Concussion not something to take for granted



Helmets can help, but they are no guarantee a skier won't sustain a concussion. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

By Kathryn Reed

While football players are getting a ton of ink when it comes to concussions, these head injuries aren't limited to those on the gridiron.

Skiers and snowboarders – and not just the professionals – are susceptible to concussions. It could be the result of catching an edge and taking a hard fall, or a trick gone wrong in the terrain park.

Car accidents, falling on ice or any surface, or getting hit in the head – they all can result in a concussion.

The good news is doctors are more aware of the symptoms and are taking the issue more seriously than they used to. The bad news is there is no definitive test to determine if someone

has a concussion.

A panel of medical experts from Barton Health on Sept. 13 spoke before a group of nearly 80 people at Lake Tahoe Community College about how dangerous a concussion is, the symptoms and what can be done to recover fully from one.

Terry Orr, an orthopedic surgeon with Barton who has worked with the U.S. ski and snowboard teams, rattled off several statistics:

· Two-thirds of those with a concussion don’t think it’s a serious condition

· 41 percent don’t want to be taken out of play

· 36 percent don’t think they had a concussion.

He said this is why it’s necessary for coaches and parents to know the signs and symptoms of concussions.

Neck pain, double vision, severe headaches, weakness or tingling in arms and legs, seizures and being unconscious are some of the symptoms. A person might stagger after the impact, have a blank look or stare, be disoriented or confused.

Depression, seizures and cognitive impairment can be long-term complications.

Players in the National Football League have proven why concussions need to be taken seriously. The Journal of the American Medical Association this summer revealed that of the 111 brains of deceased players it examined 110 had the degenerative brain disease CTE or chronic traumatic encephalopathy.

Those involved need to understand that a concussion without proper care can lead to long-term brain damage. That’s why that college scholarship or championship needs to become secondary to the player’s health. A concussed player should

never be allowed to return to the field, and instead should be seen by a medical professional.

“We want people to recover,” Jeremy Vandehurst with Barton Health said. “Return to play should be gradual.”

Barton has protocols in place to determine when a player can participate in her sport again. It could take a week, could take longer. It’s up to the individual’s progress.

Primary care doctors are often the ones who first see the concussed patients. There is a list of 22 symptoms they look for. What the initial exam reveals will determine the course of treatment.

Calstar flying again in S. Lake Tahoe

Calstar is back in business after being grounded because of radio issues.

“All the radios and navigation equipment have been working fine after the repair by Airbus and we have completed several flights this week without any difficulty,” Bryan Pond with the air ambulance company told *Lake Tahoe News.*

The Airbus H135/P3 based out of Lake Tahoe Airport was taken **out of service** in mid-August because the radio frequency was not working properly. This became a safety issue.

CareFlight filled in for the local air ambulance in the interim.

— Lake Tahoe News staff report

Efforts to control Calif. housing costs go to guv

By Alexei Koseff and Taryn Luna, Sacramento Bee

A multi-bill package aimed at addressing California's housing affordability crisis headed to Gov. Jerry Brown Friday as lawmakers prepared to draw the curtain on the 2017 legislative year.

Legislative leaders had previously reached agreement with Gov. Jerry Brown over measures to generate money for low-income housing development, fund housing programs and streamline the approval process for new projects, and he is expected to sign them.

"It's a crisis and we want to act like it," Sen. Toni Atkins, D-San Diego, said of her measure to impose a real estate transaction fee.

Read the whole story

Students at the core of

LTCC’s improvement plan

By Kathryn Reed

Every decision made at Lake Tahoe Community College is done so with the same common denominator – students.

There was a time when the philosophy in higher education was that students had the right to fail. After all, they are adults and can make decisions that may not allow them to succeed.

LTCC President Jeff DeFranco wants none of that. He believes in a student-first scenario where the mantra is students have the right to succeed and that it is those working at the college who must ensure the resources are in place for that to happen.

“We are doing everything we can to make sure they succeed,” DeFranco said. Success means getting them to move onto a four-year university, or graduating with an associate’s degree, or having the skills to find gainful employment.

DeFranco was speaking Sept. 14 to a full house at the Duke Theatre. This was his inaugural convocation where he gave the state of college address. With fall quarter slated to start Monday, this was an opportunity for faculty, staff and the community to hear where the college has been and is going in the short and long term.

DeFranco took over the presidency earlier this year. And while the groundwork was already laid for some of what he spoke about, he is also eager to break new ground and set goals that will define his time in office.

“Public education is a great equalizer,” he said. He spoke of his roots; his great-grandparents moving to the United States from Italy. A great-uncle was the first in his family to

attend higher education – which was at a community college. This paved the path for his mom to go to UC Davis.



The university center at LTCC will help to redefine the South Lake Tahoe college. Photo/LTN

While higher education may be the norm for many families, it is still a novelty for others, while some think it is out of reach.

In 2012-13, 29.1 percent of LTCC's student population was comprised of first generation college students. Last school year that percentage was 34.9 percent. Many are Hispanic; a reflection of the community at large.

LTCC supports Deferred Arrival for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and has students who are threatened by potential changes to the federal law.

While getting more students is always on the agenda, ensuring the ones who are enrolled complete their studies and on time are major goals.

Community college enrollment is dropping across the country, and LTCC is not immune to this trend.

One focus is to get more local high school students to attend LTCC. Right now about 35 percent of South Tahoe High grads go to LTCC. The goal is to capture 50 percent. The college also is making a concerted effort to lure Whittell, North Tahoe and Incline high school students, too.

DeFranco talked about “promise grants” – something that was brought up **in March** at a board meeting. Local students would receive one year free at LTCC. Funding for it, though, is still not in place. However, the president wants to launch it in fall 2019.

“If we don’t do this, we will not be serving our community and we will be left behind,” DeFranco said.

Physically, the college is going through a bit of a renaissance thanks to Measure F, the $55 million bond approved by voters in November 2014. The university center, where students will be able obtain four-year degrees via partnerships with other institutions, is going up rapidly next to where DeFranco was speaking. The plaza outside the library is a new gathering spot – and one with heated walkways. The parking lot is no longer dilapidated; plus, it conforms to ADA regulations.

Upgrades to classrooms are coming.

WiFi throughout campus is much improved, with cellphone boosters in the budget.

Transportation is seen as a barrier to college, and was made more pronounced by last winter’s epic snowfall. Starting in October, LTCC students will be provided free passes for the local bus. This is a product of ADVANCE, a collaborative network of local organizations, government offices, and employers that work together to support adults in meeting

education, career, and other personal goals. Tahoe Transportation District wants to make the college a hub. A bus shelter on campus is on the drawing board.

By 2022, LTCC intends to have **housing on campus** available for students.

LTCC wants to be a partner with other entities in town. Revamping how the theater is used in one way. TedX South Lake Tahoe will be at the college at the end of the month and Valhalla is putting on the play “Joint Chiefs” this year at the theater.

Besides starting a new school year, the most immediate concern of the college’s is to retain its accreditation. The review committee from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges will be on campus Oct. 9-12.

While there are plenty of plans in place for LTCC, the last major **strategic planning** session was in 2011. DeFranco plans to have a fresh look at the college’s goals in January.

Wind energy has hit a lull in California

By Rob Nikolewski, Los Angeles Times

Which way is the wind blowing in California?

In some respects, wind energy in the state has never been better, but by other measurements growth has hit a lull for the past four years.

The U.S. Department of Energy released its annual report

analyzing technologies and markets for the wind industry, showing that California has installed 5,656 megawatts of utility-scale wind, the fourth highest in the nation.

Read the whole story

Workers from 2 towns expected to lose CalPERS pensions

By Adam Ashton, Sacramento Bee

Ten workers and retirees from government agencies in two far corners of California likely will see their pensions slashed because their employers have not paid bills to the state's largest retirement fund in more than a year.

Trinity County Waterworks District No. 1 west of Redding and Niland Sanitary District from Imperial County are in line to become the third and fourth government agencies to break with CalPERS over the past 12 months in a manner that shortchanges their retirees.

The CalPERS Board of Administration is scheduled next week to vote on ending contracts with the two small districts because they're in default.

Read the whole story

Tainted water continues to foul Tahoe Keys



Water in several Tahoe Keys lagoons has been tainted by blue-green algae since Aug. 11. Photo/LTN

By Kathryn Reed

Results from the latest water samples in the Tahoe Keys reveal blue-green algae still lurks in the canals.

“Levels of cyanotoxins are still present, but compared to levels detected on Aug. 28 it appears that toxin levels are decreasing,” Mary Fiore-Wagner with Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Sept. 6 is when the last samples were taken. Results came in

Sept. 13.

The toxic levels remain at caution. This means the signs posted throughout the South Lake Tahoe neighborhood will remain. Contact with the contaminated water is a risk to humans and pets.

“The cooling temperatures we have experienced the last few weeks are an environmental factor that is likely helping to limit cyanobacteria growth and algal blooms,” Fiore-Wagner said.

Water will continue to be monitored until the threat is gone.

Blue-green algae occurs naturally. Scientists don’t know what causes it or makes it goes away.

Creativity helps bring companies to Nevada

By Nicole Raz, Las Vegas Review-Journal

What actually happens when businesses look to relocate to Nevada?

It usually starts with a phone call, which leads to a series of other phone calls to coordinate the process, said Ryan Smith, business development manager with the Governor’s Office of Economic Development.

He said the call either comes from somebody working within a company – usually from a tax incentive division or real estate division, or even an executive-level decision maker, depending on company size – or from a third-party site selector working

on behalf of a company.

Everything after that call just depends, Smith said, because each company is looking for something different.

Read the whole story

Zinke directs more aggressive approach to prevent wildfires

By Associated Press

WASHINGTON – Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke on Tuesday directed all land managers and park superintendents to be more aggressive in cutting down small trees and underbrush to prevent wildfires as the smoke-choked West faces one of the worst fire seasons in a decade.

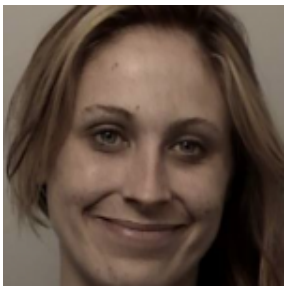
In a memo, Zinke said the Trump administration will take a new approach and work proactively to prevent fires "through aggressive and scientific fuels reduction management" to save lives, homes and wildlife habitat.

Wildfires are chewing across dried-out Western forests and grassland. To date, 47,700 wildfires have burned more than 8 million acres across the country, with much of the devastation in California, Oregon and Montana, Zinke said.

Read the whole story

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1 arrest in EDC stolen vehicle caper



Stevie Tucker

Eight stolen vehicles were recovered and a woman was arrested last week in El Dorado County.

Twenty-eight-year-old Stevie Tucker is accused of possessing stolen property.

Among the items found at the Mt. Aukum property was a backhoe that belongs to El Dorado Irrigation District.

This was a joint investigation by the El Dorado County Sheriff's Office, California Highway Patrol and Truckee Police Department.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report