U.S. youth eighth in Nordic team relay

By USSA

LILLEHAMMER, Norway – The Winter Youth Olympic Games closed the cross country competitions with a Nordic mixed team relay. The U.S. team included one female cross country skier, Hannah Halvorsen (Truckee), one male cross country skier, Hunter Wonders (Anchorage) and one nordic combined male, Ben Loomis (Eau Claire, Wis). The U.S. team finished eighth overall in a 3×3.3k race on Friday.

Russia won the Nordic mixed team relays, 21.1 seconds over Norway who stole second from Germany by just 0.4 seconds.

Loomis, Wonders and Halvorsen worked together in this unique event in its inaugural year. They each had strong individual legs, which scored them in eighth overall. Wonders had the second fastest leg of the men's cross country ski leg, just 15.2 seconds behind Norway's Vebjoern Hegdal.

Off-highway vehicle grants subject of open house

The U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit is hosting an open house Feb. 25 to provide information and seek public input on developing three preliminary applications for California's Off-Highway Vehicle Cooperative Funds grants.

Grants would provide for OHV education and information, law enforcement patrols, resource and use monitoring, planning for

winter travel management, and protection for natural and cultural resources in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

The open house is from 5-7pm at the USFS office, 35 College Drive, South Lake Tahoe.

There will be no formal presentation. Staff members will be available to explain the proposals and answer questions.

For more information, go **online** or email Jacob Quinn at jmquinn@fs.fed.us.

Class to discuss pests in the landscape, garden

University of Nevada Cooperative Extension and certified master gardeners have teamed up with Washoe County Regional Parks and Open Space to offer Gardening in Nevada: The Bartley Ranch Series.

Classes are free and run 6-8pm every Tuesday through March 29, at Bartley Ranch Regional Park, 6000 Bartley Ranch Road in Reno.

The next three classes are:

- Feb. 23: Dealing with Pests in the Landscape and Garden.
- March 1: Training and Pruning Fruit Trees.
- March 8: Landscape Gardening for Wildlife.

For more information, call 775.784.4848 or email mastergardeners@unce.unr.edu.

Truckee lends hand to South Shore on passing tax initiative dedicated for recreation

By Kathryn Reed

Commitment, dedication, a cadre of volunteers, a clear and convincing message, and money are some of the factors that can make a difference in a tax initiative getting the requisite number of voters to say yes.

Three key figures in Truckee's 2014 passage of a quarter-cent sales tax hike spoke to a group of South Shore recreation advocates on Wednesday. Measure R is projected to generate $1.2 million a year, with all of that money dedicated to trails.

With South Lake Tahoe contemplating asking voters in November to raise taxes, the Feb. 17 discussion was an opportunity for those outside the political spectrum to learn what it takes to put on a successful campaign.

Tony Lashbrook, town manager, spoke volumes about the need to have a partner group to work with. In this case is it was the nonprofit Truckee Trails Foundation headed by Allison Pedley. Then it took someone to lead the campaign committee who could be trusted and get the job done. That fell to Paco Lindsay, who has lived in Truckee for decades and owns a bike shop there.

The nonprofit was formed out of the town doing a recreation

plan. It is an eight-member volunteer board, with a part time executive director, and more than 1,000 members.



Tony Lashbrook, from left, Paco Lindsay and Allison Pedley talk Feb. 17 about how Truckee passed a tax for trails. Photo/LTN

The three outlined how it is necessary to get as many people engaged as possible – even the opposition. It means listening as well as educating. It included convincing business owners that they would not lose sales with higher taxes because a better trail network would mean more people coming to town. Ultimately the measure passed with 76 percent of the votes.

Advertising was targeted. Signs, mailers and other material were of a high caliber. On election day people were monitoring precincts and calls were made to those who had yet to vote.

“Communication is what it’s about,” Lindsay said.

A consultant was hired to help provide professional

assistance. The campaign cost about $35,000. That money came from small and large donations from community members.

While Truckee has no certain way to track the return on investment with the increase of trails in the area, Lashbrook said the town has broken hotel tax records for the last four years and this was during three horribly dry winters.

With it costing about $1 million per mile of paved trail, the increase to the network will be a slow, methodical process. But it was pointed out that the income from the measure could be used as leverage to get grants.

A sizeable chunk of the cash is being used to plow some of the paths, which the three said they don't ever see changing based on the use of the trails in winter.

The trio admitted the whole idea of paving trails and not just leaving them dirt has been controversial. The initial survey regarding the tax hike didn't have a majority saying yes. While it was work to be successful, they were encouraging to the South Shore contingent that the end result justified the effort that went into it.

As for South Lake Tahoe, the Recreation Commission has created a subcommittee what will work with the City Council's subcommittee to look at how a 2 percent increase in the transient occupancy tax that might generate $2 million a year could be spent – a new rec facility? sheet of ice? trails? something else?

Squaw youth takes 13th in slalom

By USSA

HAFJELL, Norway – Keely Cashman (Squaw Valley) had another solid finish at the Winter Youth Olympic Games, taking 13th in Thursday's slalom.

Aline Danioth of Switzerland grabbed her fourth YOG medal in four races, dominating the field by 1.59 seconds. Following Danioth was Ali Nullmeyer of Canada in second and Meta Hrovat of Slovenia in third.

Cashman has finished in the top 15 of each YOG event she has competed, taking 14th in giant slalom and 10th in super G.

"Keely has gained great experience from this amazing international championship against a strong field," said women's FIS NTG coach Thomas Erhard. "She has performed as one of the top two (in her age class) in all the races, She never gave up on tough courses with slick conditions, showing the 'fight' it will take to progress!"

Modeled after the Olympic Games, the Youth Olympic Games debuted its winter event in 2012 at Innsbruck, Austria.

N.J. officials again ask court to legalize sports

betting

By Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — New Jersey officials resumed their fight to legalize sports betting at casinos and racetracks when a federal appeals court in Philadelphia weighed the issue for the third time on Wednesday.

Proponents hope New Jersey will be permitted to legalize sports betting to boost revenues for the state and its ailing casinos and racetracks. But they have some formidable opponents: the NCAA and the four major pro sports leagues, the NFL, NBA, NHL and Major League Baseball.

The appeals court has twice before said the New Jersey law that authorized some types of sports betting violates a federal sports protection act passed in 1992. However, the full Third Circuit Court of Appeals has agreed to rehear the last ruling by a three-judge panel. The arguments are set for late Wednesday morning.

The leagues and NCAA, in addition to arguing that federal law prohibits New Jersey's actions, have said that expanding legal sports gambling will compromise the integrity of their games and lead to more incidences of game-fixing.

Sports betting supporters have called the leagues' stance hypocritical, saying the leagues condone and profit from sports fantasy leagues in which participants assemble rosters of players from different teams and compete against

Currently, only Nevada offers betting on individual games, and Delaware offers multigame parlay betting in which players must pick several games correctly to win. Hundreds of billions of dollars are bet illegally on sports annually.

Several court rulings in the New Jersey case have sided with

the leagues and NCAA in holding that New Jersey's law repealing prohibitions against sports gambling amounts to state authorization, which conflicts with a 1992 federal law.

The state argued that two 2-1 rulings by the 3rd Circuit, one in 2013 and the other in August, offer opposing interpretations, making the issue unresolved.

In its petition for a rehearing, attorneys for the state noted that 3rd Circuit Judge Julio Fuentes wrote in his dissent from the August ruling that the two decisions are "precisely the opposite." The first held that New Jersey could repeal laws against sports betting without violating federal law, while the second held that doing so would violate it.

Life saving course being offered in SLT

The South Lake Tahoe Recreation Department is offering American Red Cross certified lifeguard training.

Participants will be trained and certified to provide care for breathing and cardiac emergencies, injuries, and sudden illness until emergency services take over.

Participants must be at least 15, able to swim 300 yards continuously while demonstrating breathing control and rhythmic breathing, tread water for two minutes using legs only, and complete a timed event. The class includes seven hours and 25 minutes of online learning and 20 hours of hands-on instruction.

Upon successful completion, participants will receive the

American Red Cross certificate for lifeguarding/first aid/CPR/AED, which is valid for two years.

Precourse and swim test is by appointment, call 530.542.6059

Classes are March 14-22, Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4-8:30pm. Cost is $225. Register **online**.

Outdoor sleep systems for adventurous couples

By Wes Siler, Outside

Camping: the best third date in the world. But bring the wrong sleeping bag or mattress and you might get the cold shoulder—quite literally. Fortunately, couple's camping gear is suddenly becoming a hot segment. We've tested the latest equipment and are here to tell you what works.

The go-to options, at least when a car is involved, have always been one of those cheap, inflatable air beds, paired with a cheap, synthetic double sleeping bag. Both likely purchased at Walmart. There's a number of problems with this stuff, starting with size and weight and ending with poor insulation.

Here's the kind of double sleeping bag both you, I, and our ex-girlfriends likely have experience with. It packs down to roughly the size of a beer keg and weighs a positively unbelievable 16.5 pounds. Worth sacrificing half your trunk space, given its zero-degree Fahrenheit advertised temperature rating? Not even close. I've spent many nights in this thing and can report with considerable disappointment that it sleeps

cold if temperatures even approach freezing.

Read the whole story

Truckee youth 13th in cross-country cross

By USSA

LILLEHAMMER, Norway – At the Winter Youth Olympic Games debut of cross-country cross, Hannah Halvorsen (Truckee) and Hunter Wonders (Anchorage) finished 13th and 30th, respectively.

The new cross country discipline challenges skiers agility and poise as they raced through bumps, jumps and slalom turns throughout the 1.5K freestyle course through the Birkebeineren Cross-Country Stadium.

“The cross-country cross was a really fun event,” said U.S. Coach Adam St. Pierre. “FIS is always trying to increase the excitement for spectators and racers and we are likely to see more races in this format in the future.”

In the women’s race, Sweden’s Moa Lundgren dominated throughout the qualifiers and semifinals and was able to snatch first in the finals from teammate Johanna Hagstroem by 1.74 seconds. France’s Laura Chamiot Maitral finished third.

Halvorsen started the cross-country cross with a strong qualifier, finishing 10th, which advanced her to the semifinal heats. But in the semifinals, Halvorsen was fifth, denying her a spot in the final heat.

“Hannah missed out on a spot in the final by a slim margin,”

St. Pierre said. “She lost some momentum in the uphill slalom part of the course, but it was a fun way to start the week.”

In the men’s cross-country cross competition, Korea’s Magnus Kim ruled the course. The son of a Korean mother and a Norwegian father, Magnus was undefeated throughout the day winning the qualifiers, his semifinal heat and the final heat to claim victory just 1.17 seconds ahead of Norway’s Thomas Helland Larsen. Finland’s Lauri Mannila finished third.

Wonders snagged a spot in the semifinal heats after qualifying 30th. The semifinal heat consisted of 10 athletes skiing on the tactical course, where Wonders ended up ninth and was not able to advance to the finals. He finished 30th overall.

“Hunter was excited to qualify and skied well enough in his semifinal to move up in the overall results,” said St. Pierre. “His semifinal was pretty tight, with all 10 athletes skiing in a close pack.”

Pneumonia outbreak prompts bighorn sheep killing

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

Sharpshooters firing shotguns from a helicopter killed 24 bighorn sheep on Sunday and Monday in an unprecedented attempt to contain an outbreak of pneumonia in the herd.

According to the Nevada Department of Wildlife it’s the first time wildlife managers in the state have taken such drastic measures to prevent the spread of pneumonia among bighorn sheep.

“This is truly an unfortunate measure,” said Nevada Department of Wildlife Director Tony Wasley in a written statement. “But as the extent of this disease event has become clearer to us, we have determined that it is the proper and responsible course of action.”

Read the whole story