North Tahoe Arts’ anonymous donor needs other contributors

North Tahoe Arts is receiving an extra-special gift of generosity this holiday season. An anonymous donor has offered to match every donation that NTA receives through Dec. 31.

North Tahoe Arts, located in Tahoe City for more than 24 years, has been supporting the arts in the Truckee North Lake Tahoe area with various events such as its most recent ARTour in July, Kids Art Camps happening each summer and numerous Art Openings in the Artisan Shop throughout the year.

To donate and also take part in the Matching Gift Campaign, go online and click on the “donate” tab at the top right of the page. Donations are also welcome by mail. Make check out to North Tahoe Arts, P.O. Box 6354, Tahoe City, CA 96145.

For more information, call (530) 581.2787.

Young Tahoe explorers will learn about the world

The World Explorers’ Club will meet once a month to learn about the world, do activities and write letters to their pen pals.

The first meeting will be Jan. 15 at 3:30pm at the South Lake Tahoe branch library. Future meetings will be on the fourth Tuesday of each month.

Sign up at the library to join the World Explorers.

Explorers will:

* Learn about young people from around the world.

* Help fight poverty.

* Create art projects to share with a pen pal.

The library is at 1000 Rufus Allen Blvd.

Red Hawk Casino settles water dispute

By Cathy Locke, Sacramento Bee

After more than a decade of lawsuits and threats of lawsuits, a dispute over water service for the Shingle Springs Rancheria and Red Hawk Casino appears to have been resolved.

The El Dorado Local Agency Formation Commission, which rules on government reorganizations, earlier this month effectively rescinded the 1988 annexation of the rancheria to the El Dorado Irrigation District and approved a re-annexation with conditions necessary to meet current water service needs.

The irrigation district has been supplying water for the casino since it opened four years ago. The re-annexation is intended to clear up legal issues and satisfy recent court rulings, officials said.

“I’m just glad that this time all the parties managed to work

together to see this through," said Jose Henriquez, LAFCO executive director.

Nicholas Fonseca, chairman of the Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians, said in a written statement that the tribe was pleased with LAFCO's action.

"We have worked for many years to simply be treated like any other water customer, and remove what are obviously unfair and we believe illegal restrictions on the tribe," he said.

The 1988 annexation, which Henriquez described as seriously flawed, limited water service to 40 residences, a community building and garden plots. As the tribe sought to build a casino on the rancheria off Highway 50, opponents cited the water restrictions in an effort to block the project.

In June 2008, with the casino's opening date just months away, tribal leaders vowed to truck in water if necessary, raising the specter of up to 25 trucks a day hauling water via Highway 50.

The irrigation district board subsequently approved an agreement to supply the Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians up to 135,000 gallons of water a day. The tribe agreed to purchase water at the commercial rate to serve the 270,000-square-foot casino, as well as the existing homes and other facilities on the rancheria.

In approving the agreement, the district board cited an opinion by the U.S. Department of the Interior Solicitor General's Office that questioned the validity of LAFCO's restrictions in the 1988 annexation. The opinion indicated that if LAFCO's intent was to regulate use of the tribe's land, a court likely would find that the restrictions would be pre-empted by federal law.

In 2008, the irrigation district and the tribe rejected Henriquez's proposal that the tribe apply for detachment and

concurrent annexation to the district, allowing LAFCO to remove the restrictions.

In July 2008, the citizens group Voices for Rural Living filed suit in El Dorado Superior Court seeking to nullify the agreement to serve the casino. In December 2009, the court ruled that there was a fair argument that the irrigation district did not comply with the California Environmental Quality Act when it approved the agreement and that it did not have the authority to unilaterally invalidate the LAFCO conditions. The tribe appealed the ruling, but the trial court decision was largely upheld earlier this year by a state appeals court.

The ruling affirmed LAFCO's authority in such matters. Although the tribe is not subject to LAFCO unless it willingly waives its sovereign immunity, a public agency is subject to state law and contracting with a tribe does not extend immunity to the public agency, Henriquez said.

Tom Cumpston, the El Dorado Irrigation District's general counsel, said, "We had a legitimate difference of opinion of what was the best approach. Once we had the trial court's decision, it was clear that we needed to go through some sort of LAFCO process."

The district filed the application for detachment and re-annexation.

Under the 2008 agreement, the tribe indemnified the district against any legal challenge, and it has borne the cost of the litigation, as well as an environmental impact report and the LAFCO proceedings, Cumpston said.

Any requests for additional water for the rancheria will not require LAFCO approval. The district will be able to negotiate with the tribe as it would any other water customer, Cumpston said.

He said the district will seek a trial court ruling that it has complied with the court's order. Since the lawsuit was filed in 2008, he said, much of the public controversy over the casino has abated.

"The casino has been operating four years, and it is obvious that EID can serve them with water," he said.

Study: TV in kids' rooms a super bad idea

By Melissa Healy, Los Angeles Times

Thinking of buying your kid a TV of his or her own for Christmas or Hannukah? Well here's a bit of advice from your friends at the American Journal of Preventive Medicine: Don't. It turns out there is a way to make television even more unhealthy for your children: Put a set in their bedroom.

Research has long established that for kids, more "screen time" is linked to higher rates of obesity. A new study goes further. It finds not only that kids with a TV in their bedroom tend to watch more TV, which in itself should make them fatter, but also: Compared to television watched in, say, a family room, the screen time a kid logs in his or her bedroom is linked, hour-for-hour, to more belly fat, higher triglycerides and overall greater risk of developing heart disease and diabetes.

Take two kids with roughly the same diet and the same level of physical activity: The study published Tuesday found that the

one with a TV in his bedroom (and boys are more likely to have them than girls) will have more cardiometabolic risk factors than than the one who has to watch TV in one of his home's common rooms.

For the majority of American households, that advice comes too late. Nationwide, 70 percent of kids between the ages of 8 and 18 already have a television in their bedroom.

The study's lead author, Amanda E. Staiano a researcher with the Pennington Biomedical Research Center in Louisiana, says she's fine with scotching the hopes of kids wishing to get their own TV this holiday season.

"If this gives parents one more bit of ammunition to say, 'No, you can't have TV in your bedroom,' I'm OK with that," Staiano says. "If we have fewer obese kids in the world, I'll be the Grinch."

Staiano suggested that over and above the effects of being parked too long in front of a TV, a television in the bedroom might magnify the box's corrosive effects on a child's health by disrupting sleep patterns and discouraging the practice of family mealtimes. Sleep deprivation – the likely outcome when screen time trumps shut-eye – is a known risk factor for obesity and, worse, for metabolic dysfunction. Family mealtimes seem to promote healthier eating and lower obesity rates, not to mention less alcohol, drug and tobacco use by kids.

To conduct the study, Staiano and her colleagues studied 369 children and adolescents between 5 and 18 years old. In addition to asking how much television they watched daily and whether they had a TV in their room, the researchers gave the kids a battery of tests. They measured the kids' waist circumference, blood pressure and fasting triglycerides; ran a full cholesterol panel; and gauged each child's fat mass in two ways to get precise measures of subcutaneous fat, fat

accumulated in the belly and around visceral organs, and overall fat-to-lean mass ratio. And they tested each child's fasting glucose level – a measure of metabolic function. The researchers also had participants estimate their daily physical activity levels of food intake.

Among kids who watched more than two hours of TV a day, those who had a TV in their bedroom were as much as 2 1/2 times likelier than those who did not to be in the top one-quarter of kids in terms of fat mass. That finding held steady even after researchers adjusted for age, gender, ethnicity, physical activity levels and diet. Compared to kids who had to watch TV in a living area of the home, those who had a TV in their room were almost three times likelier to have "elevated cardiometabolic risk," meaning they had three or more unhealthy readings in the panels of medical tests they were given.

Sheer volume of TV time mattered too: Kids who watched five or more hours of TV a day were twice as likely as those who watched less to carry a density of visceral fat that fell in the top quartile.

Vicky Rideout, who has written some of the most detailed studies of children's media exposure and its effects for the Kaiser Family Foundation, said the latest study should strengthen some well established warnings but may miss some newer dangers as well.

"Research has consistently shown better outcomes for kids who don't have a TV in their bedroom than for those who do, whether we're talking about obesity, sleep or academic achievement," said Rideout, now an independent consultant specializing in health communication, social marketing and youth and media.

Rideout urges parents to "take the TV out of the bedroom." But newer technologies will require a new level of vigilance, she

adds. “Keep an eye on your child’s smartphone and computers too, because food companies are now marketing games, websites and mobile apps designed to boost consumption of foods kids should be eating less of, not more of,” Rideout said.

Letter: Thanks for helping get snow removed

To the community,

This is a follow up letter to my request last week for some snow removal so the people of Pioneer Village could access the bike trail safely.

I would like to thank K and K Services for taking the time to clear the snow that day and also I would like to thank whoever has placed trail markers so the access can be kept clear.

Thanks to all parties involved and to *Lake Tahoe News* and *Tahoe Daily Tribune* for printing my letter and getting the request out there.

John Spinola, South Lake Tahoe

Time running out to get

packages delivered by Christmas

By Bill Lindelof, Sacramento Bee

Today is likely to be the busiest mailing day of the year for the U.S. Postal Service – and private shippers will also be busy moving millions of parcels. There is still time to mail, but Christmas is drawing close.

Ralph Petty, spokesman for the Postal Service in Sacramento, suggests people use priority mail to make sure packages get to their destination. Priority mail gets to its destination in two or three days. Express mail is even faster: overnight delivery to most areas in the country.

Sacramento-area postal workers will process about 2.4 million cards, letters and packages today. Normally, workers would handle 700,000 in a day. FedEx expects to handle a record-breaking 280 million packages worldwide between Thanksgiving and Christmas, an increase of 13 percent from last year.

Here's holiday numbers courtesy of the U.S. Postal Service:

• 237 is the number years the Postal Service had been delivering holiday greetings.

• 17.9 billion cards, letters and packages will be delivered between Thanksgiving and New Year's eve.

• 685 million pieces delivered today, the busiest mailing day of 2012.

• mail carriers service more than 150 million American homes, businesses and post office boxes, delivering nearly 40 percent of the world's mail.

• 170,000 vehicles are needed to transport the mail.

• 242 million people visit a post office during the holidays.

Ski report: Freshies throughout the day

A winter storm warning is in effect for the entire ski day in Lake Tahoe.

Here is the Dec. 17 ski report.

— Curtis Fong

Reno’s Guldemond takes second in slopestyle at Dew Tour

By USSA

BRECKENRIDGE, Colo. -– After extreme blowing winds and snow Chas Guldemond (Reno) was able to overcome the treacherous conditions and take second at Dew Tour slopestyle snowboarding finals on Dec. 16.

His run featured near perfect double backside rodeo that he was able take all the way to the bottom of the jump. In a

tough competition Guldemond was one of the few in the field of competitors who was able to put down an impressive run despite the adverse conditions.

Guldemond’s second run secured his second position with a run that featured a double backside rodeo and smooth cab double 1260 that earned him a 90.75.

Teammate’s Sage Kotsenburg (Park City) and Eric Willett (Breckenridge) ended up in ninth and 10th respectively due to tough weather conditions that caused them to come up short on the final jumps.

Canada’s Mark McMorris took first with Norway’s Staale Sandbech in third.

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe

Punkin is a shy mini Chihuahua who is maybe 1 or 2 years old. He is very sweet, quiet, and a pretty cream color. He warms up to gentle attention, and would love to spend as much time as possible in someones lap.



And just look at those huge ears!

Punkin is neutered, microchipped, and vaccinated. He is at the

El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many other dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes. Go online to see photos and description of all pets at the shelter.

Call (530) 573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet. The shelter will be open for adoptions Monday-Saturday through the holidays except for Dec. 24, Dec. 25 and Jan. 1.

For spay-neuter assistance for South Tahoe residents, go online.

– Karen Kuentz

Opinion: World's dictators threatened by social media

By Joel Brinkley

Most of the world's dictators share a common fear, and it's not of the United States, NATO, the United Nations or any outside entity. No, the force that most threatens them is social media.

Originally designed as enhanced online chat forums for young Americans, Facebook, Twitter, blogs and the rest have spread around the world and are now being used as cudgels against authoritarian leaders in places like Vietnam, Russia, Belarus and Bahrain. In those states and so many others, the leaders

are attacking tweeters and bloggers as if they were armed revolutionaries. And the repression is spreading.

In India a few days ago, a 21-year-old medical student posted a mildly critical comment about a Hindu political figure who'd just died. Within 24 hours, police arrested her and a friend who had "liked" the student's Facebook post and charged them with engaging in hateful, offensive speech – this in one of the world's strongest democracies. (Police let them go a few days later.)

A more typical example comes from Belarus. There, President Alexander Lukashenko, commonly known as Europe's last dictator, seems to be fighting online verbiage all the time.

Recently, Ecuador's Supreme Court turned down an extradition request from Belarus for a blogger who fled there after the government charged him with fraud. Alexander Barankov had been blogging about widespread government corruption. That particular extradition denial stands as a bold demonstration of the fraud charge's absurdity because Rafael Correa, Ecuador's president and an acolyte of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, is no champion of press freedom. Far from it. And yet he defied the Belarus request.

Barankov is hardly the only example. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe declaimed Lukashenko's record of arresting journalists and bloggers, saying "unfortunately recent detentions and searches in Minsk and elsewhere in the country show continued efforts to muzzle dissenting voices and clamp down on freedom of expression online."

Iran, not surprisingly, is even tougher. Bloggers are given long prison terms or sentenced to death, charged with "enmity against God" and subverting national security. Human-rights groups say the bloggers and tweeters are tortured in jail. In mid-November, one died in police custody for unexplained

reasons.

Iran actually is trying to set up its own internal Internet. There, the government says, “unregulated social media and other content likely to encourage dissent” simply won’t be available.

But the sad truth is, the dictators whose people are the most repressed – locked in abject poverty – don’t have to worry about the social-media problem. In Laos, Cambodia, Eritrea, Mozambique and a handful of other states, most people have no access to computers or cell phones. Many of them are illiterate and couldn’t use the devices even if they had them. That leaves their leaders to trample over their rights with near-impunity.

China demonstrates this better than any nation. The state’s economic-development program pulled millions of Chinese out of poverty. Previously, Chinese were relatively quiescent. But with prosperity came a new understanding of how venal and repressive the Chinese Communist Party really is. So, millions of Chinese took to new social-media platforms to complain.

Now China spends more money on internal security – including a massive online censorship office – than it does on its military. Persistent online critics are imprisoned or worse. That demonstrates a clear fact: The Chinese government fears its own people far more than it does any outside power.

Other states are catching up. Russia is implementing a massive new online Internet filtering system, ostensibly to protect children from offensive sites. But human-rights advocates warn that it can just as easily be used to block social-media commentary the government doesn’t like.

In Oman this fall, six people were jailed for defaming the state on Facebook. That came after the National Human Rights Commission of Oman (an oxymoron if I’ve ever heard one) labeled those posts and others “negative writings that violate

Islamic principles.”

Nearby, Bahrain is trying to have it both ways. On the one hand, it jailed a human-rights advocate for tweeting criticism of the nation’s tyrannical prime minister. Then authorities arrested four more Bahrainis for Twitter posts considered to be critical of the king.

At the same time, though, the government allowed one of the state’s biggest companies, a telecom provider named Zain Bahrain, to sponsor a major business conference there, undoubtedly because it will be quite profitable for the island’s hotels, restaurants and other travel-related businesses.

What was the conference about? Its title: The Social Media Masters Forum.

Joel Brinkley, a professor of journalism at Stanford University, is a Pulitzer Prize-winning former foreign correspondent for the New York Times.