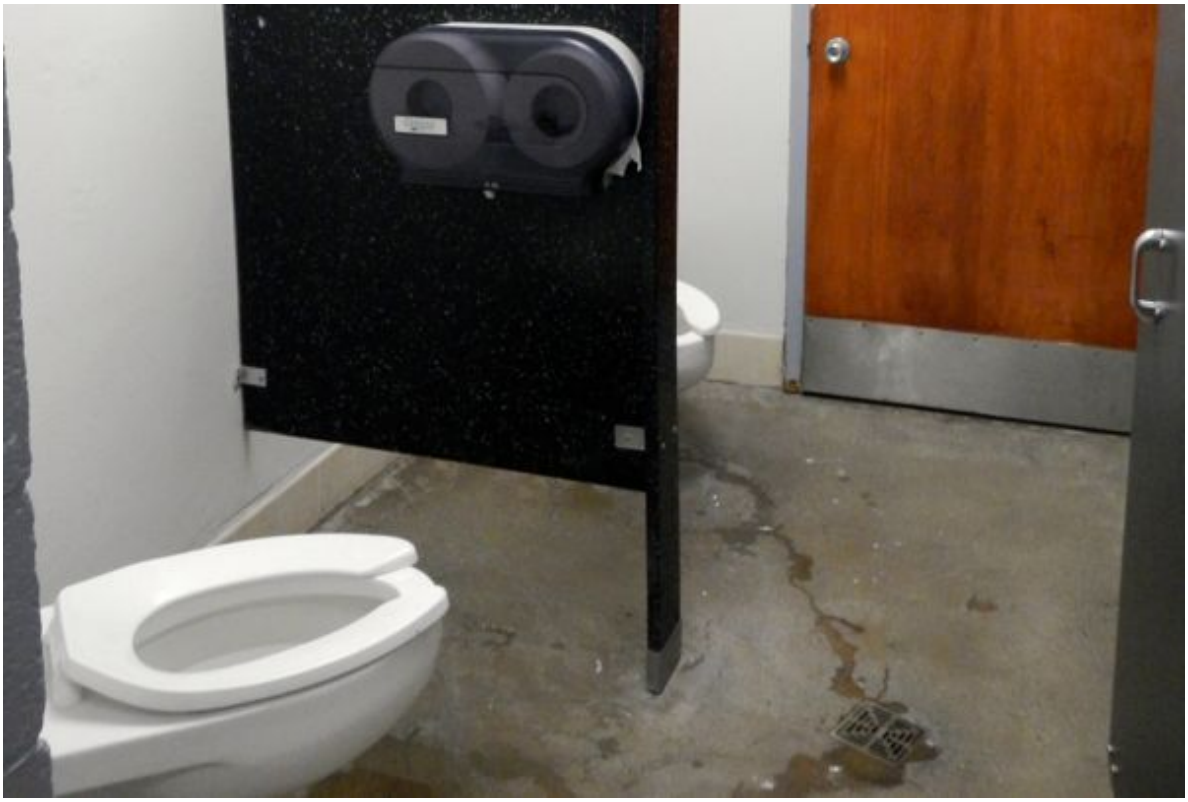
South Tahoe looking to renovate rec center



The South Lake Tahoe Recreation Center's men's bathroom lacks privacy. Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

Tape on many weight room apparatuses, blocks at the swimming pool the public aren't allowed to use, no private showers in the men's room, two out of three showers off-limits in the women's locker room.

This is the South Lake Tahoe Recreation Center.

It was built in 1975. Nearly 40 years later it is sorely in need of being overhauled, if not gutted and rebuilt from the ground up.

"It's rundown and needs serious renovation," Pete Fink, chairman of the city's recreation commission, told the more

than two dozen people at a Nov. 18 workshop.

Turning this into a green building is a goal so it is extremely energy efficient. Today the annual electric bill is about $170,000 for the building, including the pool.

Last year $37,000 had to be spent on fixing the roof.

“It seemed like it was raining more inside than out,” Fink said.



Many would like the pool to be upgraded.

An aspect of the recreation master plan being developed by the city and El Dorado County calls for renovating the center. Last week was the first opportunity for the public to tour the facility and offer input as to what they would like to see changed.

Faye-Marie Pekar, Grace Usui Meyer and Jenn Boyd finished their evening lap swimming before joining the group to offer their opinions.

They told *Lake Tahoe News* the locker rooms should to be upgraded, the starting blocks need to be accessible to anyone, there should be a professional timing system and the number of lanes expanded beyond six.

They and others voiced the need for a swim center like Carson Valley has where there are multiple pools that would accommodate divers, swimmers and those looking for therapy sessions.

Some would like a permanent roof to replace the bubble over the pool. Bleachers would be beneficial for spectators during competitions.

Both locker rooms are a bit repulsive. Even though a major overhaul of the rec center is likely, the city is going forward with fixing the rusting, corroding women's showers.

In the men's locker room the urinals go to the ground in an old-school fashion. A short wall separates the two toilets, but privacy is completely lacking.

The rec center has various rooms that are used for meetings and classes. One has mirrors for dance class, but the floor in it is not conducive to dancing. And the mirrors don't make for a professional meeting center for the entities that rent it for that purpose.

An industrial kitchen is adjacent to the gym.

Lauren Thomaselli, parks manager, suggested putting in a concession window between the kitchen and gym so food could easily by sold. She would also like to see cooking classes.

Caterers in town who need a facility that meets the health department's requirements often rent the kitchen.



Duct tape is common on weight room equipment.

The weight room equipment looks like something found in a bygone era.

“A lot of the equipment here I’ve been told was donated by clubs that went under and it looks like it,” Peter Evenhuis, who was touring the site, told *Lake Tahoe News*. His suggestion is to lease equipment in the future.

The city is looking for more input on the rec center via this online survey.

‘One problem with skate skiing: It’s hard’

By Christopher Solomon, New York Times

For a long time I just didn’t “get” cross country skiing. Shuffling through the woods while dangling a scratchy wool scarf? Too stuffy, too twee, too boring — a sport better left to old Norwegians and young honeymooners. I’m not ready to stride across a Currier & Ives print, I scoffed.

Then a friend introduced me to skate skiing, “classic” Nordic’s zippy younger brother.

If traditional Nordic skiing is a walk in the woods, then skate skiing — which was born only in the 1970s — is more like trail running. It’s swooping. It’s fast. It’s graceful. It’s even a bit sexy, something its buttoned-up older brother has never been accused of.

No wonder that more runners and cyclists have discovered the discipline as a great winter counterpart. Purchase of skate skis has been on a slow, steady rise in recent years,

accounting for 16 percent of cross country skis bought in 2012-13.

There’s just one problem with skate skiing: It’s hard.

Read the whole story

USFS fells perch tree at Nevada Beach



The large perch tree at Nevada Beach is no more. Photo/Provided

The felling of a large tree at Nevada Beach that was cut down for safety reasons is not sitting well with everyone.

“(There was) a circle of fencing around the tree – no way for it to hurt anyone outside of the fencing,” a South Shore resident told *Lake Tahoe News*.

But the U.S. Forest Service says the fencing wasn’t to protect people if the tree fell on its own, but instead was for the Tahoe yellow cress.

The Forest Service told *Lake Tahoe News* the fence was

“dilapidated and an eyesore” and the tree was “seriously rotted”.

It was called a perch tree – a dead tree that birds would perch in – such as eagles and osprey. Eventually these types of trees have to come down for safety reasons.

“We cleared this through TRPA, who indicated that they were fine with it, as there are no records of osprey using Nevada Beach,” Cheva Gabor, spokeswoman with the USFS, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Controlled burns resuming in Tahoe basin

The Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District and the U.S. Forest Service will continue prescribed fire operations in the Van Sickle Park, McKinney Rubicon and Heavenly urban lot areas. Operations will last through the next several weeks as conditions allow.

Smoke from prescribed fire operations is normal and may continue for several days after an ignition depending on the project size.

Before prescribed fire operations are conducted, the agencies post road signs around areas affected by prescribed fire, send email notifications and update the local fire information line at 530.543.2600, ext. 6. To receive prescribed fire notifications, send an email to pa_ltbmu@fs.fed.us.

Hydromulching to protect areas near King Fire

Hydromulching 1,200 acres of the King Fire terrain will begin this week in the Eldorado National Forest.

The goal is to protect areas from severe post-fire erosion that may occur with winter storms. The infrastructure at risk includes Eleven Pines Road, which serves as the primary route from Highway 50 to the northern end of the Eldorado National Forest, and the Brush Creek and Slab Creek reservoirs, which are integral to SMUD’s hydroelectric facilities in the Sierra Nevada.

The project should take two weeks to complete, but the actual timeframe will be weather dependent.

Bradco Environmental, a company based in Crestline, will do the work.

Large bales of certified weed free straw, a byproduct of rice grown in California, will be loaded into horizontal grinders which will chop the straw into 4 to 8 inch pieces of mulch prior to aerial application. Two medium sized helicopters will be used to drop the mulch onto slopes ranging from 15 to 60 percent grade, treating approximately 80 acres per day with each helicopter.

The King Fire started Sept. 13 by a suspected arsonist in Pollock Pines. It burned 97,717 acres. Twelve houses were destroyed and 68 outbuildings were lost.

Ascending to a world of majestic views



Mount Shasta is the focal point for much of the Gray Butte hike. Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

MOUNT SHASTA – If seemed like if we would extend our arms, we could scoop a snowball off Mount Shasta – we were that close.

While this majestic mountain dominated our view, it wasn't the only thing that captivated our attention. From our perch we had a 360-degree view of the North State. This included Mount Lassen, Lake Siskiyou, Trinity Alps, Mt. Shasta Ski Resort and the town of McCloud.

In getting to the starting point at Bunny Flat it seemed like the Everitt Memorial Highway might take us to the top of Mount Shasta. (The highway is named after John S. Everitt, a forest

supervisor for the Shasta National Forest who died in 1935 fighting the Bear Springs Fire.)



Scenery is incredible along the trail and from the top.

The road continues three miles farther and 900 feet higher, but it is not open year-round. It was already closed in early November. There is a gate there – which is where we started. It's about a 7.5-mile round-trip excursion from the parking lot.

Tom had intended to lead us on a different hike, but dogs are not allowed. People in the parking area told us we could walk up the road to Panther Meadows with AJ and Britton, then take a dirt trail to Gray Butte. (There are five colored themed buttes on Mount Shasta. The others are black, red, green and yellow.)

The pavement is a steady climb. To our left Mount Shasta is in view much of the way, so that compensates for being on asphalt for a hike. The other positive is that Pam, Tom, the dogs and I have the route to ourselves.



Pam Valentine and Tom Ward hiking Gray Butte trail.

At the campground we veer off to the right and finally feel like we are truly hiking.

Not far out of the campground is Panther Meadow. The view from there of Mount Shasta is stunning.

The trail is marked fairly well. It traverses through old-growth red fir, with hemlock near the summit. At times we are on dirt, sometimes rocks. A few patches of snow indicate we are probably lucky to even be on it. I'm sure some Novembers this isn't the place you'd want to be hiking.



The top of Gray Butte provides a 360-degree view.

Bunny Flat is at 6,950 feet; Gray Butte is 8,119 feet. We were still a ways from the summit of Mount Shasta, though from out vantage point it was hard to believe we would have another

6,000 feet to climb. Shasta is 14,163 feet – the fifth highest peak in California and the second tallest mountain in the Cascade Range.

Mammoth to host Grand Prix ski event

By USSA

PARK CITY – The Sprint U.S. Grand Prix has a long legacy of creating Olympic champions. This year many of them will return to compete on the 2014-15 tour, including 2014 Olympic champions Maddie Bowman of Meyers, Joss Christensen, Kaitlyn Farrington, David Wise of Reno and Sage Kotsenburg.

More than $400,000 in prize money will be awarded at the three Grand Prix tour stops.

The season opener will be held at Colorado's Copper Mountain Resort. Mammoth Mountain will host stop number two and Utah's Park City Mountain Resort will host the tour finale. The Grand Prix will host FIS World Cup level and Platinum level AFP events at Copper and Park City and the Mammoth Mountain's stop will be part of this year's TTR World Snowboard Pro Tour.

Mammoth highlights

An iconic tour stop on the Sprint U.S. Grand Prix since its inaugural season, Mammoth Mountain returns again to host halfpipe and slopestyle skiing and snowboarding Feb. 4-7 with broadcast coverage on NBC and NBCSN.

World Snowboard Tour Pro Series: The event at Mammoth will be a World Snowboard Tour Pro Series event. The Pro Series

consists of the top tier of elite level snowboarding events globally, featuring a consistent field of the best riders in the world, competing regularly throughout the season, at world class events.

The freeskiing events at Mammoth will be an AFP Platinum level.

Mammoth’s Unbound halfpipe and slopestyle course each have a long Grand Prix history and served as the naming site for both the 1998 and 2014 U.S. Olympic snowboarding teams.

Hunting on the decline in California

By Pauline Bartolone, Capitol Public Radio

Hunting in California has been in a sharp decline for the past four decades.

About 250,000 Californians hunted deer, pigs, bear and birds last year. In 1970, there were almost 700,000 hunters.

Dan Yparraguirre, a deputy director with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife says urbanization is likely one of many causes for the decline.

Read the whole story

Cinder the burned bear cub leaving LTWC



Cinder is now 83 pounds. She arrived at LTWC weighing 39 pounds. Photo/Provided

By Tom Millham

I am very pleased to inform you that Kevin Willitts, the official volunteer veterinarian for Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care, has released Cinder, the bear from Washington with burns on all four paws, from his medical care and will allow her to return to the area from where she came to complete her rehabilitation and to hibernate for the winter.

On Nov. 23 at 6:30am, Willitts will be at Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care to immobilize Cinder one last time, give her a final goodbye exam, weigh her and witness her being placed into a transportation cage for an eight-hour car ride to Garden City, Idaho.

She will spend the rest of the winter at Idaho Black Bear Rehabilitation Center, just outside Boise, in a cage next to a first year bear cub (for at least a short time, until they get to know each other).

In the spring, Sally Maughan, founder of IBBR, will inform Washington wildlife bear specialist Rich Beausoleil that she is ready to go. Then Beausoleil will pick Cinder up and take her on her last car ride.

It has been quite a ride.

Beausoleil will then release Cinder in a suitable habitat and she will again be free in the wild. The reason she will be at IBBR for the next four months will be to allow her now healed burned paws a chance to toughen up so she can be as natural as possible when she is released.

On Aug. 4, Cinder was flown by plane by pilot Bill Inman from Washington to South Lake Tahoe so LTWC could treat her wounds, just as we did six years ago with Li'l Smokey. On Sept. 30, after almost two months of having her bandages changed every other day, Willitts decided that she did not need bandages anymore and it was time to let air get to her paws. That was the first time she did not have any dressings on her paws since Aug. 3.

Tom Millham is secretary-treasurer of Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care.

Snowmakers create a Heavenly opening day



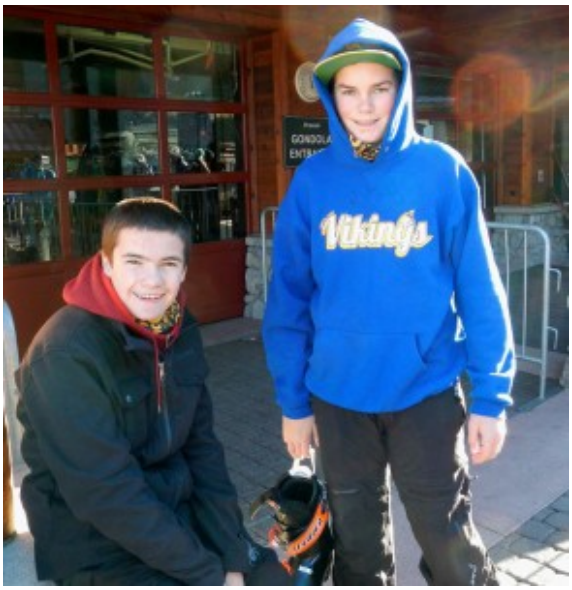
Opening day at Heavenly Mountain Resort is an event unto itself. Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

First tracks happen every day of the ski season. First tracks of the season, well, you can only get those on opening day.

Gunnar Barnwell was going to make sure he christened the slopes of Heavenly Mountain Resort for the 2014-15. The 13-year-old arrived at the gondola entrance at 5:30am Nov. 21 in below freezing temperatures.

He didn't mind waiting around for 3½ hours until the resort opened; after all this was the Whittell High School student's first opening day. (Whittell doesn't have classes on Fridays.) He admitted part of the draw was to have an opportunity to win one of the raffle prizes offered to the first 100 people in line.



Gunnar Barnwell, left, is first in line Nov. 21 for opening day and his friend, Logan Langemeier, third.

It was Barnwell's buddy, Logan Langemeier, who won the GoPro. And to think he didn't arrive until 7am.

This arrival time put the 15-year-old third in line. The South Tahoe High student was playing hooky from school on what was his second opening day.

Jennifer Wolf of Santa Cruz was second in line.

"I'm anxious (to ski)," Wolf told *Lake Tahoe News* as to why she showed up at 6am. "I sat out last year with a knee injury."

She's been skiing Heavenly for 37 years. With her parents having a cabin nearby, it makes doing so all that much easier.



Nearly 200 people wait for the gondola to open to signal the start of the 2014-15 season.

For Brad Drake of Reno this was his fifth opening day.

“It means the rest of the season is ahead of us,” Drake told *Lake Tahoe News*.

His favorite opening day: “Two years ago when I was lapping the face before Thanksgiving.”

That won’t happen this year. However, snowmaking was continuing on unopened trails throughout the morning, with the anticipation of more terrain on the Nevada side being available as conditions allow.

While only the gondola and Tamarack chairlift are open, the snowmaking crew has covered the 14 acres with an abundance of snow. No obstacles, excellent conditions. Four terrain park features are also available to the skier’s left of California Trail.



A mini terrain park has four features.