Girls being recruited for basketball clinic

There will be a girls basketball clinic Dec. 7 from 4-6pm at Kahle Community Center in Stateline.

Coach Walter Morris will help improve skills and teach the sport of basketball. Morris taught basketball at two universities and played NCAA Division III basketball. He works at Lake Tahoe Community College teaching exercise science, sports nutrition and sports including basketball.

Reserve a spot by emailing assistant coach Tracy Owen Chapman at tracyowenchapman@gmail.com. Include name and age of player, skill level and contact info. To prepay, mail a $20 check payable to: TOC Business Marketing Solution, P.O. Box 18868, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96151.

Lake Tahoe area athletes in the hunt for gold

By Kathryn Reed

Lake Tahoe is often well represented in the Winter Olympics. Expect nothing less in 2014.

Today, 25 athletes are vying to be part of the Games that are in Russia Feb. 7-23. Some are household names – especially for those who live in the basin and follow skiing and snowboarding, while other athletes are newcomers to this level of competition.

Sierra-at-Tahoe, Heavenly Mountain Resort, Squaw Valley, Northstar, Sugar Bowl and Mammoth Mountain all expect to send competitors to the Olympics. In the coming months they will be competing throughout the world with the goal of making the U.S. Team.

Though, for Joanna "PNut" Dzierzawski, she is hoping to make the Poland team as a slopestyle snowboarder. She trains at Heavenly. And Kaya Turski, who trains at Mammoth, is hoping to be competing in skier slopestyle for Canada.

Here are the athletes from the greater Lake Tahoe who are in contention for the U.S. Olympic team:

• **Maddie Bowman:** Freeskier, from South Lake Tahoe, trains at Sierra-at-Tahoe. Gold at the 2013 X Games in halfpipe. This would be her first Olympics.

• **Jamie Anderson:** Snowboard slopestyle, from South Lake Tahoe, trains at Sierra-at-Tahoe. Decorated X Games competitor. This is the first year for slopestyle as an Olympic sport.

• **Hannah Teter:** Won gold at the 2006 Winter Olympic Games and a silver at the 2010 Winter Olympics in snowboarding, lives in Meyers, trains at Sierra-at-Tahoe.

• **Kyle Smaine:** Halfpipe skier, from South Lake Tahoe, trains at Sierra-at-Tahoe.

• **Mark Hoyt**: Snowboard slopestyle, trains at Sierra-at-Tahoe.

• **Elena Hight:** Snowboard halfpipe, from South Lake Tahoe, trains at Northstar. Competed in 2006 and 2010 Olympics. Well decorated at the X Games.

• **Sho Kashima:** Moguls, lives in Stateline, trains at Heavenly. Missed the 2010 Olympics because of a knee injury.

• **David Wise:** Freeskiing halfpipe, from Reno, trains at Northstar. Multiple X Games awards.

• **Chas Guldemond:** Snowboarding halfpipe and slopestyle, lives in Reno, trains at Northstar.

• **Shaun White:** Snowboarding halfpipe and slopestyle, from Southern California, trains at Northstar. Won gold in snowboard halfpipe at 2006 and 2010 Winter Games.

• **Julia Mancuso:** Ski racer, from Squaw Valley, trains at Squaw Valley. Won gold in giant slalom at 2006 Olympics and at the 2010 Games won silver in the downhill and silver in the combined.

• **Marco Sullivan:** Ski racer, from Truckee, trains at Squaw Valley. Competed in the 2002 and 2010 Games.

• **Travis Ganong:** Ski racer, lives in Squaw Valley, trains at Squaw Valley.

• **Ross Andrews:** Boardercrosss, from Michigan, trains at Sugar Bowl.

• **Jayson Hale:** Boardercross, from Sierraville, trains at Sugar Bowl. Competed in 2010 Olympics.

• **Charlotte Mia Skinner:** Skiercross, lives on North Shore, trains at Sugar Bowl.

• **Greg Bretz**: Halfpipe snowboarding, lives in Mammoth, trains at Mammoth. Competed in the 2010 Olympics.

• **Trevor Jacob:** Boardercross, lives in Mammoth, trains at Mammoth.

• **Luke Mitrani**: Snowboard halfpipe, lives and trains in Mammoth.

• **Kelly Clark**: Snowboard halfpipe, lives and trains in Mammoth. Won gold in 2002 Olympics and bronze in 2010.

• **Sammy Carlson:** Freeskier, from Oregon, trains at Mammoth.

• **Aaron Blunck:** Halfpipe skier, from Colorado, trains at Mammoth.

• **John Teller:** Skiercross, lives and trains at Mammoth.

Beaver restoration would reduce wildfires

By Ralph Maughan

After almost every large wildfire or fires that do significant damage to structures, people ask for proactive measures. The desire for this is rational. It needs no explanation.

Officeholders usually respond, verbally at least. Politicians' solutions, however, are often useless. One reason is lack of knowledge, but probably as often they have other agendas that can be fanned by fear of wildfire. These politicians' proposed solutions often sound plausible because they use common public ignorance to achieve credibility for what the politician is pushing. The most common plausible sounding solution used in the Western United States is large scale fuel reduction — little fuel; little fire.

A big problem with fuels reduction is that you have to pay to have it done. Potential fuel covers hundreds of millions of acres. We say "potential" fuel because what will burn varies greatly. Some years are too wet. Every year hundreds of fires burn out, but a wind, not drought could make them quickly into great conflagrations. Politicians often use the words "logging" and "fuel reduction" in the same breath, but commercial logging, where the land owner gets paid, only works for good timber. That's mostly not what is burning. Dry brush,

droughty green trees, dying or dead trees, cheatgrass, and annual weeds – that's what is usually burning. It is difficult and far too expensive to eliminate these.

One idea that is rarely mentioned is to keep the stream bottoms green and raise the humidity. How could this be done? Let's restore beaver to the creeks of the Western United States. This is much less expensive than cutting out or clearing potential fuels. It also has significant fish and wildlife benefits. We can often add flood control too, plus the recharge of aquifers.

A string of beaver ponds up a drainage is like a permanent fire break. The ponds not only enlarge the area covered with water, more importantly, they increase the portion of the creek or streamside area (the riparian zone) that stays green all summer. They raise the ground water level. Beaver ponds also increase the humidity of air in the drainage. The result is fewer hours in a day when wildfires can burn hot and hard.

Beaver reestablishment is not a sudden new idea. In fact, during the Cold War days there was fear the Soviets would burn off the West by launching thousands of incendiary devices to start range and forest fires. One plan to foil this was to have a massive effort to restore beaver ponds on as many creeks as possible. The Soviets are gone now, but the likelihood of fire has grown as the climate has mostly changed towards drier, with rising temperatures, especially as we look northward.

Additional fire related benefits of beaver are that their ponds offer remote, dispersed water storage reservoirs that could be used by firefighters during fires. Areas with beaver may serve as refuges for all animals during a fire. Finally, beaver ponds trap sediment and the debris that washes down from burns. As a result a fire's effect on water quality is reduced.

There are those who complain mightily about beaver due to changes in a creek channel, the animal's tendency to plug culverts and small bridges, and flooding from some of their ponds. Beaver sometimes cut shade and ornamental trees, trees that are unique for some reason. However, a large scale program could utilize and efficiently deploy the many methods that have devised to stop or prevent this kind of damage.

Those who trap beaver for fun and profit could have their trapping diverted to live trapping to remove beaver in problem places and redistribute them about the landscape. A wise program could outbid the often small price they get from pelts.

Some observers might point out that many creeks, ponds, and meanders in the West have not had beaver in the memory of anyone living or even any written report of the location. However, British, French and American fur trappers began trapping the beaver 300 or more years ago. Entire areas were not just heavily trapped long ago, but deliberately trapped out – trapped until none were left as part of early day conflict between European powers and the incipient American nation-state. So beaver restoration in places might be a restoration far more profound than that of wolves after an 80-100 year absence.

Beaver could be a powerful tool to tame the effects of climate change.

Ralph Maughan is professor emeritus of political science at Idaho State University with specialties in natural resource politics, public opinion, interest groups, political parties, voting and elections.

Lake Tahoe search and rescue volunteers regularly risk their lives to save others

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – While it's mostly tourists whom search and rescue teams help, it isn't always live bodies that are carried out of the wilderness.

Domino is brought in to assist with avalanche and cadaver calls. Through their dog is how Scott and Heather Longoria got involved with the El Dorado County Search and Rescue team.

Because teeth hold a scent for years that is often a tool used to train dogs. Domino showed how well he is trained at Harrah's Lake Tahoe last week during the weekly Soroptimist International South Lake Tahoe lunch. He sniffed out a tooth under a table after being given the command "seek".

"We probably bring closure to 10 or 15 families a year in the greater Lake Tahoe Basin," Scott Gabler said of rescues that turn into recoveries.



Scott Gabler talks Oct. 30 about the roll of search and rescue volunteers in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Photo/Kathryn Reed

In the three years he has been with SAR he has responded to 150 searches that equated to 2,300 hours. His work earned him state recognition earlier this year.

The Tahoe unit of the El Dorado County SAR is a group of 25 volunteers who drop what they are doing to help strangers – and often at the same time putting themselves in precarious situations. They respond to upward of 100 calls a year.

“The vast majority are urgent in nature,” Gabler said. “Search and rescue operates in the background until it’s needed.”

He said about three-quarters of the people in need are tourists. And because they don’t know the terrain, or understand the winds and temperature of Lake Tahoe, or aren’t prepared SAR often comes to the rescue.

But not all incidents can be prevented. Accidents happen.

Search rescue team members may train for one of the specialized teams. Some are adept at rope rescue. Most often rock climbers find themselves in trouble at Lovers Leap, though the cliffs at Angora can also be treacherous.

Most water rescues are on Lake Tahoe, with very few involving the Upper Truckee River. It’s people on human powered craft and motorboats who call for help.

Ice axes and crampons are standard equipment for the mountaineering team.

Trips to ski resorts are fairly routine for SAR. And many times SAR is out there without backup from ski patrol.

“We get calls typically when someone goes out of bounds. And typically it’s at the end of the day,” Scott Longoria said.

It’s not always easy to find people. The person might not know

where they are or the ping from a cell phone could be misleading.

The latter was true last winter when four Stanford students called to say they were lost. Their snowshoe excursion nearly ended with a recovery because one of the women was already taking her clothes off – a sign hypothermia had set in.

They had set out at noon dressed more in workout clothes than winterwear. They had no provisions to stay out in single-digit temperatures.

The cell phone died, but the initial ping showed they were near Angora. The reality is they were near Stanford Sierra Camp. When crews figured this out they chipped ice out of the marina at Fallen Leaf Lake to be able to use the boat that happened to still be in the water. The foursome was rescued about midnight.

SAR is often assisted on rescues by a California Highway Patrol helicopter out of Auburn as well as CalStar stationed at Lake Tahoe Airport.

An annual fundraiser and community donations keep SAR afloat. The fundraiser is the third Wednesday in June at Riva Grill in South Lake Tahoe. For more info about volunteering or donating, go online.

Sierra to host dodgeball tourney at Steamers

The second annual Sierra Snowball Fight: A Dodgeball Tournament at Steamers is Nov. 14.

Sierra-at-Tahoe fans and season passholders will be able dodge, dive, dip, duck and dodge again while helping support the local community.

This is an all ages event and everyone is welcome so come cheer on the competitors and compete in a variety of quirky games and possibly walk away with some swag. The event will take place at Steamers Bar and Grill in South Lake Tahoe at 7pm.

Grab five friends and start training to be crowned Snowball Champions. Team space is limited. Sign up by calling (530) 543.3139.

Master gardeners to be trained in El Dorado County

UC Cooperative Extension is looking for adults interested in helping others learn about gardening and landscaping to apply to train as a master gardener volunteer.

UCCE master gardener volunteers learn university-based scientific information and then share that knowledge with the gardening community. Master gardener volunteers are people of all ages and from all walks of life with a common desire to help others learn about gardening and landscaping.

Any resident in the counties of El Dorado or Amador may apply. First priority is for El Dorado County residents.

Residents of Amador County will train in El Dorado County but will be Amador County master gardeners.

Applicants need Internet access because most communication

will be through email and websites.

Sign up online.

It’s necessary to attend one of the training overview meetings. They are Nov. 14 from 7-8pm and Nov. 15 from 10-11am in Placerville. RSVP to (530) 621.5528.

The 18 weekly classes start Jan. 31. They will be from 9am-3pm in Jackson. Only one class may be missed.

For more information, contact Robin Cleveland at (530) 621.5528 or rkcleveland@ucanr.edu.

Russia struggling to be ready for Olympics

By David Wharton and Sergei L. Loiko, Los Angeles Times

MOSCOW – Clouds of dust. Piles of rubble. Muddy roads and construction sites.

Oleg Rubezhansky looks around Sochi and says: “We live like in a besieged town during the war.”

His Russian city is not under attack, it is scrambling to finish preparations for the 2014 Winter Olympics with less than 100 days remaining until the opening ceremony.

And Rubezhansky, who owns a local newspaper and television company, is not alone in his concern.

Work delays, massive cost overruns and allegations of corruption have marked the run-up to these Games. Some weather forecasters are predicting a warm winter with not enough snow

to cover ski runs and snowboard halfpipes.

Just as worrisome, Russia’s new anti-gay legislation has triggered a sustained international outcry among political leaders and athletes.

Read the whole story

Time running out to get USFS firewood

Forest roads are closing soon and fuelwood permit sales end in November. The last day to purchase a fuelwood permit from the U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit is Nov. 22 and the last day to cut wood is Nov. 24.

Fuelwood permits cost $20 per cord, with a two-cord minimum purchase and a limit of 10 cords per household.

Some cutting areas may not be accessible by vehicle in areas where gates have closed. Permit holders should check whether road closures are in effect and should not go behind closed gates. More info is online.

No off-road travel is allowed and permit holders must comply with all permit conditions.

For more information, call the South Shore office at (530) 543.2694 or the North Shore office at (775) 831.0914.

Hockey team creating a buzz in South Tahoe



This is the inaugural season for Lake Tahoe Blue in South Lake Tahoe. Photos/Jessie Marchesseau

By Jessie Marchesseau

I know very little about hockey other than players wear ice skates and try to hit a little black puck into the net with sticks that resemble oversized golf clubs. However, after attending the Lake Tahoe Blue game against the Long Beach Bombers last weekend, I realized something else about hockey: you don’t have to know anything about it to enjoy watching it.

The fast-paced game had players and pucks flying from one end of the rink to the other at speeds far greater than one would see at a football or basketball game. Blue players were racing back and forth and showed no reservations about ending up on

the ice, slammed into the wall, at the bottom of a dog pile, or in an old-fashioned fistfight. The game was anything but boring.

Based on the South Shore, this is the Blue's first season in Lake Tahoe. Part of the Western States Hockey League, the Blue is a Junior A team. But don't let the term "junior" fool you. The players are all between the ages of 18 and 20. Most are hoping to earn college hockey scholarships or be scouted into higher level leagues, maybe even the NHL.



Lake Tahoe Blue captain Kyle Blondin looks on as a fight breaks out with the Long Beach Bombers last weekend.

This is not just a local or California league either. The WSHL is made up of 24 teams spread across the Western United States, and players come from all over the world to play. In fact, nearly half of the Blue, including the coach, are from outside the U.S. Several reign from Canada, others from Sweden, Hong Kong, Latvia, Slovakia and the Czech Republic.

All have moved to South Lake to live, for now anyway, and play hockey.

Head coach Zoran Bendicak is originally from the former Czechoslovakia. He moved to the U.S. in 2000 to play in the International Hockey League and has been coaching players of all ages for more than a decade. He fell in love with Tahoe

many years ago on a vacation to Squaw Valley and calls the opportunity to live and coach hockey here “a dream come true.”

“I was waiting 10 years for this,” he told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Bendicak’s dream finally came to fruition when Van Oleson, one of the founders of Tahoe Sports Entertainment which runs the South Lake Tahoe Ice Arena, contacted Chris Collins, general manager of the Bay Area Seals Junior A hockey team, and Greg Jamison, former president and CEO of the San Jose Sharks. Together, the three worked out a plan to move the Seals to Lake Tahoe. In August the plan was finalized, and the Bay Area Seals became Lake Tahoe Blue.

Collins explained that the Seals’ rink closed in the Bay Area. The Seals had only been there for one season, and after watching the success of other small-town teams, Collins wanted to take his team somewhere smaller where they could really become an integral part of the community. When he was contacted by Oleson, everything fell into place.

“We want to represent South Lake Tahoe to the best of our ability, and it would be great to become part of the fabric of the community,” Jamison said.

Jamison and Bendicak are hoping the Blue will inspire more kids from the area to get involved in hockey, and they see it happening already. All of the Blue players spend time working with the children’s teams, and Bendicak has 10-year-olds asking him if he thinks they can make the team someday.

“Little kids really look up to them; it’s really nice,” he said.



Lake Tahoe Blue goalie Olivier Gervais has played this position since he was 10.

One of those players helping to inspire the younger generation and hoping to “create a community” for hockey in Lake Tahoe is starting goalie Olivier Gervais. Out with a fractured thumb for the first part of the season, Saturday’s bout against the Bombers was his first game back.

It is not hard to see why younger players look up to Gervais. Originally from Montreal, Gervais admits he likes to be different. On the ice, he sports a helmet he painted himself with images of Chewbacca, the Road Runner and Scooby Doo. The pink ribbon painted on the back is in honor of his grandmother who had breast cancer. He is also currently sporting a blond mohawk in support of breast cancer awareness month. He said he was going to shave his head, but thought it might be more interesting if he shaved both sides of it.

Gervais has been a goalie since he was 10 years old and jokingly says it’s because he doesn’t know how to skate.

“It’s a tough job, but it’s the best,” he said in a French-Canadian accent.

Lake Tahoe Blue does have one local player, Evan Brown who is a South Tahoe High grad, and a few from elsewhere in California, including Mark De Vaughn from Sacramento.

De Vaughn played in New York last season, but says he is glad

to be closer to home this year. Even though he has only been playing with his Blue teammates for a couple of months, De Vaughn said they're like family to him.

"I'm really glad that I'm on this team with this group of guys because I wouldn't want any other family to play with," he said.

At 20, this is De Vaughn's last year in the league, and he is focusing on getting a spot on a college team next year. Gervais, on the other hand, said he would like to go to college, but is hoping to earn a spot on a professional team, perhaps in Europe.

Regardless of where they end up next year, from the coaches to the owners to the players, they all have one goal in common: to take Lake Tahoe Blue to this year's national championships.

"The only way to achieve excellence is by reaching for greatness," Collins said.

While the championship game is still months away, Saturday's 7-5 win over Long Beach was a step in the right direction.

The Blue will play three more home games this weekend against the Southern Oregon Spartans. They have 12 home games left during this season which goes through March. Tickets are $5 for children, $10 for adults, and season passes are also available.

Boreal to open on Friday

Boreal Mountain Resort is opening Nov. 1 at noon off the Nugget chairlift.

Boreal will offer one run with a four terrain park features. Early season conditions will exist and no beginner terrain will be available at this time. Skiing and riding will be on advanced terrain only.

Crews will re-evaluate the conditions Friday afternoon to determine the operating schedule for the following days. Go online for updates.

Boreal received more than 16 inches of snow in the past few days. Snowmaking started Oct. 27 to add to the natural base.

On Friday, lift tickets are $20 for all ages and all 2013-14 Boreal season passes are valid.