STHS students' photos in top 100 in contest

Updated Jan. 29 10:20pm

Colton McHugh's, a junior at South Tahoe High School, had his photograph selected as one of the 100 best in the 33rd annual College & High School Photography Contest sponsored by NIKON.

Sandy Robles, who graduated in 2012, is also a finalist, as is student Julia Schmidseder.



Colton McHugh's photo.

The top 12 will be selected from this group to receive a $2,000 scholarship.

Winning photos will be published in the May issue of *Photographer's Forum* magazine, entered into Nikon's Emerging Photographers Hall of Fame and exhibited at Brooks Institute Gallery 27.

Terrain park competition for young riders

SnowBomb.com's annual Lil' Air Mountain Festivals are ramping up the season with kid-friendly terrain park competitions.

Each competition is open to participants 12 and younger, with a $10 registration on the day of the event: Feb. 9 at Homewood, Feb. 23 at Squaw Valley, March 9 at Homewood, and March 30 at Alpine Meadows.

Lil' Air is geared toward creating a safe environment for kids to go "big" on closed-course terrain park features, specially designed for competitors ages 3-12.

For more info, go online.

Employment law seminar in Stateline

The business community is invited to attend the employment law update "What's on Your Mind?" on Feb. 1, from 9am-noon at the Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce, 169 Highway 50 in Stateline.

Sponsored by the chamber in partnership with the Sierra Human Resources Association, this seminar includes updated

information managers and business professionals need to know for 2013.

The format includes a presentation followed by plenty of time to ask attorneys from California and Nevada questions. David Cohen of Cohen Durrett LLP in Sacramento and Nicole Harvey of Harvey Law Firm in Reno will cover new laws as well as best employment practices in general.

Early bird registration: $39 for chamber and SHRA members, $49 for non-members. Beverages and snacks will be provided at 8:30am. Attendees will be able to purchase 2013 employment law products at a discount.

Seating is limited and advance registration is required online.

For more info, call Laura Moriarty at (530) 573.0224 or Emily Abernathy at (775) 588.5900, ext. 303.

S. Tahoe police disclose attempted rape 1 month after incident

By Kathryn Reed

A 25-year-old woman from out of town who was attending the SnowGlobe Music Festival was almost raped New Year's Eve.

South Lake Tahoe police officers did not release the news that

there is a would-be rapist either living in the area or who visited town until Jan. 29. Police Chief Brian Uhler said the delay is because they wanted to have a sketch of the suspect before information was released.



Now people are being asked a month after the incident to jar their memory if they have seen the man in the sketch to the left.

It is not known where the suspect is from. Uhler said no other similar incidents in the last month have been reported.

“We don’t have a serial situation in South Lake Tahoe,” Uhler told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The attempted rape occurred in the neighborhood off Johnson Boulevard, which isn’t far from the concert venue off Al Tahoe Boulevard. According to police, the woman, whose hometown has not been released, accepted a ride from the stranger with the agreement he would drive her to the residence where she was staying.

“The suspect then drove around for about 10 minutes before parking the truck. He explained he was trying to use his GPS to find the house. The suspect then attacked the victim,” Lt. Brain Williams said in a press release. “During the struggle, the suspect was able to pull down the victim’s pants. The victim continued to resist however, ultimately escaping from the suspect and running away. She fled through unfamiliar areas until she was finally able to find her friend’s house.”

The suspect is described as a white male, approximately 25 years old, 5-foot-7, 150 pounds, thin build, with wavy brown hair with about 2 inches on top and 1 inch on the sides. He had about a week's worth of facial hair.

The pickup he was driving is an older white Ford with manual transmission and black cloth seats.

Anyone with information is asked to call (530) 542.6100 or Secret Witness at (530) 541.6800.

Laine wins appointment to S. Lake Tahoe council

By Kathryn Reed

After a 10-year hiatus from the South Lake Tahoe City Council, Brooke Laine will be sworn in Feb. 5. The ceremony will be at 8am so she can participate in that morning's closed session prior to the open session starting an hour later.

On a 3-1 vote, with Councilman Hal Cole the dissenter, Laine was chosen Jan. 29 to fill the remainder of Claire Fortier's term. At the meeting Laine told the council she intends to run for the seat when it expires in fall 2014.

Laine served on the council from 1998-2002. Cole and Mayor Tom Davis were on the council for part of her previous tenure.

“I served 10 years ago. I was 38. I have new ideas and experiences and I want to bring them forward,” Laine told *Lake Tahoe News* after the meeting. “I look forward to being a team player.”

While Laine was Cole’s second pick, he would have preferred Kathay Lovell return to the council.

Councilwomen Angela Swanson and JoAnn Conner had a problem with Lovell wanting the seat only for the 22-month term and not willing to seek re-election next year. Lovell served on the council from 2002-10.

Davis and Cole each picked Laine and Lovell as their top choices; Conner chose Laine and Scott Valentine; and Swanson picked Valentine and Kay Ogden.

The others who sought the seat were Austin Sass, Bruce Grego, Howard Bittner, Bill Crawford and Joan Walthall.

Each person had 10 minutes to make a case for him or herself. Walthall did not attend the meeting. Then the councilmembers asked various questions, with Davis participating via phone. And the public had a chance to comment about whom they preferred.

The council has been put in a similar situation in the past with needing to appoint a fifth person. However, it’s been a while. The last time was when Grego was appointed Aug. 1, 1989, to fill the seat vacated by Terry Trupp who in June of that year was arrested on a slew of drug charges.

On Dec. 15, 1970, William Ames resigned and Ken Smith was appointed Jan. 5, 1971, and on June 8, 1971, Donald Clarke resigned and Bill Moyer was appointed July 20, 1971. When Ken Smith resigned March 12, 1974, the council opted for a special election. That is when Robert Kaufman was elected on June 6, 1974.

Google wants to limit law enforcement's access to customer info

By Reuters

WASHINGTON – Google will lobby Washington this year to make it harder for law enforcement authorities to gain access to emails and other digital messages.

In a blog post on Monday, linked to Data Privacy Day, Google's chief legal officer, David Drummond, said the tech giant, in coalition with many other powerful tech companies, will try to convince Congress to update a 1986 privacy protection law.

He cited data showing that government requests for Mountain View-based Google's user data increased more than 70 percent since 2009.

In 2012, Google said, it received 16,407 requests for user data affecting 31,072 users or accounts, more than half of them accompanied by a subpoena.

"We're a law-abiding company, and we don't want our services to be used in harmful ways. But it's just as important that laws protect you against overly broad requests for your personal information," Drummond said in the post.

The U.S. Electronic Communications Privacy Act, passed in the

early days of the Internet, does not require government investigators to have a search warrant when requesting access to old emails and messages that are stored online, providing less protection for them than, say, letters stored in a desk drawer or even messages saved on a computer's hard drive.

The current system also makes complex distinctions, many disputed in courts, between emails saved as drafts online, in transit, unopened or opened. Some of them are to be released with subpoenas, which have a lower threshold than search warrants as they often do not involve a judge.

A warrant is generally approved by a judge if investigators have "probable cause" to believe that their search is likely to turn up information related to a crime.

Google, Microsoft, Yahoo and popular social media site Twitter – among others – have resisted turning over customer data.

They have put in place policies, based on the constitutional protection from unreasonable searches, that require search warrants for access to content of private communications.

Privacy activists say the outdated law should be reformed to extend the constitutional right to privacy online, but legislation limiting government requests will not face an easy road.

Last year, Democratic Sen. Patrick Leahy, who chairs the Senate Judiciary Committee, introduced a bill that would have updated the current law.

It triggered a wave of concerns from the police and FBI that new restrictions would impede crime investigations and possibly endanger victims.

"After three decades, it is essential that Congress update ECPA to ensure that this critical law keeps pace with new technologies and the way Americans use and store email today,"

Leahy said in a statement on Monday.

His privacy legislation died in Congress last year after his counterpart in the House of Representatives, House Judiciary Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte, a Republican, drafted another version of that bill, which also tackled other issues but stripped out privacy reform language.

Last year, Goodlatte said he was willing to consider the privacy law reform, but that the timeline then was too short for a "thorough examination."

Leahy has now included the change of privacy laws as one of his top priorities this year.

Diamond Peak racers do well at Mt. Shasta competition

By Lisa O'Daly

Diamond Peak skier Casey Delaney tore it up to finish second overall in men's giant slalom on Day 1 of the Far West Race Series at Mount Shasta last weekend, while Payton Norton charged to take second for the men on Day 2.

Winston Pretti (5th, 9th), and Cory Huber (6th, 11th) joined their teammates in the top 15.

Delaney was in fourth place and on his way to a win on Jan. 27 before dramatically crashing his second run due to an equipment failure. Also on Sunday, Noah Cleary was skiing fast when he hooked a tip and ripped out a gate and panel before losing a ski and sliding down the steep pitch in a spectacular crash.



Incline's Payton Norton competes at Shasta; finishing second overall in the Jan. 26-27 races. Photo/Provided

Of the seven Diamond Peak U14 ladies competing at Shasta, Madison Idso was her team's top scorer, finishing in the top 10 on Saturday, tying for 10th place. On Sunday, Idso (5th) continued her reign in the top 10, joined by teammate Sophia Holm (10th), whose stellar Day 2 performance saw her move dramatically in her rank.

Emily Donahue had consistent results with a 20th on Saturday, followed by a 22nd Sunday. Teammate Bridgette Johnson improved her 24th from Saturday to take 19th on Sunday, right behind Laurel Taylor. Taylor climbed up the scoreboard on Day 2, jumping from 35th place on Saturday to 18th.

The team ripped it up on a long, steep course on very firm snow. Despite the intimidating conditions, the weekend was marked by outstanding performances by all team members.

"I couldn't be any prouder of the U14 athletes. They've been training hard and it shows," said coach Mark Norton. Many of Diamond Peak's 23 men and ladies U14 racers (ages 12 and 13) have been training five days a week, honing their ski racing techniques and tactics.

Lisa O'Daly is a parent volunteer with the Diamond Peak Ski

Foundation.

Ski report: Time to carve



Clearing skies and corduroy to carve.

Here is the Jan. 29 ski report.

— Curtis Fong

Ice carving event benefits High Fives Foundation

Truckee River Winery is having an ice carving contest March 6 from noon-7pm.

This is a fund-raising event with High Fives Foundation. Ice carvers will be given four hours to sculpt their blocks of ice. All carvers will be judged on artistry, creativity, level of difficulty and relevance. Carvers are encouraged to choose a design that emulates all three of these skills. Only two people per team are allowed.

The cost is $100 for the ice block. The winner of the competition will have his or her fee waived.

Here is the application.

Heavenly’s tram – a 50-year-old tradition

By Susan Wood

One of South Lake Tahoe’s most famous landmarks has carried countless skiers and boarders up the steep slopes of Heavenly Mountain Resort’s lake-facing ridge. It has carried a history with it – one that has stood the test of time.

The tram has been operating for 50 seasons.

From old-timers to modern-day users, the tram in six minutes has whisked riders up to the back slopes. It can cart 600 people an hour up the mountain. Near the top is a restaurant, which has changed names a few times since the lift’s inception in 1962. It’s now a burger joint with a bar called Booyah’s.

South Shore’s longtime skier, former Heavenly employee and Olympic volunteer Martin Hollay still makes the tram part of his morning ski ritual. Hollay lives a few blocks away – his home base since going to work for Heavenly in 1964.



Views from the tram are one reason people continue to ride it from Heavenly's California Lodge. Photos/Kathryn Reed

He likes the views from the tram and said he'd be heartbroken if it were taken out. The views are unparalleled, sweeping 180 degrees of the lake's south shore.

"It should be kept because it's a big part of Heavenly's history," Hollay told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Although the tram is documented in the 2007 Heavenly Master Plan, its days could be numbered once the redevelopment plan involving the California Base Lodge is launched. This is according to Heavenly and confirmed by the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and U.S. Forest Service. A smaller lift situated closer to the ground will replace the tram. It is proposed to land near the top of the Powderbowl chairlift.

"Its removal is no longer tied to the implementation of the gondola," said Andrew Strain, Heavenly's planning chief. The Heavenly Gondola opened in 2000 near Stateline from the Highway 50 street level.

The scenic impacts of the building and towers were discussed by TRPA back then, but never fully addressed. The new plan was approved in 2007 by the regulatory agency.

The U.S. Forest Service, which leases the land to Heavenly, is treating the plan as a "concept document," said Jonathan Cook-

Fisher, the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit recreation special uses regional manager.

Fisher uses the tram because before he hits the slopes he likes “to tinker” with his gear. One can do that while standing in the tram. Other than that, he treats taking the tram versus the other lifts as a difference between an escalator and elevator.

“It has served the ski area well,” he said.



Heavenly’s tram has been transporting people for 50 seasons.

Tram proponents – including former employees – hope there is as much room for the lift in the town as there is in the hearts of its residents.

Malcolm Tibbetts, Heavenly’s former vice president of mountain operations of 32 years, remembers working with the tram like it was yesterday. However, the place looked a lot different and wasn’t owned by Vail Resorts.

“When the tram was first built, it was a separate company, but it didn’t stay that way very long,” he told *Lake Tahoe News*. “Back then, the lifts were numbered.”

There were three chairlifts and two rope tows. The tram was completely rebuilt in 1986 – making the new one faster and larger. The new one doubled the number of passengers to 50.

“As a tourist lift, it was fantastic,” said Tibbetts, who still lives on the South Shore. “From a marketing standpoint, it probably paid for itself.”

“It’s a part of the Heavenly history,” he said.

Tibbetts recalled how employees would unwind at the top building known decades ago as the Pioneer Hut.

“It was added onto through the years,” he said. “We loved to do our own construction.”

The tram turned out to be a bane and a blessing. It needed much maintenance, creating a “huge headache” for the mountain operations workers, Tibbetts added. “It had its quirks,” he said.

One morning, all but one member of the ski patrol was caught in the tram when one of the cables “reversed,” making it necessary to slow the tram down to a “creeping” speed a half hour before the mountain opened.

The restaurant that came to be known as Monument Peak was a steakhouse where workers and old-timers staged last-minute parties.

Some parties were more memorable than others.

About a decade ago, a spine-tingling version of “God Bless America” was sung by a host of pioneering South Lake Tahoe families who gathered at the restaurant to honor the late Patsy Gilman Wood. Her husband, Robert Wood, was a founding partner of Heavenly and was on hand to help lead the group in singing her favorite song. (Patsy Wood has a run and lift named after her, but is not related to this reporter.)

The Woods were instrumental in getting the tram off the ground in 1962.

Today’s riders are more than grateful of the effort.

“We always ride the tram,” said local skier Jill Berliner on a recent morning with her son, Bram Sigman.

He noted how many riders are scared to go up the tram because of how steep the ridge appears.

They also know when the gondola is on wind hold, the tram is often a last hold-out to get on the mountain.