Trove of trails to explore above Genoa



Plenty of views abound around nearly every bend of the Genoa Loop Trail. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

GENOA – People pay to go on hiking excursions all the time. Usually it's for a guide or a permit. Last week it was for a vet bill.

AJ and Cody thought it would be a great idea to go about 100 feet off the trail. The worst we thought is they would end up at the bottom of the canyon. Wrong. AJ came back with a gash that the next day required surgery. (She is doing fine, despite the cone and not being allowed to play for two weeks.)

It's just one of those things when you go off into the woods. There are sharp items. Was it a rock, a tree limb, part of a

stump or something else? We'll never know.

But what it showed the seven of us is the necessity to have a well-stocked first aide kit. Between those who brought survival supplies we were able to come up with multiple items to cover the wound of my four-legged daughter. Of course she wanted nothing to do with it so she ended up walking out without the torn skin being covered. She was on leash by this time.

Rosemary and I had attended a wilderness survival lecture last summer. Last weekend's experience got me thinking that maybe on all hikes or snowshoes I should carry my poles. We could have made a litter to carry AJ out of the woods. And it would be easy to put duct tape on the poles – because duct tape can be used in so many ways.

The hike

Carson Valley is becoming a hiking Mecca, with new trails being created all the time. Another route is being dedicated this weekend.

A week ago seven people – me, Sue, Suzy, Rosemary, Brenda, Danielle and Frank – and two dogs set off to do the 8.2-mile Genoa Loop. It has about 2,500-feet of elevation gain, which seemed to all be at the get-go starting from Carson Street.

The entire route is single-track. Luckily we all talk loud enough to allow for conversation with at least the person behind or in front of us.

It doesn't take long for expansive views of the Carson Valley to unfold. The land below looks fertile.

There are spots along the way where the trail splits, but they meet up again at the same point. Our guess is these are good passing opportunities for equestrians or mountain bikers. However, we only saw other hikers and some runners on the

trail. And a sign along the way says the terrain is challenging and not recommended for horses or cyclists.

A short section is shale. Most of it is hardpack dirt. Portions are layered with pine needles. As it gets warmer and drier, this trail is likely to be dusty, and definitely hot in the summer. Even on the first Sunday of April it was rather warm and nice to have as much shade as we did.

What surprised most of us was the abundance of water in various sections. This was perfect for the dogs.

Two other big surprises greeted us. One was Genoa Falls, which is about 12- to 15-feet high. It fell from a sheer rock face. Moss covered the lower rocks as bamboo sprung up along the creek.

Around a corner we came across a “Star Wars” pillowcase and a hard copy of “Field Guide to Trees and Shrubs” by George A. Petrides. What they were doing there we don’t know.

Rosemary added a compass to the collection and Suzy a pink flamingo keychain from Tampa.

“Lush” was the word Rosemary used to describe some areas of the route. And it’s not a word usually associated with the Carson Valley.

We scampered through Genoa, Schoolhouse and Sierra canyons along this trek. One misstep and it could be a long hike back to the trail.

While plenty of pine trees remind us we are still in the Sierra, the terrain was still much different than being in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

In a normal winter this trail would still have snow on it. A few patches remained on the side. There are other routes off this trail to explore on another day when my four-legged hiking buddy is able to explore again.

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Getting there:

• From South Lake Tahoe, take Highway 50 east. Turn right onto Kingsbury Grade. Turn left on Foothill Road. Park near the Snowshoe Thompson statue – on the right – in Genoa.

Trail is across the street, up Carson Street.

• Park on Carson Street or on Centennial Drive for out and back hikes.

Other:

• Carson Valley Trails Association is online.

• Not all trails are recommended for mountain bikes or equestrians.

• Dogs are allowed.

• Clear Creek Trail grand opening is April 13 – 10am-3pm, 14-mile equestrian led tour to Knob Point and back. From 3-6pm is a 14-mile mountain bike led tour to Knob Point and back. Events start at Jacks Valley Trailhead on the west side of Jack Valley Elementary School.

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Rafting season could

evaporate quickly

By Paul McHugh, Sacramento Bee

California boasts some of our globe’s hardest-working water. It flows off ski slopes, rolls past wildlife habitats, tumbles into reservoirs, then gushes through pipes and turbines, sprinklers and faucets. En route – particularly in a drought year – water managers horde every drop they can capture, and parcel it out according to an elaborate rubric of contracts and agreements.

Thanks to that essential arrangement, northern and central portions of the state will score a whitewater recreation season that will be surprisingly long and robust, but only on dam-controlled rivers such as the Klamath, Trinity, and south and middle forks of the American and the Tuolumne.

On popular free-flowing rivers, such as the Kings, Merced and California Salmon, would-be rafters and kayakers should look online to study flows and weather, talk to outfitters, and stay poised and ready to leap onto these streams in April and May. Once their thin snowpacks melt and flow down the canyons, they’ll be done.

So much for the general whitewater season profile.

Read the whole story

Lake Cushing Crossing pond

skimming at Squaw

The 24th annual Lake Cushing Crossing returns to Squaw Valley on April 12.

The pond skimming event challenges participants to cross the chilly waters of Cushing Pond on skis, a snowboard or any ski or snowboard-based vessel.

The event kicks off at 1pm at Cushing Pond, adjacent to the KT Base Bar.

The competition will be limited to the first 50 registrants. Participants may register on the day of the event at KT Base Bar starting at 9am. Cost is $20 per competitor. Competitors are required to wear a life preserver and helmet.

STHS alum McIntyre returns to Jets' roster

By AP

FLORHAM PARK, N.J. — The New York Jets have re-signed versatile backup linebacker Garrett McIntyre.

McIntyre, a South Tahoe High School graduate, became a free agent last month after he was not tendered an offer by the Jets as a restricted free agent. The team announced the deal

Wednesday, but did not release terms.

McIntyre was signed by the Jets in 2011 after stints in the Arena Football League and Canadian Football League. He has 5½ sacks, 72 tackles and two forced fumbles in 42 games, including 10 starts, with New York.

An undrafted free agent out of Fresno State in 2006, the 29-year-old McIntyre has also spent time with Seattle, Arizona and Tennessee.

9-year-old credited with saving dad in snowmobile accident

By John Fowler, KTVU-TV

The quick-thinking of a 9-year-old Marin County boy may have helped save his father's life after a recent snowmobile accident.

Bode Bierdneau is in the fourth grade and had an extra pep in his step Tuesday.

"Because I saved my Dad, a lot of people were like 'Wow! You saved your dad'," Bierdneau told KTVU.

His dad, JT Bierdneau was severely injured two days ago after riding his snowmobile near Blue Lakes off Highway 88. The sled hit a tree and then the snowmobile trapped his leg.

Read the whole story

Tahoe climber survives harrowing fall in New Zealand

By John Lewis, Otago Daily Times

The moment Matt Stewart clicked his safety harness on to the line, he realized his mistake.

The 33-year-old Lake Tahoe resident had on Jan. 5 climbed to the top of a 20m-high crag (about the height of a five-story building) at Hospital Flat, near Wanaka in New Zealand and was preparing to abseil down.

He hooked on to the wrong line, and fell to the ground. By all accounts, he should have died. He still marvels at his extraordinary survival.

He broke his back and both legs in the fall, and there had been a time when he thought he would be confined to a wheelchair for the rest of his life.

Read the whole story

Sage grouse, wild horses dominate BLM budget

By Martin Griffith, AP

RENO -– Wild-horse fertility control and sage-grouse habitat

conservation are among top priorities in the proposed $1.1 billion budget for the federal Bureau of Land Management.

President Obama's request for the 2015 fiscal year calls for an increase of $2.8 million in funding for the agency's wild horse and burro program, and would allow it to continue studies to develop more effective contraceptive drugs and techniques.

The BLM has pledged to step up the use of fertility control as an alternative to controversial roundups of what it calls overpopulated mustang herds on U.S. rangelands in the West.

If approved by Congress, the request would further the BLM's implementation of recommendations made by an independent panel of the National Academy of Sciences in 2013, agency officials said.

In a report highly critical of the BLM, the panel said the agency should invest in widespread fertility control of the mustangs instead of spending millions to house them.

It concluded the BLM's removal of nearly 100,000 horses from the Western range over the past decade is probably having the opposite effect of its intention to ease ecological damage and reduce overpopulated herds.

The BLM treated about 1,000 mares in 2012 but only about half that last year, records show, far short of the annual goal of 2,000 then-BLM Director Bob Abbey announced in 2011.

Anne Novak of California-based Protect Mustangs questioned the value of fertility control and called on Congress to embrace "holistic" land management by keeping mustangs on the range to rebuild soil and reverse desertification. She thinks the agency's horse roundups have caused the herds to have an increased birthrate.

"Throwing more drugs, sterilizations and pesticides on native

wild horses is a backwards approach," Novak said. "It's time to help our American wild horses contribute to the thriving natural balance of the ecosystem using fresh science."

The budget also seeks to maintain funding for the BLM's initiative to conserve sage-grouse habitat across the West to avoid the bird's listing as an endangered or threatened species. The agency plans to complete the plan in the upcoming fiscal year. Such a listing would have economic consequences for ranching, mining and alternative energy development across large swaths of land.

Another top budget priority is authorization of a nonprofit foundation to help provide the BLM with new ways to work with the public on landscapes and programs, including wild horse and burro management.

"The BLM carries a great responsibility in its stewardship of roughly 10 percent of the nation's land," BLM Principal Deputy Director Neil Kornze said in a statement. "We strive each day to strike the right balance under our multiple use and sustained yield mandate."

Kornze testified on the budget at a hearing Friday before the House Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies.

Significant rock slide closes trail in Yosemite

By AP

Officials at Yosemite National Park say a massive amount of

rock has fallen from a cliff, closing a hiking trail.

The National Park Service said Monday that nobody was hurt when the 16,000 tons of rock fell 500 feet from a cliff near Hetch Hetchy Reservoir on March 31. Many boulders tumbled into the water.

Officials say the rock crashed down from a cliff east of Wapama Falls. The rock broke into numerous boulders, crushing trees and sending up a small dust cloud.

About 400 feet of the Rancheria Falls Trail were destroyed and park staff says it will remain closed for now. Park officials say hikers can still get to Wapama Falls starting at O'Shaughnessy Dam.

Alpine hosting Snow Golf Tournament

The 31st annual Snow Golf Tournament returns to Alpine Meadows on April 12.

Participants start at the top of Alpine Meadows' Summit Six chairlift and weave their way down a nine-hole golf course to the bottom of Alpine Bowl chair. Players are provided scorecards, pencils, clubs and tennis balls – in lieu of golf ball. All competitors are encouraged to dress up in their best "golf" attire, and must be wearing skis or a snowboard to navigate from hole to hole.

Participants can register for the event at the top of Summit chair beginning at 9am on the day of the event. Snow Golf is free with a lift ticket or season pass.

Following the tournament, all scorecards will be entered into a raffle.

Time to be wary of ticks

El Dorado County health officials are reminding residents to take precautions to protect themselves and their pets from ticks and tick bites.

“If a tick attaches to the skin, it should be grabbed closest to the skin with tweezers or a tissue, and pulled straight out using a firm and steady motion. Wash your hands and the bite site with soap and warm water after the tick is removed, and apply antiseptic to the bite site. See a doctor if you develop a rash, flu-like symptoms or a fever. Tell your doctor if you have been bitten by a tick,” Alicia Paris-Pombo, El Dorado County health officer, said in a statement.

Ticks live in wooded areas, brushy fields, long grasses and leaf-litter areas, and are most active during the warmer months.

Tips to avoid tick bites include the following:

- Avoid walking through wooded or brushy areas with tall grass; walk in the center of trails whenever possible
- Wear long pants and long socks, and apply insect repellent containing DEET when walking through areas where ticks may be present
- Examine gear and pets after walking
- Bathe or shower as soon as possible after coming indoors to wash off and more easily find ticks that may have crawled on you or your clothing
- Conduct a full-body tick check upon return from known

tick infested areas, and check for up to three days after possible exposure (some ticks may be very small and are hard to see)
- Tumble clothes in a dryer on high heat for an hour to kill remaining ticks
- Talk to your veterinarian about using tick preventives on your pets.