Money available to help Truckee area residents with landscaping

Homeowners are eligible to receive up to $1,000 rebate for landscaping labor and materials until Aug. 1 through the River-Friendly Landscaping program through the Truckee River Watershed Council.

For implementation after Aug. 1, the rebate drops to $400 until funds are exhausted.

River Friendly Landscaping improves water quality by assisting residential property owners in voluntarily reducing or preventing soil erosion. It covers older and established neighborhoods in the Truckee River watershed within Truckee, Placer County, Nevada County, and Sierra County.

The program is completely voluntary.

The Watershed Council provides free site evaluations, site plans, and resources for homeowners. Call Andy Otto at (530) 550.8760, ext. 3.

UNR students excavating 19th

century Virginia City hospital

UNR in cooperation with the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office is sending a team of archaeologists to excavate the site of one of Nevada's most important early hospitals. St. Mary Louise Hospital in Virginia City opened in 1876 and served the mining community until the early 20th century.

Sarah Cowie, assistant professor of anthropology in the University's College of Liberal Arts, will direct the excavation, which is part of a summer field school in archaeology. Cowie's team consists of 12 undergraduate students, three graduate student field supervisors and volunteers.

The Daughters of Charity opened the hospital as a Catholic facility, although the institution accepted patrons of any faith. They wore a distinctive habit with a starched cornette on the head, made famous in the late-1960s television show, "The Flying Nun." The order had an active vocation that sought to administer to people in need. Opening an orphanage and school, and then operating a hospital in what was a remote mining community, fit nicely with the mission of the Daughters.

The excavation of the St. Mary Louise Hospital grounds continues a tradition dating back to 1990 of UNR archaeologists working with support from the Historic Preservation Office and the Comstock Historic District Commission to examine resources in Virginia City. Previous excavations included work at Piper's Opera House, an African American saloon, Chinatown and a residential neighborhood known as Cornish Row. The discoveries of the archaeologists have been made available to the public through tours, exhibits, websites, lectures and publications.

The State Historic Preservation Office and the National Park Service provided funding for the dig at the St. Mary Louise Hospital excavation site, located at the current St. Mary's Art and Retreat Center, 55 R St., Virginia City. The public is welcome to visit the site while the team is working there, Mondays through Fridays, 9:30am to noon and 1 to 3pm. They expect to conclude their work Aug.15.

Artifacts from the project will be brought back to the University's Historical Archaeology Lab, where they will be analyzed, cleaned, conserved and entered into a database. Within about a year, they will be curated at the University's Anthropology Research Museum.

Paddleboarder to attempt trip around Tahoe in 24 hours

Doug Stoup plans to circumnavigate Lake Tahoe on a standup paddleboard July 31 in less than 24 hours.

He will start at Waterman's Landing in Carnelian Bay and finish there.

Stoup is paddling to raise money and awareness for High Fives Foundation and the Ice Axe Foundation. The Ice Axe Foundation is an educational 501(3)C set up to educate youth about the planet through live Internet feeds.

There will be a fund raising reception Aug. 1 from 3-7pm at Waterman's Landing with live music.

Thunderstorms to linger in Tahoe for a day

Expect thunderstorms in the greater Lake Tahoe area to remain through Monday.

Rain started to fall in South Lake Tahoe about 4am, and will continue on an off throughout today. However, the National Weather Service is saying no flash flooding is expected.

“There was lightning all across the Sierra last night,” Alex Hoon, meteorologist with the Weather Service in Reno told *Lake Tahoe News*.

He said most of the more than 6,000 strikes were on the west side of the mountains, from Modesto to north of Truckee.

However, lightning to the east of Tahoe on Sunday is being blamed for a 1,000-acre blaze in the Pine Nuts near Gardnerville. The Sierra Front Interagency Dispatch Center at 6:35am did not report any significant changes to the fire overnight.

This is the first rainfall in the Tahoe area in more than a couple months. Afternoon thunderstorms this time of year are normal.

Hoon said it would start to dry out tomorrow, with the rest of the week being sunny, with temperatures returning to normal.

– Kathryn Reed

2-mile walk benefits South Lake Tahoe Cancer League

Sierra Athletic Club on July 29 at 2pm is putting on a 2-Mile Cancer Walk to benefit the South Lake Tahoe Cancer League.

The event will start at the Sierra Athletic Club parking lot at 2pm. Participants will walk from SAC to the shores of Lake Tahoe and back, followed by a barbecue, silent auction and entertainment.

Barbecue tickets will be $10 per person. All proceeds will go to the South Lake Tahoe Cancer League, which provides local cancer patients with financial assistance as well as support and aid throughout their treatment.

For more information, call Sierra Athletic Club at (530) 542.4426.

Protecting habitat critical to survival of mule deer

By Jeff Delong, Reno Gazette-Journal

Mike Piercy was readying his Truckee home for winter one afternoon when he “pretty much tripped over” a strange-looking device on the ground.

It was a calling card from deer No. 79897.

With mule deer numbers dwindling, biologists have been tracking deer and studying their annual Reno-Truckee migration

to identify critical habitat that must be protected to maintain the herd.

Deer No. 79897 was tranquilized by biologists on Reno's Peavine Peak in January 2010 and fitted with a satellite collar. The doe sported the device throughout the winter and in the spring as it wandered to its summer digs in the Truckee area.

The next fall, the collar accompanied the doe as it scampered down the Truckee River Canyon to the Reno area to weather winter's snows, then again as the deer crossed the state line back into California as the seasons turned. Ultimately, the collar dropped off as it was designed to do.

Piercy picked it up, recognizing the device as a tracking collar for wildlife. As requested by a stamped notice, he dropped by the Nevada Department of Wildlife and asked if they wanted it back.

They did. Data later downloaded from the collar – which had malfunctioned so it couldn't be located – was incorporated into a study conducted by biologists from Nevada and California. The scientists were monitoring deer that migrate twice each year through the Truckee River Canyon, with 25 does collared and their movements tracked.

Among the conclusions of the $170,000 study: These mule deer make their Truckee-Reno migration at about the same time each year, with departure dates only days apart, and travel very close to the same route every time.

"They've got their path dialed in," said Mike Cox, big game biologist for the Nevada Department of Wildlife. "The take-home message is that these mule deer have an innate and learned behavior to use the same route time after time."

Why? The answer is relatively simple, Cox said. They do it because it works.

The deer take roughly the same route because it’s easiest, minimizing expenditure of energy, and because they know where there is forage to feed upon, Cox said. Taking the same path may also help reduce the risk of being ambushed by a predator.

Read the whole story

Quinn takes home ACC trophy for 5th time

By Craig Smith

STATELINE – Dan Quinn birdied three of his first seven holes Sunday to pull ahead and then stretched his lead on the back nine to earn a six-point victory over former NFL quarterback Mark Rypien in the American Century Championship at Edgewood Tahoe.

Quinn finished with 66 points. Rypien was second with 60 points and Hall of Fame quarterback John Elway finished third with 59 points. It was the fourth win at the event for Quinn, a former NHL star who will caddie for Ernie Els at next week’s Canadian Open. Els won the British Open earlier in the day.

Quinn, who collected $125,000 from a total purse of $600,000, started the day three points behind second-round leader Rypien, who had 43 points after 54 holes. The event uses a Stableford scoring system that awards graduated points for pars or better. This is the fifth time he has won the event.



Dan Quinn, right, and John Elway played together in the July 18 practice round of the ACC; and ended up placing first and third, respectively. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Billy Joe Tolliver finished fourth with 58 points; Tony Romo was fifth with 56 points, and Joe Theismann was sixth with 53 points. Former MLB pitcher Mark Mulder, who shared the first-round lead with defending champion Jack Wagner, finished in seventh place with 52 points. Wagner slipped to eighth place with 51 points.

At the half-way point, Quinn held a 52-50 lead over Rypien. The former hockey player birdied the par-4 11th to move in front by four points over Rypien and five points over Romo with three good scoring holes remaining; especially the par-5 16th and 18th.

Quinn then made a 25-footer for birdie on 16 to close the door on his challengers.

“My thought was just to get that putt to the hole,” said Quinn. “When I made it I thought, ‘Unless I did something crazy I looked pretty solid.’”

Romo failed to birdie the 16th and then took a double bogey on the final hole to lose two points.

“I just need to compete more,” said Romo, who heads to training camp next week. “I don’t play enough to compete in a three or four-day event. Golf is a tough game.”

“I’m lucky to be in the position I am in,” said Quinn after Saturday’s second round. “I think it will be decided on the last three holes and that’s exactly what NBC wants.”

He was wrong. Quinn salted the win away long before that.

Craig Smith is a former employee of U.S. Golf Association

Yosemite’s boundaries may increase by 1,575 acres

By Michael Doyle, McClatchy Newspapers

WASHINGTON – Yosemite National Park in California would grow by 1,575 acres under a bill seeking traction on Capitol Hill.

Written by a Democrat and backed by local Republicans, the Yosemite expansion legislation could have a leg up on some of the myriad other national park bills being shopped around Congress. But in an environment where public lands ownership also can push political buttons, advocates still have their work cut out for them.

“This is a challenging Congress to move things through,” Laurie Wayburn, president and co-chief executive officer of the San Francisco-based Pacific Forest Trust, said Tuesday. She added, though, that “this is one of those rare, common-ground movements. Yosemite has a very special place in

Californians' hearts."

The legislation introduced last month by Rep. Jim Costa, D-Calif., authorizes the National Park Service to expand Yosemite's western boundary through the addition of several adjacent Mariposa County parcels. The park service could buy the designated land, located near an existing resort development called Yosemite West; in theory, the agency also could accept donated property or acquire it through a land swap.

The Pacific Forest Trust currently owns about half of the 1,575 acres covered by the bill, and a consortium of medical professionals owns the other half. The non-profit trust bought its share about seven years ago with the long-term goal of conveying it to Yosemite, Wayburn said. The doctors had bought the land as an investment, potentially for development.

The landowners' anticipated scenario now is that federal Land and Water Conservation Fund dollars would be used to buy both parcels once the National Park Service secured its authorization, Wayburn said.

Read the whole story

Mancuso's Truckee gym inspires weekend warriors

By Susan Wood

TRUCKEE – The roots of Olympic ski racing medalist Julia Mancuso run vast and deep in Truckee – much like the downhill runs she conquers.

A resident of Olympic Valley, Julia needs no last name for people in the Lake Tahoe region to know whom one is talking about.

At the JM Performance Training Center, this 6,000 square-foot facility is where recreation and racing meet style and sex appeal. Mancuso is known for mixing the fast and the feminine. Mancuso took over ownership of this Truckee fitness facility a year ago. The Pioneer Trail Drive gym brings a unique flair to conditioning.



Olympian Julia Mancuso trains at the gym she owns in Truckee when she is in town. Photos/Kathryn Reed

Seven years after launching her career in a major way at the World Cup on Copper Mountain in Colorado, Mancuso won a gold medal in the 2006 Winter Games in Turin, Italy. Then she turned around and captured two silvers in the combined and downhill events in 2010 at the Vancouver Games in Whistler. It’s been a hard-fought road in the shadows of her U.S. Women’s Ski Team mate Lindsey Vonn. Despite the friendly competition, Mancuso placed fourth overall in the nation’s women ski racing program last year.

But it’s not only her fierce performances on the slopes that make Mancuso so memorable. Her personality comes out in all

her endeavors.

At the front desk, her gym sells pink sweat shirts for $20 with a caricature readily known as the ski racer. A big, bold photograph of her carving a perfect slalom turn hangs near the front entrance. A panoramic photo of where she skis, Squaw Valley, takes up the high side of an entire back wall of the gym.

No plans have been made for expanding the gym's retail outlet to include Mancuso's "Kiss My Tiara" line of lingerie, but gym worker Andrew Finkelstein didn't rule out the idea either when he gave *Lake Tahoe News* a recent tour. The tiara line was inspired by her coach presenting her with a royal tiara for luck in 2005. Five years later, she wore it during the medal ceremonies at Whistler.

Mancuso's stamp on the gym has carried over to the grounds and the clientele of 800 members.



Vivian Herrera was drawn to the gym because of Mancuso.

"I'm a snowboarder, so when I moved here from Chile, I wanted this gym because of her experience with skiing. I've been athletic my entire life," said Vivian Herrera, who moved to Truckee five months ago. She works at the Ritz-Carlton Lake

Tahoe spa. She usually hits the treadmill, free weights and the TRX suspension training classes. A popular new training mechanism, TRX works on one's body core through suspended stretching bands in various positions.

"The people are friendly here, and they offer special training classes that keep you fit," Herrera added.

These principles are what Mancuso had in mind when she opened her gym more than a year ago.

"Being active and fit is a part of my DNA. I live for it. It was only natural to take the opportunity when it came up," Mancuso told *Lake Tahoe News*. The star athlete is learning one day at a time about the business side. "But at the end of the day, I know I am giving a place to the community to come and play and have fun and feel really good."

Mancuso's father, Ciro, owns the land and the building, which has stood for 12 years under a different name.

The ski racer also relies on a competent team that helps the customers by "inspiring them to reach their goals." If that's not enough to hammer home the mission of the gym, the signs in the group exercise room remind others who aspire to be the best like Mancuso to place the end result in sight. They say: "Follow Your Dreams" and "Commit to be Fit."

The hallway leading to the women's locker room also serves as a reminder to working hard at fitness, at least for the prospective Olympian in all of us. The hall is lined with posters of the Olympic Games, a touch sure to instill pride and chills in even the most cynical.

The local Olympian would like to see another bid for the Winter Games in Tahoe. A high-powered committee is working on the 2026 Games.

"I attribute 100 percent of my success as an Olympic ski racer

to the mountains and growing up in Squaw Valley," she said, admitting, though, she hasn't skied many other places in Tahoe to compare where the women's downhill run should be located.

Squaw named a run after her called Julia's Gold.

"Although the run on KT is steep and short, it's a ton of fun. There is really nothing like skiing in my hometown," she said.

The vibrant 28-year-old Mancuso, who was born in Reno, tries to return to Tahoe for a few weeks to train each year, although much of her life is on the road.



Andrew Finkelstein demonstrates how the Olympic setup works.

Still, her gym lives on without her physical presence. And a spike in membership when she took over the operation showed the power of the image mixed with a little elbow grease. The staff took out the tanning beds from the previous gym and focused entirely on a well-rounded fitness approach that members would embrace.

"We tried something a little more modern, and we tried to make it fun," Finkelstein said, while walking around the front

room.

Sure, there are many features one would find in a lot of fitness centers – 25 nautilus weight machines, a dozen cardio units, 15 free weights stations, dumbbells, kettlebells, jump ropes and plyometric accessories. It's the assortment mixed in with a wall of pull-up bars and stretching devices that make it stand out. Plus, one free weight corner is labeled the "Olympic setup."

"This is a little corner event in itself," Finkelstein said. He picked up the long weight bar, transporting an observer to the Summer Olympics.

Moreover, how many gyms can attract the Squaw Valley ski team in their spin rooms?

The TRX suspension classes often sell out, and the others such as "Cardio kickboxing," "Bosu strength and stability" and "Summer hardbodies" stay busy, according to Finkelstein.

Sometimes the workouts go outside – with esteemed general manager and triathlete Chris Cloyd taking the members out for a run in the center after their workouts.

"We work pretty hard keeping our members happy," Finkelstein said. And then there's Mancuso, who commended her staff for their efforts.

Sometimes Mancuso and the gym members think alike.

Mancuso said she plans to work on an approach for reducing injuries in her training in the upcoming year. This is also the goal of longtime gym member Keith Abrahms, who has come to the gym since its inception.

"It's the only thing that keeps me vertical," he said, while working on his biceps. The carpenter strives to keep his core intact to keep him out of medical clinics.

The Performance Training Center offers a standard annual membership for $50 a month.

Opinion: Cycling community lacks strong culture of safety

By Daniel Borenstein, Tri Valley Times

As I descended a narrow road from Ebbetts Pass, elevation 8,736 feet about 50 miles south of Lake Tahoe, another cyclist whipped past. I immediately realized she wasn’t going to make the next turn.

It all seemed to unfold in slow motion. She tried to correct as her bike slipped onto the dirt shoulder. Her back wheel slid out from underneath and she went splaying back across the pavement, upending the next rider. She was in bad shape; he seemed OK.

Some of us stopped. A few went back up the hill, shouting to slow down the next wave and prevent a massive pileup. Many riders passed carefully; but some were going so fast they couldn’t stop and had to dodge the fallen cyclists.

It reinforced my belief that the cycling community must adopt a stronger culture of safety.

We were among more than 3,000 participants last weekend in the

32nd annual Death Ride. The ominous marketing name emphasizes the physical challenge of the beautiful 129-mile route, which includes 15,000 feet of elevation gain over five mountain passes in thin High Sierra air.

Most properly trained and were ready for the climbing. But we couldn’t prepare for the reckless small minority of riders who seemed to think they could defy physics with no consequences and endangered all of us in the process.

They rode at excessive speeds; passed without calling out; even went around on the right side. To be sure, they were the exceptions, not the rule. But there were too many of them.

We all know cycling comes with risks. We ride on thin tires prone to flats. Our bikes are harder to stop than automobiles. We have nothing to protect our bodies other than a helmet and common sense.

Read the whole story