Mancuso takes gold in giant slalom for 15th national title

By USSA

WINTER PARK, Colo. – Olympic gold medalist Julia Mancuso of Squaw Valley powered through exhaustively soft snow at the Nature Valley U.S. Alpine Championships to take giant slalom gold and up her own national title record to 15.

Nineteen-year-old Norwegian Kristine Gjelsten Haugen was second ahead of 17-year-old Mikaela Shiffrin of Vail.

It was Mancuso's fourth straight giant slalom title and sixth of her career. She also has four super G titles, four combined titles and one downhill title.

World Cup overall champion Lindsey Vonn of Vail started the first run, but made an early exit after getting late into a hair pin turn.

Temperatures soared into the mid-60s creating soft snow conditions for the final run.

Volunteer-driven adaptive ski program gets kids on the snow

By Jill Oberly, Reno Gazette-Journal

Drive by Sky Tavern on a weekday afternoon and the hill is quiet, the parking lot empty.

But stop in on a Saturday or Sunday and the mountain is buzzing. A handful of chairlifts and even more trails are filled with some 2,500 kids learning how to ski under the watchful eyes of 350 volunteers.

Since 1948, the nonprofit has provided ski and snowboard instruction to children of the Truckee Meadows regardless of financial limitation. In 1995, it started giving snow sports instruction to those with cognitive and physical disabilities through the Sky Tavern Adaptive Program.

The adaptive program is unique because of the amount of time its participants get to spend on the snow. During the course of a season, students are on the hill eight weekend days, with two hours of instruction each day. Each week, a single child is paired with an instructor, and often that instructor is the same person. The frequency and consistency are keys to the program's success.

"A lot of the programs are, show up once and do it once, but this is really something that you can do as a part of your life, not just a one-day thing," said mom Emily Houston. "My son gets to go for eight weeks, every weekend. It is super affordable, and the guys that do it are so incredibly knowledgeable, talented and generous."

Houston's son Ben has cerebral palsy and is in his third year with the program.

In a typical season, both the adaptive and junior ski programs will start the second weekend in January. But this year, a lack of early season snow pushed the adaptive program start back to the weekend of Feb. 25, where it started at Mt. Rose-Ski Tahoe. Mother Nature finally cooperated, and the program operated at Sky Tavern the following weekend. This year's closing date is not firm. Organizers will wait to see how many

kids stick around for spring break, April 7-15, before making the call.

Read the whole story

Routine home maintenance can keep animals in the wild

By Cheryl Millham

As I look out the window and see it snow, it is hard to remember that last week was the start of spring. But in the world of wildlife, life goes on and spring is the start of new "wild" beginnings.



Coyotes and raccoons are breeding in the months of February, March and April. Once the female is impregnated, the gestation for both species is the same – 63 days. Most babies are born during April and May.

So, why am I telling you this bit of interesting news?

Now is the time to look around your house for any air vents which may have been pushed in or are missing. Also check to make sure the crawl space opening (the access to get under your house) is securely sealed. Also, look for vent openings into the attic area. Make sure all of these are repaired.

If your house is not kept in good repair, Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care will be getting a call from you asking how to get a raccoon out from under my house, or a statement saying that a coyote has had babies under my porch. It is always better to

repair your house before you have any wild animals living with you.



Now is the time ensure wildlife don't have babies at your house. Photos/LTWC

Coyotes are good parents and have to feed their babies, so they are always looking for more food in the months of April, May and June.



Also, please take extra special care of your small dogs and cats. To a coyote, they do not see them as a human’s loved pet. Coyotes just see them as food to keep their babies alive.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care at (530) 577.2273.

Cheryl Millham is executive director of Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care.

Wet, windy weather on the horizon

Wind will be the word most likely to describe the storm that is blowing toward Lake Tahoe.

The low pressure system will bring a cold front to the region starting Friday night. Winds from the south to southwest are expected, with a lake wind advisory in effect. Sustained winds are forecast to be about 30 mph, with gusts of 50 mph.

A winter storm warning is in effect above 5,000 feet from 7am Saturday to 7am Sunday.



Slick roads could lead to accidents like this one earlier this month on 15th Street in South Lake Tahoe where the driver ran into a tree. Photo/LTN

Rain at lake level is likely before 11am Saturday because it will be a warm storm. However, the precip will change to snow, with 5 to 10 inches collecting above 5,000 feet, with 1 to 2 feet above 6,500 feet.

By Tuesday the high in South Lake Tahoe is expected to be 57 degrees.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

California creeks, levees may be next battleground for public access

By Matt Weiser, Sacramento Bee

It was January 2010 when Shawn O'Brien visited her favorite paddling spot on Cache Creek, in Yolo County's scenic Capay Valley, and noticed something wasn't right.

The path to the water alongside Rumsey Bridge, which she had used for a decade to launch her canoe, was obstructed. Tree limbs, stumps and brush had been piled against the bridge, blocking the popular path.



For now, the Upper Truckee River is not part of discussion. Photo/LTN file

In subsequent visits over the next few months, the debris pile grew larger and the message became clear: The public wasn't welcome.

"I was so disappointed," said O'Brien, who lives in Ukiah. "It made me crazy, and so I kind of went to work."

O'Brien thus became another agitator in the loose cadre of citizens fighting to protect access to creeks and rivers.

Public access to coastal beaches has been a high-profile struggle for decades. The same battle on inland waterways, however, has received far less attention. The public has similar legal rights in both situations, but the legal thicket seems to get bigger as the waterway in question gets smaller.

"Even as an experienced attorney and kayaker, it's hard to know what to do to approach this problem," said Walter Schmelter, a Sacramento attorney and longtime kayaker who teamed with O'Brien to fight for access to Cache Creek. "It's a daunting task for an individual of any stripe."

One of the biggest fronts in the battle may become the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, where 1,000 miles of levees have provided public fishing access for more than a century. In recent years many of those levees have sprouted forbidding "No

Trespassing” signs.

The California Constitution since 1879 has guaranteed the public the right to access waters of the state. In addition, the water itself and the fish that swim in it are legally owned by the public.

Yet ensuring that citizens can reach the water and its fish is not always simple.

Read the whole story

Mancuso wins 14th national super G title

By USSA

WINTER PARK, Colo. – Julia Mancuso of Squaw Valley landed a massive 1.2 second super G victory at the Nature Valley U.S. Alpine Championships Friday to extend her national title record to 14 in spring-like Winter Park.

Leanne Smith of North Conway, N.H., nabbed silver with Laurenne Ross of Bend, Ore., bronze.

It was the fourth super G U.S. Championship gold medal of Mancuso’s 12-year career with the U.S. Ski Team.

“Winning my 14th national title is pretty cool, but I’m going to race until I have 30,” Mancuso said. “It’s spring conditions and kind of like an obstacle course. It’s always fun to come to nationals to see all the enthusiasm of the clubs from across America.”

Women’s Nature Valley U.S. Alpine Championships action continues Saturday with giant slalom in Winter Park.

Birder to give 2 lessons along Carson River

Discover dabblers, divers, and other feathered friends on an early morning walk with Jim Woods, local birder and member of the Lahontan Audubon Society.

See what species are coming and going during the annual spring migration, and what birds will stick around all year. In May, the males will be singing their territorial and nesting songs and will be filling the forest with song. In August, identify the birds in changing plumage from breeding to winter feather and from fledgling to adult as they prepare for the upcoming winter migration. The trips will be along the Carson River and surrounding lands.

The dates are May 26 and Aug. 4, both from 8-11am, and starting at Sorensen’s Resort in Hope Valley.

More information is online.

Injured cub leaves Tahoe to return home to the wild

By Kathryn Reed

No. 8626 is home.

While still small at 35 pounds, this black bear left Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care at the break of dawn Thursday headed for Soda Lake near San Luis Obispo. This is the area where she was picked up in September and where California Department of Fish and Game officials released her later Thursday.

At Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care animals don't receive names. This is because they are not pets and this is not a zoo. It's a rehab facility for wildlife.



The last bear club rehabbed this season at Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care was returned to the wild March 29. Photos/Kathryn Reed

When this bear came in she was without a mom, was wandering around San Luis Obispo, and not eating even though she would scamper up pear and apple trees.

When Kevin Willitts, LTWC's veterinarian, examined her he

found an injury under her chin. An abscess had formed that made her unable to swallow. She was losing weight. Arriving at 16 pounds, she couldn't afford to lose much more.

Every two days Willits would work on her until the sore healed.

He was there when DFG picked her up March 29. He took blood, looked at her chin. No evidence of any injury.

"She's not the same bear," Willits says. And that's a good thing. Now she is a healthy bear ready to live in on her own.

It was a slow road to recovery. It was soft foods to begin with – like oatmeal and applesauce. She eventually graduated to solid foods.

Still, being so small, she was never put in with the five other cubs Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care took in last year. Those animals were returned to the wild earlier this year. But based on this one's size, she was kept longer to put a little bulk on her and to give her a better chance at surviving.

Marc Kenyon, associate wildlife biologist with DFG, said a colleague this week had checked the area out where the bear was to be released.

"The rains we've gotten have really greened up the area," Kenyon said, adding there is plenty of food and water for this youngster.

Normally bears are released into a den while they are hibernating. With bears out and about, a den was not her destination.

To get her into the cage in the back of the pickup she had to be tranquilized. Mixing the Telazol, which comes in powder form, with water, Kenyon puts it in a syringe that is the attached to what looks like a long pole.

She’s upstairs in the bobcat cage wondering who these people are.

It takes a few minutes for her to get woozy. When she is too out of it to harm anyone, Willits hands her to LTWC volunteer Barry Trammell. He carries what looks like an oversized stuffed animal to the scale in the garage. (LTWC is operated out of the Millhams’ home on the outskirts of South Lake Tahoe.)

A monitor is hooked to her tongue to gauge her heartbeat. All her vitals are taken. Kenyon and his two assistants were to do the same when they reached their destination.

At this stage the bear can still feel, see and hear. She’s not totally out. On the table though, her eyes are covered to protect them and not have her become agitated so as to raise her heartbeat.

Kenyon put a tag in her ear – just in case she is caught again they know her history.

Cheryl Millham isn’t sad to her go. It’s the right thing. And it’s what she and husband Tom have been doing for 34 years – rehabbing wild animals.

“They are going on to their next step of life. No animal should be kept in a cage,” Cheryl Millham said.

ngg_shortcode_0_placeholder (Click on photos to enlarge.)

Sports academy to be offered in S. Tahoe starting this fall

By Kathryn Reed

In a 4-0 decision, the Lake Tahoe Unified School District board voted to launch the South Lake Tahoe Mountain Sports Academy.

Board member Judy Cefalu was recused because her son, Chris Cefalu, is one of the owners of Tahoe Sports & Entertainment. TSE will bring the hockey and figure skating components to the academy.



Sierra-at-Tahoe will be the mountain where skiers and snowboarders will train.

While all the particulars have not been worked out, the plan is for the academy to be running at the start of the school year in the fall.

“When we first went to the city, education was a component of it,” Chris Cefalu told the board. His company took over operation of the South Lake Tahoe Ice Arena last summer with the idea of increasing opportunities on the ice.

He envisions a handful of people being involved the first year, growing to maybe 10 in year two, and possibly having enough youths to field a team in year three. These would be traveling teams. The hockey season runs August-January.

Amy Jackson, who has a background in competitive figure

skating, will be the counselor for the students. She works at Mount Tallac High.

“I do understand the mentality of competitive athletes. They do need flexibility from teachers and support staff,” Jackson told the board during the March 27 meeting.

Academic components would be structured to fit the schedule of the respective sports involved.

Board member Sue Novasel during the study session before the meeting and during comments before the vote was taken kept bringing up concerns about possible NIAA issues and wanting Heavenly Mountain Resort – where she skis – to be involved.

Employees from Heavenly Resort and Heavenly Foundation were in the audience Tuesday night. It was a packed room for the study session, with about two dozen people.

As for the high school sports issue, the academy is about training high caliber athletes. While some in the academy may ride for South Tahoe High, the academy is not about the high school ski team, plus there are no high school hockey teams in the NIAA.

Maddie Bowman, a South Tahoe High senior who took silver in the superpipe at this year’s Winter X Games and is second overall in the Dew Tour rankings, told the board, “I think this is a good idea.” She said an academy would help student-athletes be more successful.

Educators believe the academy could grow to include other sports and involve all grade levels.

Tahoe Grizzlies qualify for state championships

By Ted Parkhill

The Pee Wee hockey team from the South Tahoe Amateur Hockey Association had what officials are calling an amazing weekend of playoff hockey in Oakland. They placed second overall across Northern California.

With this strong finish, the team qualified to compete at the California State Hockey Championships in San Jose April 13-15.

On March 23, the team faced the California Cougars Pee Wee team from Cupertino. The Tahoe Grizzlies came out strong and triumphed by pouncing on the Cougars 4-2. On Saturday morning, the Grizzlies faced the Fresno Monsters, losing 5-3. The Grizzlies demonstrated the depth of the team with their three goals scored by three players.

Saturday afternoon the Grizzlies stomped on the Redwood City Black Stars, 7-2. Reiss Jensen of Reno scored a hat trick and Edward Parkhill of Incline Village also had three points with one goal and two assists.

The championship game was Sunday afternoon. Again, the Grizzlies faced the Monsters. It was a hard fought game, but in the end the Monsters were hungrier than the Grizzlies. The Monsters won 3-2.

The Fresno Monsters and the Tahoe Grizzlies earned a spot at the California Amateur Hockey Association’s annual state

championships.

Ted Parkhill is a member of the South Tahoe Amateur Hockey Association.