Fun run with Christmas theme

The Jingle Jog Fun Run is Dec. 13 at 10am at Lake Tahoe Community College.

Dress for the occasion in your wackiest holiday gear.

There will be a 5K race and a kids fun run.

Prizes will be awarded for best race times.

Registration begins at 9am and races will begin at 10am. Registration for the kids fun run is $10 and the 5K is $29. Proceeds benefit youth activity scholarships through Athletes United.

For more information and to register, go online.

Path puts users in woods, off major Tahoe road



Cyclists no longer have to ride on Lake Tahoe Boulevard on the South Shore. Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

Sometimes riding on Lake Tahoe Boulevard between Highway 50 and the Angora burn area can be an adrenaline rush. The problem is it has nothing to do with pedaling and everything to do with drivers.

With the vehicle lanes being narrow and the shoulder non-existent, it can be scary with cars whizzing by at speeds topping 55 mph, even though the posted speed limit is 50 mph.

Now there is an alternative to that harrowing ride. A 1.7-mile Class 1 bike path was laid down this fall. It essentially follows what had been a dirt path mountain bikers would use.

It starts at Viking Way at the base of South Tahoe High School, meanders through the woods – with singed trees from the 2007 Angora Fire still visible, and ends at Sawmill Road.

The nearly $800,000 trail is on U.S. Forest Service land, operated by El Dorado County under a special use permit.

“There is no plan to extend a Class 1 bike path,” Donaldo

Palaroan, senior civil engineer with El Dorado County, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “However, we do plan to construct bike lanes toward Clear View Drive where the bike lane currently ends. So, a Class 2 bike lane will be extended from Clear View Drive/Mule Deer Circle to Sawmill Road to connect with the Lake Tahoe Boulevard bike path and the Sawmill 2 bike path.”



Erosion control measures line the trail.

While road bike riders traditionally prefer the road to a path because they can go faster and not be encumbered by other users, they have been seen on this trail.

“Bikers are hypersensitive to 3,000-pound-plus metallic objects lumbering down the road at or above of 50 mph while rocking out to Axle Rose and Slash, particularly when those objects are within an arm’s reach,” Garrett Villanueva, USFS trails specialist, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “So, I think some roadies will use the bike path and I think recreational or less experienced bicyclists will tend to use the path exclusively.”

Mountain bikers are also using the trail. This gets them to dirt trails in the Tahoe Mountain area. A sign at the Sawmill end includes a permanent map that lists the various trails in the area.

Walkers, dogs and inline skaters have also been populating the

trail.

At the Sawmill juncture people have the choice to get onto Lake Tahoe Boulevard without any lane markings or to cross the boulevard to get onto Sawmill Road. Eventually the county is going to reduce Lake Tahoe Boulevard to one lane in each direction from Sawmill to Tahoe Mountain Road.

At the crosswalk there is a button that will trigger a flashing yellow light to warn motorists people are in the road.



The new path connects to the Sawmill Road trail.

Once across people have the opportunity to be on a trail for seven-tenths of a mile along Sawmill Road that was built in 2012. In 2015, the rest of the trail will be constructed. In total it will be 1.3 miles. The second half will remain on the same side as the current trail (which wasn't always the plan) and has already been outlined. The erosion control work for the trail was done this year.

Once that section is done it's possible to be on a bike trail from Meyers to STHS.

Future connections include going from STHS to the Y.

There is limited parking at Sawmill Road and Lake Tahoe Boulevard.

Winter Trails Day in Truckee

The 20th annual Winter Trails Day is Jan. 10 at Tahoe Donner Cross Country Ski Area.

REI and Tahoe Donner are coordinating the free event in Truckee.

Winter Trails Day offers those new to snow sports the chance to try snowshoeing and cross country skiing for free, and discover the great fitness and social benefits with these easy-to-learn winter activities. There will be free trail passes for pre-registered participants ($5 onsite suggested donation to the Truckee High School Nordic Team), mini snowshoe and cross country ski lessons, interpretive snowshoe hikes, education, product demos, food, and entertainment.

Bring your equipment. Vendors will have equipment to try, but must restrict time of use as supplies are limited.

The event is from 11am-3pm.

Go online to register.

Wet week ahead for Lake Tahoe

The National Weather Service in Reno has issued a winter storm watch for this week for elevations above 7,000 feet in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

The watch is from Dec. 2 at 10am though Dec. 4 at 4am.

The wet system is expected to drop snow at lake level. High temperatures, though, are predicted to be in the 40s in South Lake Tahoe. This means moisture could partly be in the form of rain.

By Thursday the snow should be tapering off. Roads are expected to be slick and visibility limited, especially over the passes. For current road conditions, click on the state icons on the home page of *Lake Tahoe News*.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Crews race to mulch barren King Fire terrain

By Ed Fletcher, Sacramento Bee

Contractors working for the U.S. Forest Service are racing against Mother Nature to spread straw mulch over 1,200 acres of fire-scorched mountainside exposed by the King fire.

As several storms arrive in the next week, forest officials fear a big, wet one will hit. Without the underbrush and plant

material that normally cover the forest, massive erosion will wash away roads, fill reservoirs and harm other critical infrastructure.

The September wildfire burned 97,717 acres. While much of the damaged forest survived with the trees' canopy largely intact, an estimated 30 percent of the damage is severe, said Mary Moore, a key member of the team assessing the damage. Of that area, 1,200 acres were identified as key to protect through an aerial drop of mulch on the steep slopes near roads, waterways and other assets.

Read the whole story

Dirt roads off-limits in Eldorado National Forest

The annual seasonal closure of as dirt roads in the Eldorado National Forest takes effect this week.

Rainfall, soil moisture, road and trail conditions, and weather forecasts are factors that trigger a seasonal closure earlier than Jan. 1. The roads will remain closed until at least April 1.

The seasonal closure is designed to protect roadbeds and watersheds from damage and to protect water quality. A minimal three-month closure period from January 1 through March 30 was designated for the harshest part of the winter in the Eldorado National Forest Travel Management Plan. To maintain flexibility, going into the dirt road closure early or extending the closure is determined based on current conditions at the time. Last year, conditions were so dry the

roads were only closed for the mandatory three-month period.

Roads subject to seasonal closure are identified on a map that is free-of-charge and available at all Eldorado National Forest offices and online.

Apple Hill Christmas trees survive drought

By Debbie Arrington, Sacramento Bee

Drought realities haven’t evaporated the holiday spirit on Apple Hill.

“Conifers are pretty drought-tolerant trees,” noted Dee Kobervig of the El Dorado County Christmas Tree Growers. “A lot of trees we grow up here don’t need that much water.”

That list includes Douglas firs, blue spruces, Scotch pines, Nordmann firs and native incense cedars; they’ve lived through the drought with their green needles intact.

“My silver tips and my red firs are doing really well,” Kobervig added. “The incense cedars are native to our area and very, very drought tolerant. This year, they’re beautiful trees.”

Recent rain came just in time to plump up the crop for prospective buyers.

Read the whole story

Mackinaw, browns biting in Lake Tahoe

By Cal Kellogg, Fish Sniffer

If you would like to land some mackinaw and have a shot at hooking a jumbo brown, now is the time to hit Lake Tahoe. The mackinaw are hitting near the bottom in 100 to 200 feet of water, while the browns are cruising the middle depths assaulting immature kokanee.

“My clients have been catching limits of mackinaw every day. We are slow trolling and bouncing the bottom in 150 to 200 feet of water,” related Gene St. Denis of Blue Ribbon Charters. “Minnows and dodgers are doing the trick for macks. The average fish goes 3 to 6 pounds and some larger fish to 12 pounds have been landed recently.”

Read the whole story

Sullivan strong in Lake Louise downhill

By USSA

LAKE LOUISE, Alberta – Marco Sullivan of Squaw Valley was the American to watch in Saturday’s downhill, holding the top step of the podium for 13 racers, before finally finishing in fifth place.

Wednesday’s training run-winner Kjetil Jansrud of Norway squeaked a first place by Manuel Osborne-Paradis and Guillermo Fayed, who tied for second. It was Sullivan’s best finish in two seasons, since skiing to the podium in Lake Louise in 2012.

The men’s speed team was in Lake Louise for the first speed series of the season with five U.S. Ski Team racers starting: Sullivan, Travis Ganong (Squaw Valley), Steve Nyman (Sundance, Utah), Jared Goldberg (Holladay, Utah) and Bryce Bennett (Squaw Valley).

“I knew it was going to be good snow and I needed to take advantage of that early start number. I didn’t feel the fastest, but I was clean the whole way,” said Sullivan. “I’m one of the veteran guys now and I’m just feeling comfortable racing these days. Nothing is holding me back.”

Athletes praised the course set, which was full of bigger jumps and higher speed than years past. Even with the snowfall canceling the last two training runs, the track was fast and hard, with temperatures dipping into the negatives.

Ganong also skied a solid race, tying for 10th place. In addition, the U.S. athletes had two notable bibbos: Steve Nyman started 44th and finished 16th, and former U.S. Ski Team athlete Wiley Maple wore bib 56th and ended up 22nd.

Rounding out the athletes, Goldberg finished 35th and Bennett in 56th place.

Special events drive skiers to Tahoe slopes



A crowd watches Olympic snowboarders face off at the poker table and the big air jump at High Roller Hold ‘Em at Heavenly. Photo/Heavenly Mountain Resort

By Kathryn Reed

Events have long been said to be an economic force – no matter the location. It’s true for the greater Lake Tahoe Basin as well as the hosting venue.

While it can be hard to put a definitive dollar amount on what the various ski resort events add to the economy, these activities are bringing people to the area who may not otherwise have come. The industry as a whole brings more than $500 million to the basin each season, according to economic

studies.

Events give added value to the passholder and day lift ticket buyer.

“Though I do not have specific numbers, our special events definitely attract locals as well as traveling visitors. Several events do draw tourists to the resort; who plan their trips around these exciting activities,” Cass Walker, spokeswoman for Northstar, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Paul Raymore with Homewood Mountain Resort, said, “These events are really designed to give our customers unique experiences that they wouldn’t normally get.”

Thea Hardy at Sierra-at-Tahoe, said, “These events are important to build excitement during the season and to give back to the community that supports us all year. Whether they are for spectators or not, Sierra-at-Tahoe events are an important way to communicate our mission and to give our guests an extra incentive to connect with Sierra and feel like they are part of its animation.”

Plus, the promotion associated with the various events gives obvious added attention to that particular resort as well as triggers the thought of Lake Tahoe as a whole to people.

“We think that events at our South Shore ski resorts enhance the visitor experience, which creates the potential for social sharing of that experience and/or enticing a visitor toward a repeat visit,” Carol Chaplin, executive director of Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “From the destination differentiation aspect, the events send a brand message. That message boasts the high-energy vibe we have both on and off the slopes. We also know that event marketing helps to heighten awareness and inquisitiveness that might lead to visitation.”

Events also give guests a different view of a resort – more

whimsical, more hardcore – depends on the attraction.

“There is more to Heavenly and South Lake Tahoe than incomparable skiing and beautiful views. Events like these take the resort experience to the next level, where guests can go all in with world-class entertainment, après ski parties, and nonstop casino nightlife,” Liesl Kenney with Heavenly told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Resorts are always looking toward the future. While tradition is important, so is being innovative and having big dreams.

“It is important to continuously create new, unexpected traditions that allow guests to celebrate with each other,” Walker from Northstar said.

Mt. Rose aspires to be an Olympic venue or host an international extreme skiing competition. This could be possible as it is eyed to be one of the few resorts that could host the Olympic men’s downhill.

Homewood would also like to host more high-profile ski/snowboard racing events/competitions.

“Homewood has a racing heritage we’d like to bring back,” Raymore told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Ski resorts were asked to share what they believe are the top three events for this season.

Northstar:

- **Bubbles on the Slopes**

New this winter, Northstar will host *tōst*, the celebratory culinary tradition that redefines the art of the daily toast. Celebrating the mountains, Lake Tahoe and the tradition of toasting to friends and family, Northstar invites guests to raise their flutes and sip bubbles each day on the mountain at

2pm.

- **Mountain Table**

Epicureans are invited to discover the essence of Northstar’s laid-back California luxury through Mountain Table, the new mountaintop culinary experience at Zephyr Lodge, which features an entire menu of California-sourced ingredients. Meals will be paired with regional artisan wines, craft beers, and distilled spirits. Each Mountain Table dinner will donate proceeds to one of North Lake Tahoe’s nonprofit foundations. Dinners are: Dec. 19, Jan. 16, Jan. 30, Feb. 13, Feb. 27, March 13, and March 27 from 6-9pm.

- **Northern Lights**

The inaugural Northern Lights festival will commence Dec. 12 by welcoming connoisseurs to the Brewmaster Dinner at Zephyr Lodge. The five-course menu will feature fresh, seasonal produce and meats from California’s finest sources. Each course will be customized to highlight select craft brews and seasonal specialties from Lagunitas Brewing Company. Northern Lights culminates Dec. 13, during which kids and families partake in a day and evening of light-filled revelry and activities, a torch light procession and snowcat light parade – all of which leads to the Village at Northstar where the festivities and entertainment continue with a fireworks grand finale.

Mt. Rose:

- **Chutes Fest**

The Feb. 21 extreme competition is the 10th anniversary celebration of the notorious Mt. Rose Chutes.

- **Local Craft Brew Festival**

This is a gathering of many Tahoe-Reno craft brewers, combined

into an outdoor ski festival on March 7.

- **Burner Party**

March 21 is the second annual party recognizing the Burner Spirit on snow.

Homewood:

- **New Year’s Eve Party**

Dance to the infectiously funky grooves of Lake Tahoe’s Drop Theory from 9pm-1am while enjoying beer, wine and cocktail specials at the Fireplace Tavern bar, inside Homewood’s South Lodge. Tickets are $25 in advance online, or $30 at the door.

- **First Tracks Breakfasts**

Skiers and snowboarders will want to set their alarms early on select weekends throughout the season as Homewood expands its lineup of First Tracks Breakfasts. Early-birds looking for untracked powder tracks or pristine corduroy are invited to load the Madden Chair from 7:45-8:15am and enjoy all the fresh tracks they can find off the Old Homewood Express chair before the general public is allowed to start loading the Madden Chair at 9am. In addition, participants will enjoy a hearty breakfast at the mid-mountain Big Blue View Bar anytime from 7:55-9:30am. Free for Homewood season passholders, the First Tracks Breakfast events will cost $40 in addition to the normal lift ticket price for non-pass holders. Dates: Jan. 10, Jan. 24, TBD in February and March.

- **March Music Series**

Dates to be determined.

Heavenly Mountain Resort

- **Winter Ignite**

It spans two weekends, Dec. 5-6 and Dec. 12-13, culminating with a free concert by Young the Giant on Dec. 13 at 7pm in Heavenly Village. Winter Ignite will jumpstart the 2014-15 ski and ride season with on-mountain activities such as pop-up DJ Cat and Unbuckle après kick-off parties as well as off-mountain events like “Pretty Faces” movie Dec. 12 at Harrah’s and comedy from Daniel Tosh at MontBleu Dec. 12.

- **High Roller Hold ‘Em**

Three Olympic athletes from the inaugural U.S. slopestyle snowboarding team will arrive in South Lake Tahoe on April 4. Olympic gold medalist Sage Kotsenburg will place his bets against fellow Olympians Billy Morgan and Chas Guldemond, as well as High Roller Hold ‘Em veterans Gjermund Braaten and Eric Willett. Developed in partnership with Snow Park Technologies, High Roller Hold ‘Em combines the thrill of snowboard Big Air with the strategy of high-stakes poker into an event that sends the winner home with $50,000. This event is free and takes place on the World Cup run at Heavenly’s California base area.

- **Unbuckle at Tamarack**

Rated as the No. 1 après ski party in North America by *Forbes* and confirmed by CNN Travel, is Lake Tahoe’s highest elevation après ski party featuring music, drinking, dancing and the Heavenly Angels. Après takes place daily from 3:30-5:30pm with half-priced drinks and food specials and, exclusively on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays, a guest DJ. There is no cost for admission to this event.

Diamond Peak

• **6th annual Ullr Fes**t

The Jan. 23-25 event to raise funds for the Diamond Peak Ski Team. The action-packed weekend kicks off Friday with a Torch Light Parade, bonfire, and live music, and continues through Sunday with other events including races, competitions, food, entertainment and more. Come dressed in the best Ullr attire as the event is named for the Scandinavian god of winter and snow, who is widely regarded as the patron saint of skiers.

• **Last Tracks Wine/Beer Tastings**

Every Saturday Feb. 7-April 11, enjoy beautiful views of Lake Tahoe from Snowflake Lodge while tasting fine wines or craft brews paired with tasty appetizers. At the end of the event, ski or snowboard down a freshly groomed run at sunset. Last Tracks tickets are $34 and include a lift ticket valid from 2-4pm. Participants must be 21 years old to attend and ski or snowboard at an intermediate level.

• **15th Annual Dummy Downhill**

The Dummy Downhill (March 15) has been a favorite community event for past 14 years and every year it gets better. Participants build a dummy on skis or snowboards that get launched off of a big jump and watch as unique characters fly down the hill or crash hard. This is the flugtag for dummies. Dummies will be judged on creativity on the Base Lodge deck, followed by the jumping and an awards ceremony. Prizes and certificates will be awarded for creativity, best crash, furthest distance, and more.

Sierra-at-Tahoe

• **Jamie Anderson’s Give Back with Love Sponsorship** (not for spectators)

Women’s snowboard slopestyle Olympic gold medalist Jamie Anderson will partner with Sierra and the Lake Tahoe Unified School District to sponsor local students again this winter. Less fortunate students in the community have a chance to experience what it is like to be a sponsored athlete for a season. Each winner receives a season pass at Sierra, complete snowboard set-up including board, bindings, boots and outerwear, and a day of snowboarding with Jamie Anderson.

• **Equinox Spring Festival**

Sierra-at-Tahoe Resort will kick off the spring season on March 21 with the second annual Equinox Spring Festival. The festival includes a free concert series, events, parties, and more, giving guests an opportunity to enjoy the outdoor Solstice Plaza, listen to live music, reminisce about a great day on the mountain and celebrate spring in the Sierra.

• **Ski With Maddie Bowman Day** (not for spectators)

Women’s freeskiing halfpipe Olympic gold medalist, Maddie Bowman, hosts an annual Ski with Maddie Day where up-and-coming skiers in Sierra’s Rippers program have the chance to ski with Bowman and receive expert tips. Bowman, being an ex-Ripper, wants to inspire younger kids to follow their dreams and share how her dream came true.

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Notes:

• More info about events may be found on the resorts’ respective websites.