Ski report: Wind will be a factor



Temperatures are expected to be in the 30s to 40s today. Wind will be the main thing to worry about.

Heavenly is starting on wind hold, so call the resort to know if the gondola is spinning.

Here is the Nov. 20 ski reportt.

– Curtis Fong

Letter: Tips to make holidays safe and happy

To the community,

The El Dorado County Sheriff's Office wishes for everyone to have a safe and enjoyable holiday season, and has the following safety tips to offer:

Do not drink and drive.

Do not leave presents visible in your parked car, while shopping.

Lock your doors and windows when you leave your house.

Be prepared for winter weather at home and while driving.

Be cautious with your mail. The holiday season is when most mail thefts occur. Drop off mail at your closest post office if you are mailing money, checks, or gift cards. Pick up your mail promptly and report any suspicious activity immediately to the sheriff’s office, your police department, or your local post office.

If you are leaving for the holidays, suspend your mail and paper delivery, or have a neighbor pick up these items for you and ask them to watch your house while you are gone. I

f you live in the county, contact the El Dorado County Sheriff’s STARS at (530) 621.7545 and schedule vacation house checks any time of the year.

The holiday season can be a time of loneliness and depression for some. If you are depressed, and need to talk with someone, please call Community Crisis Services, 24 hours a day, at (530) 622.3345.

On behalf of the El Dorado County Sheriff’s Office, Happy Holidays!

John D’Agostini, El Dorado County sheriff

SNC faculty keeping book publishers busy

The English faculty at Sierra Nevada College in Incline Village has recently been making its mark on the literary

scene far and wide.

Brian Turner, director of the MFA program, was recently featured in *Parade* magazine. His book “Here, Bullet” was listed as one of the top 10 by this generation of vets. The reviewer writes, “The strongest poems from Brian Turner’s collection distill both grisly reality and the unlikely flashes of beauty he witnessed during his year in Iraq as an army infantry team leader.”

Other SNC faculty poets making big moves include Jared Stanley and Laura Wetherington. Stanley recently had a second collection of poetry published, “The Weeds”. American poet and editor Cole Swensen commented, “At times funny, always smart, Stanley’s poetry provides particularly difficult ecologies with their own ecopoetics, one that strikes a vivid vigilance, collapsing the distance between representation and presentation ….”

Stanley, who was also appointed a research fellow at the Center for Art and the Environment at the Nevada Museum of Art, has been on a whirlwind reading tour, as has Laura Wetherington, author of “A Map Predetermined and Chance”. Wetherington has given readings in Oakland, San Francisco, UC Merced, Fresno State and other venues. She will be featured in the Writers in the Woods series Feb. 15-16 at Sierra Nevada College.

In the academic publishing, English instructor Chris Anderson has an article forthcoming in the CATESOL Journal (California Association of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) titled “Defining and Evaluating Success.” It is a qualitative study examining the level of preparedness of college English teachers who work with multilingual students.

Nonfiction author Ann Marie Brown, who will be teaching Travel and Adventure Writing this spring at SNC, had the fifth edition of her “Moon Handbooks: Tahoe” published in September.

In June, a ninth edition of her book “California Hiking” was published by Avalon Travel.

Santa making stop at American Legion

The American Legion Auxiliary will host its annual children’s Christmas party on Dec. 1 from 1:30-3pm at the American Legion Hall, 2748 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe.

Santa will be in attendance and gifts will be provided for children ages 2 to 10. Cookies and hot chocolate will be served.

The party is free and open to the public.

For more information, contact Mary Farnham at (530) 541.8788.

Black Friday shopping extravaganza loses uniqueness with early store openings

By Kathryn Reed

Retailers are no longer content with Black Friday; instead they are starting the holiday shopping frenzy earlier.

“Last year we lost out on this weekend. Kmarts lost out to all stores that opened early,” explained Melodie Johnson, manager of the South Lake Tahoe store.

In the past Kmart would open at 5am on the Friday after Thanksgiving. Not so anymore.

This year the general merchandise store will be open Thanksgiving Day from 6am to 4pm, then reopen that night at 8 and stay open until 3am Friday. It will be closed for two hours, before reopening at 5am.



While opening day was a big deal this month for TJ Maxx in South Lake Tahoe, Black Friday will be rather ho-hum. Photo/Tracy Franklin

While Kmart is closed employees will be restocking and changing signs. The different hours will have different specials. For instance, the first set of specials on Thanksgiving Day includes two-for-one shoe sales. The evening specials will be on clothing, jewelry and Craftsman products. Door busters start Friday at 5am.

Johnson told *Lake Tahoe News* the goal is to keep people in Tahoe instead of having them go off the hill for specials like they did last year.

TJ Maxx, which opened in South Lake Tahoe on Nov. 11, won’t be any competition for Kmart because it will be closed

Thanksgiving Day.

A salesperson told *Lake Tahoe News*, “We have no specials on Black Friday because our items are discounted all the time.”

But just in case Black Friday shoppers want to start early, the store will be open at 7am and won’t close until 10pm.

Apricot Lane in the Heavenly Village “isn’t doing anything crazy for Black Friday,” a saleswoman said, but to capture holiday shoppers a three-day sale begins Wednesday. And the store is open Thanksgiving Day.

Targets and Wal-Marts everywhere, including the Carson Valley, are opening earlier on Thanksgiving than last year – 9pm for the former, 8pm for the latter.

The National Retail Federation predicts consumers to spend $749.51 on gifts and other holiday items this season. A year ago, $740.57 was spent per person. This would mean holiday sales for 2012 would total $586.1 billion – an increase of 4 percent for 2011.

This does not include online purchases. Forrester Research believes online sales will be up 15 percent over 2011 levels to total $68.4 billion. Cyber Monday – the Monday after Thanksgiving – is usually the big day for online retailers.

STPUD employees receive pay raise, change to health care

By Kathryn Reed

Most South Tahoe Public Utility District employees, including managers, are making more money.

The board of directors this month unanimously approved a four-year contract for the union and two-year for management that is retroactive to July 1. Union members received between a zero and 13.31 percent pay hike, while the management group increase was between zero and 14.1 percent. About two-thirds of the 92 union employees received a raise.

The increases are based on a survey of 14 other agencies. STPUD uses the median to base its salary scale.

The last raise was in 2009 – 2 percent for everyone. This was based on the 2006 contract that called for the salary adjustment.

The medical plan changes Jan. 1. No longer will South Tahoe PUD be self-insured. STPUD will be part of the joint powers insurance agency through the Association of California Water Agencies. Over the course of the four-year contract the district will save $1.5 million. This savings pays for the salary increase.

District spokesman Dennis Cocking told *Lake Tahoe News* no rate increase will be used to pay for the salary changes.

"It's a good solution when nobody is happy, but everyone can live with it. We have a good agreement," board President Eric Schafer told *Lake Tahoe News*.

“I think some of these things are taken out of our hands like pension reform in California and the Affordable Health Care Act. We brought ourselves into compliance with those,” Schafer said. “Who knows what the state of California will do next? We know they need money. I hope it does not come from us.”

It’s likely with an aging workforce, STPUD will see more savings in terms of salary and PERS contributions because new employees will make less and have a different pension formula.

Santa flying into Meyers for annual tree lighting

Tahoe’s first pedal-powered tree lighting event is Dec. 9 in Meyers.

Santa will again arrive by air – just not with the usual reindeer.

Hot chocolate, popcorn, Christmas carols and other fun are planned from 6-8 that night.

Lake Valley and Tahoe Douglas firefighters have strung the lights in front of the Divided Sky.

Fallen Leaf Lake proceeds with board election

Even though several residents of Fallen Leaf Lake don’t believe the issue of who can vote has been resolved, there will be a board election next year.

Candidates for the two seats have until Dec. 7 to file with the El Dorado County Registrar of Voters Office.

The election will be March 5.

Candy Cane Lights to be turned on Thanksgiving weekend

Candy Cane Lane, a custom outdoor drive-through holiday display at the Carson Valley Inn, will be up for nightly viewing starting Thanksgiving weekend.

In its third year, Candy Cane Lane features thousands of seasonal lights and a variety of scenes depicting traditional characters and images getting ready for Christmas. Accompanying music can be heard by tuning an FM radio to the frequency posted at the entrance.

To experience this visual and musical salute to the festive holiday season, pull into the Carson Valley Inn parking lot at the RV Resort Entrance – between the Carson Valley Market and

the Inn’s electronic sign. The lighted arches mark the way.

The Carson Valley Inn is located on Highway 395 in Minden.

The free light display will be up through December.

South Shore ski club looking for youth participants

Zephyr Cove Ski Club, a nonprofit organization comprised of parent volunteers, is looking for youth who want to learn how to ski or snowboard.

ZCSC is associated with Douglas County Parks and Recreation and the Douglas County School District.

The program is open to grades K-12 and all ability levels. It includes transportation to and from Heavenly’s Boulder lodge, optional ski or snowboarding lessons in the morning, and a lift ticket for the entire day. All riders 8-years-old and younger must be picked up and supervised by an adult or other authorized person after morning lessons.

The program begins Jan. 12 and runs for six Saturdays (excluding holiday weekends).

For questions or to sign up, call Sally O’Brien at (775) 588.7233.