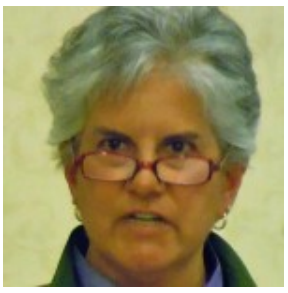
Opinion: Biking, walking have multiple environmental benefits

By Joanne Marchetta

Lake Tahoe is biking its way to a healthy, more environmentally sustainable future. In the first two weeks of June, more than 400 people around the Tahoe basin logged 13,800 miles and 3,800 bike trips just getting to work and doing errands as part of the Tahoe Bike Challenge. TRPA and the Lake Tahoe Bicycle Coalition have put this event on seven years running to get people out on their bikes and to reinforce the commitment our communities have to multi-modal transportation, clean air and water. The data collected is used to help Lake Tahoe agencies make better decisions about biking facilities.

While there is a common understanding that TRPA is mandated to improve Lake Tahoe's air quality, you may not be aware of the inherent linkages among land use policies, transportation programs, economic strength, clearer water, cleaner air and healthier, more vibrant communities. I'd like to connect the dots for you.

Cleaner air and water



Joanne Marchetta

The latest science shows that most air pollution at Lake Tahoe is coming from local pollutants created here in the Lake Tahoe airshed. Nitrogen emissions contribute to the growth of harmful algae that is clouding the lake. The size of our paved surfaces and the number of cars on our roads also contribute to the load of fine sediment washed into Lake Tahoe through streams, storm drains and stormwater runoff. Fewer vehicle trips and better community design are critical to improving both air and water quality and the goal of regaining the lake's famed clarity.

Economy

Thousands of visitors come to Lake Tahoe every year just to ride their bicycles. That's because Lake Tahoe offers some of the best cycling experiences in the West. Cyclists are estimated to bring between $6 million and $23 million in local direct expenditures annually to Lake Tahoe communities. As Lake Tahoe positions itself in the geotourism market and begins to diversify its local economies with a focus on recreation, health and wellness, bike trails and pedestrian-friendly town centers are critical investments.

Community

TRPA has benefited from broad community input on the Lake Tahoe Regional Plan update. One theme that we have heard over and over is the need for safer, more vibrant and walkable town centers. The current design of most of our town centers, with sprawling parking lots and dirt road shoulders, sends a clear message that we are built for the car and that you are only welcome if you're in one. The emerging vision of the Regional Plan Update is to support bikeable, walkable communities which enhance the quality of life for locals and millions of visitors.

You can experience this more vibrant model of community design for yourself. Tahoe City's downtown sidewalks and the Lakeside

Trail along with the pedestrian plaza at the Heavenly Village show the benefits of safe, pedestrian-friendly town centers. The Kings Beach Commercial Core Improvement Project, which is scheduled to break ground next year, promises to be an outstanding example of our emerging collective vision.

How we get there

TRPA is updating the Lake Tahoe Regional Plan and Regional Transportation Plan this year with a priority focus on more bikeable, walkable communities. Draft policies increase the connectivity of bike facilities basinwide. Others guide the form and design of development in our town centers to provide incentives for property owners to improve their street frontage, share parking, create storefronts that engage pedestrians, and contribute to transit stops and bike lanes along the roadway. Property owners considering redevelopment will have real incentives to redesign our built environment in a way that doesn't revolve strictly around the car and that contributes to the vitality of our region.

There is no innovation without implementation. We are gathering specialists and experts in Tahoe this month to discuss what it takes for communities to reduce reliance on the private automobile. On July 25 and 26, we have guest speakers in town from Park City, a resort town similar to Lake Tahoe which managed the transportation needs of the 2002 Winter Olympic Games, and from Portland, a region that has transformed itself into one of the most bicycle-friendly places in the nation. We hope you can come out to hear from these experts.

If you want to learn about the strategies, challenges and solutions to improving our quality of life and environment, go online and plan to attend one of the upcoming educational opportunities on July 25 and 26 taking place on the South and North Shores.

Joanne Marchetta is executive director of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

LTUSD board to choose from 4 candidates to fill vacancy

Four people have applied for the vacancy on the Lake Tahoe Unified School District board.

They are Barbara Bannar (former board member, homemaker), Kathy Haven (educator/small business owner), Cathy Giardina (business owner/bookkeeper), and Heather Clelan (property manager).

Interviews will be at the Aug. 7 board meeting. The remaining four members choose the member. Meetings are at that district office, and start at 6pm. The board member will be sworn in Aug. 21. The term runs until December 2013.

The vacancy was created when Judy Cefalu abruptly left without much reason.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Mancuso's Truckee gym inspires weekend warriors

By Susan Wood

TRUCKEE – The roots of Olympic ski racing medalist Julia Mancuso run vast and deep in Truckee – much like the downhill runs she conquers.

A resident of Olympic Valley, Julia needs no last name for people in the Lake Tahoe region to know whom one is talking about.

At the JM Performance Training Center, this 6,000 square-foot facility is where recreation and racing meet style and sex appeal. Mancuso is known for mixing the fast and the feminine. Mancuso took over ownership of this Truckee fitness facility a year ago. The Pioneer Trail Drive gym brings a unique flair to conditioning.



Olympian Julia Mancuso trains at the gym she owns in Truckee when she is in town. Photos/Kathryn Reed

Seven years after launching her career in a major way at the World Cup on Copper Mountain in Colorado, Mancuso won a gold

medal in the 2006 Winter Games in Turin, Italy. Then she turned around and captured two silvers in the combined and downhill events in 2010 at the Vancouver Games in Whistler. It’s been a hard-fought road in the shadows of her U.S. Women’s Ski Team mate Lindsey Vonn. Despite the friendly competition, Mancuso placed fourth overall in the nation’s women ski racing program last year.

But it’s not only her fierce performances on the slopes that make Mancuso so memorable. Her personality comes out in all her endeavors.

At the front desk, her gym sells pink sweat shirts for $20 with a caricature readily known as the ski racer. A big, bold photograph of her carving a perfect slalom turn hangs near the front entrance. A panoramic photo of where she skis, Squaw Valley, takes up the high side of an entire back wall of the gym.

No plans have been made for expanding the gym’s retail outlet to include Mancuso’s “Kiss My Tiara” line of lingerie, but gym worker Andrew Finkelstein didn’t rule out the idea either when he gave *Lake Tahoe News* a recent tour. The tiara line was inspired by her coach presenting her with a royal tiara for luck in 2005. Five years later, she wore it during the medal ceremonies at Whistler.

Mancuso’s stamp on the gym has carried over to the grounds and the clientele of 800 members.



Vivian Herrera was drawn to the gym because of Mancuso.

“I’m a snowboarder, so when I moved here from Chile, I wanted this gym because of her experience with skiing. I’ve been athletic my entire life,” said Vivian Herrera, who moved to Truckee five months ago. She works at the Ritz-Carlton Lake Tahoe spa. She usually hits the treadmill, free weights and the TRX suspension training classes. A popular new training mechanism, TRX works on one’s body core through suspended stretching bands in various positions.

“The people are friendly here, and they offer special training classes that keep you fit,” Herrera added.

These principles are what Mancuso had in mind when she opened her gym more than a year ago.

“Being active and fit is a part of my DNA. I live for it. It was only natural to take the opportunity when it came up,” Mancuso told *Lake Tahoe News*. The star athlete is learning one day at a time about the business side. “But at the end of the day, I know I am giving a place to the community to come and play and have fun and feel really good.”

Mancuso’s father, Ciro, owns the land and the building, which has stood for 12 years under a different name.

The ski racer also relies on a competent team that helps the

customers by “inspiring them to reach their goals.” If that’s not enough to hammer home the mission of the gym, the signs in the group exercise room remind others who aspire to be the best like Mancuso to place the end result in sight. They say: “Follow Your Dreams” and “Commit to be Fit.”

The hallway leading to the women’s locker room also serves as a reminder to working hard at fitness, at least for the prospective Olympian in all of us. The hall is lined with posters of the Olympic Games, a touch sure to instill pride and chills in even the most cynical.

The local Olympian would like to see another bid for the Winter Games in Tahoe. A high-powered committee is working on the 2026 Games.

“I attribute 100 percent of my success as an Olympic ski racer to the mountains and growing up in Squaw Valley,” she said, admitting, though, she hasn’t skied many other places in Tahoe to compare where the women’s downhill run should be located.

Squaw named a run after her called Julia’s Gold.

“Although the run on KT is steep and short, it’s a ton of fun. There is really nothing like skiing in my hometown,” she said.

The vibrant 28-year-old Mancuso, who was born in Reno, tries to return to Tahoe for a few weeks to train each year, although much of her life is on the road.



Andrew Finkelstein demonstrates how the Olympic setup works.

Still, her gym lives on without her physical presence. And a spike in membership when she took over the operation showed the power of the image mixed with a little elbow grease. The staff took out the tanning beds from the previous gym and focused entirely on a well-rounded fitness approach that members would embrace.

“We tried something a little more modern, and we tried to make it fun,” Finkelstein said, while walking around the front room.

Sure, there are many features one would find in a lot of fitness centers – 25 nautilus weight machines, a dozen cardio units, 15 free weights stations, dumbbells, kettlebells, jump ropes and plyometric accessories. It’s the assortment mixed in with a wall of pull-up bars and stretching devices that make it stand out. Plus, one free weight corner is labeled the “Olympic setup.”

“This is a little corner event in itself,” Finkelstein said. He picked up the long weight bar, transporting an observer to the Summer Olympics.

Moreover, how many gyms can attract the Squaw Valley ski team in their spin rooms?

The TRX suspension classes often sell out, and the others such as “Cardio kickboxing,” “Bosu strength and stability” and “Summer hardbodies” stay busy, according to Finkelstein.

Sometimes the workouts go outside – with esteemed general manager and triathlete Chris Cloyd taking the members out for a run in the center after their workouts.

“We work pretty hard keeping our members happy,” Finkelstein said. And then there’s Mancuso, who commended her staff for their efforts.

Sometimes Mancuso and the gym members think alike.

Mancuso said she plans to work on an approach for reducing injuries in her training in the upcoming year. This is also the goal of longtime gym member Keith Abrahms, who has come to the gym since its inception.

“It’s the only thing that keeps me vertical,” he said, while working on his biceps. The carpenter strives to keep his core intact to keep him out of medical clinics.

The Performance Training Center offers a standard annual membership for $50 a month.

Politics at center of off-reservation casino fight

By Laurel Rosenhall, Sacramento Bee

In the coming weeks, Gov. Jerry Brown will decide whether two Indian tribes in remote parts of California can build gambling establishments next to freeways many miles from their homes.

The questions he faces put him at the center of a big-money casino fight – a massive lobbying effort in the Capitol that includes some very rich and influential groups.

The proposals from the Enterprise Rancheria near Marysville and the North Fork Rancheria near Fresno are part of the growing phenomenon critics describe as off-reservation casinos. But they are unusual because approval is in the hands of the governor under a process that's been used only a few times nationwide.

Most Indian casinos are on either tribal land or land restored to a tribe by the federal government, leaving state politicians out of the equation.

The Enterprise and North Fork proposals are subject to a different bureaucratic process because they don't necessarily fit those criteria – tribal members already have land but want to build casinos somewhere else.

Their projects have been given the green light by the U.S. Interior Department. Now Brown has until Aug. 31 to decide whether they can move ahead.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Cycling community lacks strong culture of safety

By Daniel Borenstein, Tri Valley Times

As I descended a narrow road from Ebbetts Pass, elevation 8,736 feet about 50 miles south of Lake Tahoe, another cyclist whipped past. I immediately realized she wasn't going to make the next turn.

It all seemed to unfold in slow motion. She tried to correct as her bike slipped onto the dirt shoulder. Her back wheel slid out from underneath and she went splaying back across the pavement, upending the next rider. She was in bad shape; he seemed OK.

Some of us stopped. A few went back up the hill, shouting to slow down the next wave and prevent a massive pileup. Many riders passed carefully; but some were going so fast they couldn't stop and had to dodge the fallen cyclists.

It reinforced my belief that the cycling community must adopt a stronger culture of safety.

We were among more than 3,000 participants last weekend in the 32nd annual Death Ride. The ominous marketing name emphasizes the physical challenge of the beautiful 129-mile route, which includes 15,000 feet of elevation gain over five mountain passes in thin High Sierra air.

Most properly trained and were ready for the climbing. But we couldn't prepare for the reckless small minority of riders who

seemed to think they could defy physics with no consequences and endangered all of us in the process.

They rode at excessive speeds; passed without calling out; even went around on the right side. To be sure, they were the exceptions, not the rule. But there were too many of them.

We all know cycling comes with risks. We ride on thin tires prone to flats. Our bikes are harder to stop than automobiles. We have nothing to protect our bodies other than a helmet and common sense.

Read the whole story

Rypien leads ACC with several guys in the hunt

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – Record crowds on Saturday witnessed golf that, while it may not rival Augusta, proved to be intense. Nine points separate the leader and No. 10 player after two days of play at the American Century Championship.

Mark Rypien sits atop the leader board heading into Sunday's final round at Edgewood Tahoe. He last won the event in 1990 when traditional scoring was used. A 54-hole modified Stableford format was introduced in 2003.

Dan Quinn, who has a two-day total of 40 points – three behind Rypien, at a July 21 press conference said, "I've been kind of shocked that this is the score that's leading. Normally if you're 43 or 44 on Saturday, you're 10 or 12 points behind. So, I'm pretty happy … I still have a chance."



2011 ACC winner Jack Wagner get some extra help late Saturday. Photos/Kathryn Reed

Quinn has won the celebrity tournament four times; the most recent being in 2004.

But guys not often in the top 10 are in the hunt:

Mark Rypien, 43

Dan Quinn, 40

Mark Mulder, 38

Tony Romo, 37

John Elway, 37

John Smoltz, 37

Jack Wagner, 36

Billy Joe Tolliver, 33

Joe Theismann, 33

Chris Chandler, 32

Wagner, who won the event last year, was the last man standing

on the driving range. Two people stood within close range offering the actor advice about his swing.

While many of the players are in it for the title, others are there to have fun – just like the fans.

Legendary All-Pro quarterback Joe Theismann didn't hesitate to sign autographs as he walked the line of the putting green.

Jerry Rice could take a lesson from his elder. Even though his game has improved through the years and he has been known to mingle with the crowd, on Saturday he walked off the putting green without so much as a smile to the gang along the ropes.

This was in direct contrast to Alfonso Ribeiro and Carson Palmer who smiled and conversed with people as they were on the putting green.

Even though Charles Barkley is usually jovial, he left hole 9 in a cart Saturday without a word to anyone despite a large crowd wanting his autograph.

The strip of sand along hole 17 was one big party on Saturday – as is tradition. The tournament provides this group with its own bar on the beach.

Douglas County sheriff's Sgt. Ron Elges and Deputy Adam Windsor kept an eye out to make sure the crowd stayed on the other side of the rope.

The tournament is on target to break last year's attendance record of 40,156. The single day record was set July 21 at 13,727. The previous record of 12,276 was from 2011.

Action begins July 22 at 8:05am. Here are Sunday's tee times.

– Susan Wood contributed to this story.

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Pet adoption fee cut in half in Placer County

Placer County Animal Services is offering half off the cost of adoptions for all animals at the animal shelters in Auburn and in Tahoe Vista through Aug. 31.

“We’ve seen a bountiful increase in the number of dogs and cats that have come into our shelters this year,” Mike Winters, Animal Services manager, said in a press release. “The summer months are a great time for families to consider adopting a new pet. A new pet could be a great addition to your family and we’d like to make it easier for families to do so.”

Placer County Animal Services is able to offer the half-off adoption promotion due to charitable contributions and the support of A New Hope Animal Foundation. The half-off fee will be $56 for dogs and $46 for cats.

The Auburn animal shelter is located at 11251 B Ave. and the Tahoe Vista shelter is located at 849 Shelter Road.

Placer County scores at State

Fair

Placer County’s State Fair exhibit won several honors. The county’s display won the Best Content Award, the Best Design Award and received the coveted Gold Award.

The exhibit highlights Placer County as a paradise for outdoor enthusiasts, wine connoisseurs, epicureans and history buffs. Though Placer County is famous for its rich Gold Rush history, there are many modern day activities that attract thousands each year.



Placer County's State Fair exhibit is award-winning. Photo/Provided

As the exhibit depicts, Placer County offers hikes among pine trees, river rafting, mountain biking, picnicking under live oaks and drinking locally produced wines. Additionally, the exhibit touches on the many historic business districts throughout the county.

The region’s bounty of history is well represented by the many museums and historic sites. Some of the notable and easily recognizable features highlighted in the exhibit include four county bridges:

The Fanny Bridge over the Truckee River in Tahoe City overlooks Lake Tahoe's only outlet. Named after the many fannies that have been visible on people who bend over the bridge to see the trout in the river below since the bridge was built in 1928.

The Foresthill Bridge was built in 1973 to provide a roadway to Foresthill when the canyons below were slated for flooding from the Auburn Dam, which was never built. The tallest bridge in California is a visual icon as it spans the North Fork of the American River.

Located in the heart of the Gold Country, the Iowa Hill Bridge is a one-lane steel cable suspension bridge constructed in 1928. Built to serve as a reliable all-seasons link over the North Fork between the historic towns of Colfax and Iowa Hill, the 150-foot bridge has cables anchored into bedrock and supported by short steel towers resting on stone masonry piers.

Mountain Quarry Bridge aka "No Hands Bridge" was completed in 1912 and was the largest concrete railroad bridge in the world. It was built by Pacific Portland Cement Company to transport limestone from a quarry near Cool seven miles to Auburn to connect with the Southern Pacific Rail lines. Service ended in 1939, the rails were scrapped in 1941 for the war effort and today the bridge is used by hikers, runners and equestrians as part of the 100-mile Western States Trail linking Squaw Valley and Auburn.

All fairgoers are encouraged to vote for the People's Choice Award during the fair, ballots may be obtained at the Friends of the Fair Desk. Placer County has attained this popular prize many times in recent years. The State Fair runs through July 29.

Drought could send food prices to record levels

By Joshua Zumbrun and Mark Drajem, Bloomblerg

Cloudless skies seldom look so ominous.

A worst-in-a-generation drought from Indiana to Arkansas to California is damaging crops and rural economies and threatening to drive food prices to record levels.

Agriculture, though a small part of the $15.5 trillion U.S. economy, had been one of the most resilient industries in the past three years as the country struggled to recover from the recession.

“It might be a $50 billion event for the economy as it blends into everything over the next four quarters,” said Michael Swanson, agricultural economist at Wells Fargo & Co., the largest commercial agriculture lender. “Instead of retreating from record highs, food prices will advance.”

The U.S. Department of Agriculture declared July 11 that more than 1,000 counties in 26 states are natural-disaster areas, the biggest such declaration ever.

The designation makes farmers and ranchers in affected counties — about a third of those in the entire country — eligible for low-interest loans to help manage the drought, wildfires or other disasters.

Corn rose Monday to the highest in 10 months while soybeans increased to the costliest since 2008.

Read the whole story

Great Gatsby Gala benefits TY&FS

The Great Gatsby Gala is Aug. 11 at MontBleu in Stateline.

All proceeds benefit Tahoe Youth & Family Services.

The $50 ticket includes dinner, dancing, and one libation. Cocktails start at 6:30pm, dinner at 7pm.

Tickets may be purchased online.