Lake Tahoe Relay race a labor of love for family

By Chris Murray, Reno Gazette-Journal

Every year in early June, April Carter and her family gather for a reunion at Lake Tahoe.

But unlike most family reunions, this one isn't just about catching up and reminiscing about old times. It's largely about work. And a race.

That race is the DeCelle Memorial Lake Tahoe Relay, which celebrates its 47th anniversary this year and is the oldest distance relay race in the United States.

"We're just trying to carry on the tradition," Carter said.

Carter's father, Robert DeCelle, created the seven-person, 72-mile relay that circles Lake Tahoe in 1965. It's steadily grown and an expected 117 teams and 820 runners will line up when the race begins at 7 a.m. Saturday.

DeCelle served as the administrative assistant for U.S. Olympic teams in 1968 and 1972 and often trained athletes at Tahoe's high altitudes. It was then that he decided to create this race and make it his labor of love.

Read the whole story

Bull riding at county fair to

test cowboys' prowess

A good bull ride is symbiotic and competitive at the same time. Part pitted warfare between man and beast, part beautiful partnership – where for a mere eight seconds the two become one.

Cowboys endure cracked ribs and plenty more for the chance to achieve the high … to feel it even once.



They hope and pray to pick the bull named "Little Hummer" or "Slim Slam," so they get their shot at a perfect ride, because even if they stay on for the full eight seconds, none of it matters unless they also have an outstanding animal.

A really good bull, the one that gets good scoring and the one a rider hopes he'll pick, doesn't just buck a lot. He spins and kicks and puts his whole heart into knocking the rider off.

Humpz & Hornz is a Professional Bull Riders Contractor , with upward of 70 bulls in the herd, including such high scorers as Spartacus, Funky Music, Slim Slam and Little Hummer.

In bull riding, both the rider and the bull are judged on a one to 25 scale by two judges, with a possible total score of 50 points for each. A 22-point bull is considered a good bull,

On June 17 at the El Dorado County Fairgrounds, dozens of cowboys will attempt to ride Wes Ibrahimi's bulls. They'll vie for the small chance at a little bit of prize money, a silver buckle and a perfect eight seconds. Many of us might consider it a foolhardy act, but they'll do it for the love of it, pure and simple.

The bull riding starts at 8pm in the Grandstands at the El

Dorado County Fairgrounds. It’s free with admission to the fair.

The 2011 El Dorado County Fair is June 16-19 in Placerville. For more information, call (530) 621.5860.

Work day on Corral mountain bike trail

On Saturday, Hilride returns to South Lake Tahoe to begin work on lower Corral Trail for mountain bike riders.

Bring bikes and riding gear.

The agenda:

Meet at U.S. Forest Service office (College Drive, South Lake Tahoe) June 11 at 9am.

9-10am Workshop Part 1- Trail analysis overview

Review project overview and goals

Review field workshop goals

Review workshop process

Carpool to Corral Trail

Meet at Corral Trailhead 11am

11-noon Workshop Part 1 – Trail analysis preview

Meet at Corral Trailhead

Shuttle to top of Upper Corral Trail

Descend Upper and Lower Corral Trails

Objective – Establish basic trail characteristics, features, speed, flow, basic inventory of features, and ground truth map.

1-3pm Workshop Part 2 – In-depth trail analysis

Regroup at Lower Corral Trailhead

Shuttle to top of Upper Corral Trail

Descend Upper and Lower Corral Trails

Objective – In-depth analysis of Lower Corral Trail to establish specific user speeds and flows that will inform the design and planning of new and modified trail features.

3-4pm Workshop Part 3 – Trail analysis review

Regroup at Lower Corral Trailhead

Shuttle to top of Upper Corral Trail

Descend Upper and Lower Corral Trails

Objective – Review trails metrics, analysis and proposed trail features, placement, speeds and user flows to build group consensus.

Workshop participants

Participants should come prepared to ride with bikes, clothes and equipment, plus additional layers of clothing to stay warm while talking.

Participants are encouraged to bring vehicles capable of carrying multiple bicycles, in addition to cameras, and lunch for the day.

Officials warn river users of raging, frigid waters

By Cathy Locke, Sacramento Bee

With sunshine and temperatures in the 80s forecast for this weekend, the Sacramento region's rivers and waterways beckon.

But public safety officials recommend steering clear of the water, particularly the rivers, for at least one more week.

The flow in the Sacramento River at Freeport on Wednesday was 46,000 cubic feet per second, about 2 1/2 times the historical average of 18,000 cfs for the date, said Maury Roos, chief hydrologist with the California Department of Water Resources.

"We've posted signs at launch points warning of cold water and high flows," said Randy Lewis, park ranger supervisor for Sacramento County Regional Parks.

Parks officials issued an advisory Tuesday urging people to avoid recreational activities on the lower American River after the Bureau of Reclamation increased releases from Folsom Dam to 9,000 cubic feet per second. The bureau said flows are likely to increase to 15,000 cfs in coming days.

Roos said 64 percent of the expected runoff into the American River from this year's snowpack has already occurred and much of the remaining 36 percent is likely to come down the river next week, generating some of the highest flows before tapering off for the summer.

Read the whole story

Tour de California in Tahoe a question mark for 2012

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – Will Lake Tahoe be part of the 2012 Tour de California and what do the financials from this year look like for the region?

“Don’t know” is the answer to both questions.

South Shore officials have an appointment to speak with AEG officials – owners of the race – at the end of the month about what the future holds for the area. Until all the invoices come in, the money issue is a moving target.



Next time the Tour de California is in Tahoe, everyone hopes lighter weight clothing is required. Photo/Lisa J. Tolda

With Andrew Messick, president of AEG Sports, leaving this month to be CEO of World Triathlon Corporation, it could make the future of the tour interesting. He has been the heart and sole behind the road bike event.

On top of that, Amgen's three-year contract to be title sponsor expired when the race finished last month. It's not known if the biotech firm will bid to retain that designation.

Carol Chaplin, Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority executive director, told *Lake Tahoe News* on June 9 the South Shore wants to be part of the multi-day bike race again, but it doesn't have to be the initial start location. Instead, being the start or end site for a stage would be more to its liking.

Jerry Bindel, a member of the LTVA board, on Thursday said hosting the end of a stage is his preference.

The board discussed the race that never was at its June 9 meeting. The South Shore was supposed to be the start location May 15, with Northstar-at-Tahoe the site where riders would end stage 1. Stage 2 was to start the next day from Squaw Valley. Instead, Mother Nature (aka snow) forced tour organizers to bypass Tahoe completely and start the race that Monday in Nevada City.

AEG officials are contemplating having the race in 2013 start in Southern California, which weather-wise could make a stop in Tahoe more appealing. Santa Rosa is the 2012 start city. Officials are also talking about having one year be all Southern California and another all Northern California.

Chaplin on Thursday told her board, "We did get a huge amount of pre-event press. We got everything we wanted out of that."

But it was the international television exposure that would ideally entice people to Lake Tahoe that was to be the big long-term financial benefit of hosting this event. That isn't likely to happen even though Tahoe received some TV coverage

at the get-go.

Chaplin and Andy Chapman, tourism guru for North Lake Tahoe Resort Association, were at the finish in Thousand Oaks – where they were on TV. But it wasn't the same as having Lake Tahoe as the backdrop for cameras.

Chaplin admitted the immediate economic boost from hosting the event fell flatter than anticipated.

Board member Jon Koster (Harrah's-Harveys), Bindel (Lakeland Village) and Pat Ronan (Lakeshore Lodge) all said they had plenty of rooms available that weekend.

"We kept hearing 30,000 people, and if they were here, I don't know where they were staying," Koster said.

Bindel said while his property didn't see a boost in room nights from the bike race, overall he sees the event as a benefit for the community.

Chaplin pointed out without hard analysis of knowing why people were in town, it's possible the room nights could have been even worse had the race not been scheduled on the South Shore.

But the board members were also in agreement the region came together in a way that is seldom seen – that a sense of pride permeated the frigid temperatures that day and for the days leading up to that Sunday.

Sue Barton, LTVA deputy executive director, said with the riders and their entourages being in town several days before the race was to start, it meant they were seeing a better side of Tahoe than on race day.

"I know some rode to Fallen Leaf Lake and some ate at Sprouts. They interacted with the locals," Barton said.

The board had praise for staff, volunteers and the community.

The weather affected the race in ways that went beyond not having the event in Tahoe. It started with airline delays from points east of Tahoe that meant volunteers being patient while picking up dignitaries.

Volunteers willingly agreed to take a larger size T-shirt knowing they would have to wear it over their clothes to be identifiable. This meant being wet – not having a Gore-Tex outer layer on.

Riders, who had already submitted detailed menus of what they'd eat, had breakfast at 7am. After the initial delay word came in they would need to be fed again at 10am. But MontBleu and Harveys, the host hotels, weren't prepared to do that – financially or food-wise.

The tour paid for the meals. MontBleu had them go through the buffet and Harvey's put on another banquet breakfast.

This last-minute ability to juggle is part of the reason the tour has told local organizing officials they want Tahoe to be part of the tour again. Plus, the elevation gains and scenery are perfect for riders and spectators.

TRTA offers backcountry camps for youth

The Tahoe Rim Trail Association and Sierra Nevada Journeys are partnering for the fourth annual Youth Backcountry Camps summer program.

Youths ages 14-17 will develop backcountry skills in the mountains of Lake Tahoe, make new friends while learning about

the natural history of the basin, outdoor leadership, teamwork, and participate in a service learning project building part of the Tahoe Rim Trail.

Session 1 – July 6–8

Session 2 – July 24-26

Session 3 – July 28-30

Session 4 – Aug. 14-16.

For teens with some experience or interest in backcountry travel, there is YBCC2. Like YBCC, the five-day YBCC2 program focuses on backcountry skills and outdoor leadership development. This program provides an incredible wilderness experience for young people with experienced and well-trained staff from the Tahoe Rim Trail Association and Sierra Nevada Journeys.

YBCC2 dates are Aug. 6–8.

Register online.

For more information, go to the TRTA website or call Tom Rodriguez at (775) 298.0238.

Bucket list of state parks to see before they close

By Dixie Reid, Sacramento Bee

California's State Parks face an uncertain future. Because of budget cuts, Gov. Jerry Brown has proposed closing as many as 70 historic sites, beaches and recreation areas by July 2012.

If it happens, Californians no longer will have access to some of the state's most cherished treasures, such as the Governor's Mansion in Sacramento, a great fishing spot at Brannan Island and the enormous gold nugget on display at a Mariposa museum.

Here is a list of 15 must-see parks from the governor's "hit list" and the reasons they should be on everyone Californian's must-visit list during the next 13 months.

Be aware that services in some parks already have been reduced. For details on any site in the California State Parks system, go online.

Read the whole story

Harvesting cray fish may improve Tahoe's clarity

By Jeff Delong, Reno Gazette-Journal

The millions of crayfish skittering along the bottom of Lake Tahoe offer a promising economic opportunity and, if reduced in number, a possible chance to help improve the lake's threatened clarity.

That's the central message from a Yerington man who proposes a commercial venture to harvest crayfish on the lake's Nevada side.

If successful in changing state law and obtaining permission from all necessary regulatory agencies, Fred Jackson could begin pulling crayfish from Tahoe and selling them to restaurants and food wholesalers sometime next year.

“We want to see if we can make a difference for the lake’s clarity and make a little money on the side,” said Jackson, 47.

Crayfish, also known as crawdads, are not native to Lake Tahoe. The Tahoe area’s first crayfish, believed to have come from the Klamath River, were introduced into Marlette Lake in 1895, according to a study prepared by scientists at University of Nevada, Reno and University of California, Davis.

Other introductions followed, and by 1932, crayfish were “thriving in the lake and its tributaries,” the study said.

Their numbers quickly skyrocketed. In 1967, an estimated 55 million crayfish lived in Tahoe. Today, the number is estimated at 220 million or more.

Catching and selling crayfish — a Cajun delicacy — just sounds like a good idea, Jackson said.

Read the whole story

Pro wrestlers to bring their muscle to El Dorado fair

Monstertruckin’ Otis and “The Russian Wolf” — two hulking guys with a long and storied past — face off in round No. 3 as the Sacramento Wresting Federation brings “Hangtown Showdown” to the El Dorado County Fair.

It’ll be a two-hour high adrenaline rush with eight intense matches featuring 20 wrestlers.



A trailer park superstar from Branson, Mo., Monstertruckin' sees himself as a defender of truth, justice and truckin'. Insult the "U.S. of A." and Otis is likely to call it an act of war. So, you can only imagine how Otis felt when "The Russian Wolf" Alexis Darevko rudely interrupted the ring announcer during a match in February by blasting the Russian National Anthem. The stage was set for mayhem.

The Russian Wolf, who is vehemently opposed to all things American, was met by a chorus of boos as he walked to the ring with a chain in hand. He launched into verbal assault on the crowd and delivered a drop kick to Otis's knee. Darevko worked the knee for most of the match, ultimately slapping on a figure-four leg lock. As the crowd got into it with chants of "U.S.A…U.S.A.," Otis mounted a comeback, hitting the Russian with two Truckin' splashes and the Monster drop for the win at the eight minute mark.

Now, Darevko realizes that Otis is one big stone (more like a boulder really) in his path to Russian dominance in the Sacramento Wresting Federation. And, it's something he plans to undo with a vengeance in Placerville.

Sacramento native Josh Edlow spearheads the Sacramento Wrestling Federation. Often featured on local radio and television, Edlow is well known in the community as an award-winning business manager, lifelong student, and committed family man.

The Sacramento Wresting Federation's "Hangtown Showdown" comes to the El Dorado County Fair on June 16 at 7pm in the Grandstands.

Tickets are $15 for adults and $9 juniors, fair admission is included.

The 2011 El Dorado County Fair is June 16 to 19 in

Placerville. For more information, call (530) 621.5860.

Sugar pine planting in Truckee

The Sugar Pine Foundation is planting sugar pine seedlings in Truckee June 11 from 10am-noon.

Where: From the intersection of Alder Creek Drive and Schussing Way, drive south on Schussing to a dirt Forest Service road on the left. Park and meet along the dirt road.

What: Bring a shovel or a trowel. Seedlings, some tools, planting instructions and light refreshments will be provided.

For more information, go online or call (650) 814.9565.