Armstrong to be pacer in Western States run

By James Raia, Sacramento Bee

Eric Byrnes' background as a professional baseball player isn't the only thing that makes him stand out from the field in this weekend's Western States 100-Mile Endurance Run.

Runners are encouraged to have pacers for the final 38 miles beginning at Foresthill. It's often done in two segments, one joining the runner for 16 miles through the river crossing at Ruck a Chuck, the second the final 22 miles to Placer High School in Auburn.

Byrnes' first pacer will be Franz Dill, who has finished the Western States four times and is a neighbor in Half Moon Bay.

His second pacer has a much more recognizable name. Former professional cyclist Lance Armstrong will accompany Byrnes to the finish.

Read the whole story

Meyers hockey academy on solid ice

TRPA board approves facility

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – Hockey before education. That is ultimately what made the difference for the Tahoe Hockey Academy in Meyers to move forward.

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Governing Board on June 22 voted unanimously to allow a 16.4-acre parcel at the bottom of Old Meyers Grade to be transformed into an elite hockey academy for athletes seeking to play at a Division 1 university or beyond.

"We are going to help a lot of kids achieve their goals. That is the most important thing," Jami James, founder and vice president of Tahoe Hockey Academy, told *Lake Tahoe News* after the meeting.

As a kid James came to Tahoe to go to different camps. He said he played hockey and baseball at the professional level. The Berkeley native said he loves Tahoe and wants to give back, to help youngsters, to essentially repay the people who helped him when he was an at-risk kid.

While education is a large component of what will go on at the academy, hockey is the reason youth ages 13 to 20 will attend. All classes will be online. No instructors will be at the facility.

Opponents argued this is a school, while proponents said the California Department of Education does not define this type of facility as being a school. The parcel is zoned for a group facility. If this were deemed to primarily be a school, it would not be an allowed use per zoning regulations.

At build-out, which is probably going to take a few years,

eight adults will be employed, with 92 players attending. Dorms will be built, with construction expected to start this summer. James told *LTN* the school will start this fall, but players are likely to be housed elsewhere until construction is finished.

The academy will follow the academic year, with summer being reserved for camps – including this summer.

The project generated controversy when last month it was on the bi-state regulatory agency's consent agenda. Letters and phone calls prompted staff to table the item for one month and bring it out into the open with a public hearing. It was originally on the consent agenda because two previous projects – in 1995 and 2011 – had been approved, and the academy is an allowed use.

Land use, parking, traffic, coverage, noise and lighting were the major issues raised.

The 10 people who spoke on Wednesday were almost split between supporters and opponents.

The uproar generated change, including moving the tennis court away from the nearest neighbor. It will be frozen in the winter to have training onsite. Resident Rick Van Horn is worried any chemicals used in the coils for freezing purposes could leak. He asked for the soil and groundwater to be tested.

No outside lights will be used to enable play or training after dark.

No student is expected to have a vehicle. Vans will transport the players to the ice rink in South Lake Tahoe.

Earmarked by the academy is $150,000 in upgrades for that facility.

All of the board members who spoke were complimentary of the

academy, saying this is good for the region, will benefit the economy and that one day the South Shore may be home to Olympic hockey players just as it is for skiers and snowboarders.

Night bike races in Meyers

Lake Tahoe Golf Course in Meyers is becoming a cycling venue on June 24.

Tahoe Games Bike Nights is a cross country race featuring illuminated pedaling across varied terrain. Helmets, bike lights, headlamps, glow sticks, bike decor and costumes are strongly encouraged. The course will be designed for ages 10 and up.

Sierra Cycle Works will have demo bikes and raffle prizes for competitors.

Registration will open at 7pm, with races beginning at 9pm. Cost is $20. There will be three heats broken down by classes. Awards and an after-party in the clubhouse will follow the race. The next race will be July 29.

Lake Tahoe Boats & Brews at

Tahoe Keys

The inaugural Lake Tahoe Boats & Brews boat Show is June 24-26 in the Tahoe Keys Village.

The three-day event is free. People will be able to check out a wide array of new boats, water toys, and an assortment of local and regional vendors.

The South Lake Tahoe Yacht Club will be sponsoring a brew fest on Saturday from 11am-7pm. For $20 participants will be able to sample unlimited local and regional craft beers. A portion of the funds raised will benefit Bread & Broth 4 Kids' program.

The event will be at the corner of Tahoe Keys Boulevard and Venice Drive in South Lake Tahoe. The Boat Show hours are Friday, 1-7pm; Saturday, 11am-7pm; and Sunday, 11am-5pm.

Tips to be safe on 'red flag' days

South Lake Tahoe Fire Department is implementing the "red flag" program for a third year to help inform and educate citizens on fire danger.

Red flags will be flown at local fire stations to inform the public when the weather creates a fire warning.

Extra personnel will be added for an aggressive fire attack.

Tips during these times:

- Avoid outdoor burning, such campfires, or any other open flame. Even grilling is not advised.
- Dispose of cigarettes and other smoking materials into fire safe containers. Tossing smoldering cigarettes onto the ground should be avoided.
- Properly store flammable materials such as gasoline, alcohol, paint, lighter, and matches. These materials may reach their critical points during hot weather and can possibly result to fire.
- Be extremely careful when using and fueling chain saws, lawn mowers, weed eaters and other lawn care equipment. High heat conditions make ignition of the fuel vapors more likely. Find shade if possible and allow the machinery to cool if it has been running. Also avoid welding in dangerously dry conditions, as the sparks can easily ignite the dry vegetation around you.
- Be careful where you park your vehicles. The hot underside of a car or truck filled with gasoline parked over dead grass or leaves is an explosion waiting to happen.

SLT putting on adventure camps for kids

South Lake Tahoe Recreation Department is offering a South Tahoe Adventure Camp for children ages 6-12 years on Monday-Friday 8:30am to 5:30pm through Aug. 19.

The mission is to provide an active, healthy, and safe environment for youth to learn and play. The focus is on inspiring a love for the outdoors through exposure to the natural playground in and around the Tahoe region.

The structured programs include a strong emphasis on promoting and recognizing positive behavior, fostering meaningful friendships, and developing children’s self-confidence and leadership skills.

The cost is $35/day or $150/week. There is an additional cost for some trips at no more than $10 per child.

For more information, call 530.542.6099 or kpeacock@cityofslt.us.

Truckee Air Show ready to take off

The Truckee Tahoe Air Show & Family Festival is flying into its fifth year on July 9.

This year’s theme is Space, Science and Beyond, an exploration into STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.

Keeping with the theme, the air show’s grand marshal will be former NASA astronaut and retired U.S. Air Force test pilot Karol “Bo” Bobko. Bobko became a NASA astronaut in September 1969 and was a crew member on the highly successful Skylab Medical Experiments Altitude Test (SMEAT). The test was a 56-day ground simulation of the Skylab mission, enabling crewmen to collect medical experiments baseline data and evaluate equipment, operations and procedures.

The air show will include world-renowned performers Spencer Suderman (Guinness World Record holder for inverted flat spins), Rich Perkins soaring full speed in the Fire Cat jet,

Danny Sorenson with his own designed and built BF9-2 biplane, and Bill Braack racing his Smoke-n-Thunder Jet Car against an airplane.

Huge warbirds will be on display and modern aircraft too.

The show is from 9am-4pm.

Best landscape designs don’t require hours of maintenance

By Brenda Richardson, Washington Post

Pity the poor yard. It receives constant care and attention during the spring and summer, but let a few dry spells or heavy downpours mar its beauty and efficiency and suddenly it’s the bad guy.

Maybe it’s time to hit the reset button. Adjustments to your landscape can conserve water, prevent erosion and produce a healthy yard that you can be proud of for its low impact on the environment.

Sustainable design is the hottest trend for residential landscapes, according to a recent survey by the American Society of Landscape Architects. The results revealed that members expect the greatest consumer demand for residential outdoor-design elements that are environmentally sustainable, reduce water costs and require little maintenance.

Read the whole story

USFS seeks input from users of forest lands

The Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest is conducting recreation visitor surveys throughout the summer and into the fall.

The information will be used for forest and local community tourism planning. The goal is to provide the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest recreation staff with an estimate of how many people actually visit the forest and what activities they engage in. The survey results will also show levels of visitor satisfaction and the impact forest visitors have on the local economy.

Questions include: where people recreated on the forest, how many people they traveled with, how long they were on the forest, what other recreation sites they visited, and how satisfied they were with the facilities and services provided. About a third of the visitors will be asked to complete an additional survey on recreation spending during their trip.

The interview lasts about 8 to 12 minutes.

Traffic counters on roads are collecting information about how many vehicles access different parts of the forest for recreational activities.

Sierra streams take dangerous turn

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

Charles Williams’ hike went from sunny to scary in an instant.

He had been hiking all day on the Pacific Crest Trail when he reached the south fork of the Kings River near Mather Pass, south of Bishop.

Williams, 46, of Quincy is an avid hiker with high-altitude experience and while the stream looked daunting he thought finding the right location would allow him to cross without incident.

So he hiked along the river until he found a spot where two islands divided the stream into smaller channels and started to cross.

Then, almost as quickly as he got swept away, the river spit him out of the current and close to some overhanging brush.

Read the whole story