

Flood insurance not always a sure bet

By Matt Stevens, Los Angeles Times

For the last several months, officials from the Federal Emergency Management Agency have sounded a lot more like salesmen than bureaucrats. And their sales pitch for flood insurance – which harps on the dangers of El Niño while espousing the benefits of protecting your property – has largely worked.

Last week, as long-awaited rains arrived in California, FEMA announced a recent 12 percent increase in the number of flood insurance policies written statewide – a rise the agency said was the “first of its kind in recent history.”

But officials remain worried that people still mistakenly assume they are covered for floods under their standard homeowner policies. That might explain why only 9% of homeowners in the West have flood insurance, according to industry estimates.

[Read the whole story](#)

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• The South Lake Tahoe Recreation Facilities Joint Powers Authority is seeking applicants to fill three positions on the Bicycle Advisory Committee. The deadline to apply is Jan. 22 at 5pm. For an application, call 530.542.6006 or email eapalazzo@cityofslt.us.

• East West Resorts is officially rebranding to East West Destination Hospitality. Celebrating its 30th anniversary in 2016, the company offers a variety of North Lake Tahoe vacation rentals, including residences in the Village at Northstar and at Old Greenwood, which features a Jack Nicklaus Signature golf course and 200 whole and fractionally-owned residences.

• Tahoe Cross Country in Tahoe City has trails designated for people who ski with their dogs.

• Truckee River Winery is hosting a fundraising event with High Fives Foundation on March 9. Ice carvers will have four hours to create their artwork. Here is an **application**.

West Slope fire chief accused of domestic violence

An El Dorado County fire chief is back behind bars – this time on domestic violence charges.



William Dekker

Garden Valley Fire Chief William Dekker was arrested early Jan. 13. Bail was set at \$7,500.

Dekker, 60, was **arrested in December** on driving under the influence charges. On Dec. 22 the district announced that Dekker had resigned and the board appointed Linda Szczepanik as interim chief.

The problem is Dekker never turned in any paperwork to officially resign so he has been getting paid to not work.

Financial details of the resignation have not been released.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Sheila Charlene Middlebrook – 1950-2015



Charlene Middlebrook

On Wednesday morning, Dec. 23, 2015, my wife and best friend, Charlene Middlebrook, lost her long and courageous battle with cancer.

As with everything she did, Charlene handled the cancer and a subsequent stroke, with grace, courage, total resolve and of course her humor and her smile, once again being the hero in our family.

Charlene and I met here in Tahoe 35 years ago and soon discovered that we had both grown up in Southern California about two miles apart. We worked hard, played hard, made many friends, raised our two sons and enjoyed every single minute of living in this beautiful place.

During the summers, Charlene took "The Boys" to every trail, lake and stream in the basin, taught them how to ski, coached them in soccer and was an unwavering advocate for their education. There are many, many teachers and counselors in our school district who are more than well aware of Charlene's thoughts on education. The result of that is two very successful and accomplished young men.

Charlene was a hair stylist for almost 40 years and made many great friends with her business. We joked that when I was

doing news at the radio station that about half of my news came from her shop, which she shared with her friends, Joanne, Roxanne, Pam and Leo.

Charlene was preceded in death by her parents, Ada Lee and Charlie Henderson of Paramount, Calif. She is survived by her beloved sons, Devin (Ashley) and Grant (Kelsey), and my son, Matt (Lisa) and my daughter, Monica (Alex), and our grandchildren; Julia, Brady, Grace, Claire, and Della. She also leaves behind her sister, Lynette of Irvine, Calif., and her brother Rick (Margaret) of Hollydale, cousin and best friend Judy Lampshire of Carson City and her husband, Mike, and their children and grandchildren.

We want to thank the staff of Renown Cancer Institute, but most important, the staff, physicians and nurses of Barton Memorial Hospital and Barton Skilled Nursing. Their care, dedication and kindness added time and quality to Charlene's life. We know that she touched your hearts as you touched hers. Special thanks to Angie, Jill, Christine, Gil, June, Kelly, Heather, Ibeth, Patrick and Amy, and Jason Collin for always being there for us. You will always be like family. I also want to thank Barton Hospice for getting us through Charlene's final day. And a very special thanks to the man who could always get Charlene to smile through this, our friend Dr. Henning Mehrens.

Charlene always saw the good in everything and everyone. I will miss her kindness, her strength, her love, her humor, her smile ... and those incredibly beautiful green eyes.

Please remember Charlene by donating whatever you can to the American Cancer Society.

We will not have services at this time, but may have a memorial this summer.

– Paul Middlebrook

Stalled luxury housing complex in Stateline set to break ground at mobile home park site

By Kathryn Reed

Luxurious, high-end housing on the shores of Lake Tahoe designed to be second or third homes for the wealthy – presumably from the Bay Area – is set to break ground in summer 2016.

The project isn't new. It's been stalled because of the economy and the inability of the developers to secure financing.

Tahoe Beach Club, when it is built out, will include 143 units, a private 40,000-square-foot beach club on the water, restaurant, spa, workout area and facilities for banquets-parties-weddings. The club will offer memberships to the public.

It will be built in three phases, with occupancy expected to be ready in 2017. This will include 46 units, the clubhouse and gatehouse. Completion of the project will depend on how sales go as well as loans. If all goes according to plan, Tahoe Beach Club could be built out in 40 to 44 months once construction starts.

All of this will be built at the end of Kahle Drive in Stateline. By summer the remaining trailers at Tahoe Shores Mobile Home Park will be gone. The remaining residents have

been given notice.

The project has been controversial since 2002 when the trailer park changed hands and the owners made it known the current residents would have to move.



Mobile home residents will need to have different lodging in spring 2016.
Photo/LTN

“On the human side we want to do the best we can,” Tom Castaneda told *Lake Tahoe News*. He and Bob Mecay are the principles of Tahoe Beach Club. “We’ve met with every single one and told them the good news. I can give them some direction, which they have been looking for for 15 years.”

The developers will be responsible for helping with relocating the remaining 11 coach owners. There are also about 30 trailers that are being rented.

Part of the approved plans call for turning apartments on the street into deed restricted low income housing in which many of these people would qualify.

Castaneda would not put a price on the units, but mentioned how new high-end construction not on the lake is going for

between \$900 and \$1,000 per square foot. These units are expected to be between 1,250- and 3,500-square-feet. On the low end that is \$1.125 million. All will be whole ownership.

The duo doesn't regret delaying the project.

"If we had gone into the market in 2009 when it was first approved, it would have been a disaster. I think it would have been extremely difficult to get construction financing. If we had gotten it, it would have been hard money and leveraged strongly," Castaneda said.

During this time there has been some work done on the property. A nearly 160-foot pier, part of which is floating, has been installed.

More recently the Kingsbury General Improvement District pump house that was near the beach has been moved to the far southwest section of the property near where the current entrance to the trailer park is. A larger building had to be built to meet certain codes and regulations. Tahoe Beach Club gave KGID an easement on the property for the new structure.

Another advantage to the delay is being able to keep with contemporary design and interior features. While neither the footprint of the property nor the height of the buildings is allowed to change per the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency permit, the look and interiors can. There can also be fewer units, just not more.

"We can decide what the market is calling for," Castaneda said.

Final architectural renderings are not complete.

IMI has been hired to be the sales team – the same company that sold Martis Camp and Lahontan in the Truckee area. Presales are likely to begin in the spring.

Opinion: U.S. should never host another Olympics

By Brian Alexander, Outside

After enough pleading and promises to make a desperate boyfriend seem hard to get, the International Olympic Committee thought it had the final list of candidates that would compete to host the 2024 Summer Olympics: Paris, Rome, Hamburg, Budapest, and—a last-minute substitute for Boston—Los Angeles. But then, late last year, Hamburg said no thanks, leaving four organizing committees in four cities who say they really, really want the Games. So now we wait. And wait.

In the meantime, there will be two years of politicking, schmoozing, and wining and dining. (The IOC promises there won't be any outright bribery this time, unlike with past Olympic beauty contests like Salt Lake City.) Then, two years from now, in September of 2017, IOC pooh-bahs will meet in Lima, Peru, and, to great fanfare, announce the lucky winner. There will be scenes of jubilation among the assembled campaign workers from the city that prevails.

The heartache of remorse will take a while to settle in.

Los Angeles mayor Eric Garcetti is absolutely sure there will be no heartache if L.A. ends up winning. He says he's thrilled about the idea of subbing for Boston, whose citizens wisely balked at the enormous financial uncertainty of hosting. In what must be some sort of record for speedy government action, a motion was introduced before the L.A. city council to authorize Garcetti and council president Herb Wesson to negotiate with the IOC for 2024. Before Angelenos could react, the city was off to the Olympic races. Exactly how, or if,

residents there will have a say about the idea remains murky, but here's hoping that, inspired by Boston's and Hamburg's good sense, Angelenos ultimately reject the Games, too. And while we're at it, let's forget about hosting the Olympics in the United States at all—not just in 2024, but forever.

Read the whole story

Unlimited vacation time a growing trend

By Steve Twedt, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Unlimited vacation time sounds like a pretty good job perk.

This year, social media site LinkedIn joined the still-small-but-growing roster of companies offering employees as much time off as they'd like, with the understanding that the coupon is good only if they get their work done.

Estimates about how many companies offer open-ended vacations run in the 2 to 4 percent range, mostly small startups but including none other than General Electric, which earlier this year began offering unlimited vacation time to many of its executives.

Besides being a strong recruitment and retention tool, such policies can free companies from any unused vacation pay liability if they currently allow vacation days to accrue. Proponents say the policies also bestow a sense of "ownership" among employees that cultivates a more committed workforce.

Read the whole story

Time Warner pushes for binge-watching rights to combat Netflix

By Gerry Smith, BloombergNews

Time Warner Inc.'s strategy against Netflix is taking shape.

Hoping to keep viewers who are dropping cable subscriptions for online streaming services, Time Warner is negotiating to make full seasons of more shows available to pay-TV customers on demand, according to Time Warner Chief Financial Officer Howard Averill.

Time Warner's cable networks, which include TNT and TBS, have "made it clear" to Hollywood studios that they want so-called "stacking rights," or the ability to air full seasons of shows they buy, Averill said.

Read the whole story

Incline racer scores first World Cup points

By USSA

FLACHAU, Austria – Veteran Resi Stiegler led the U.S. team in a night of firsts at the Audi FIS Ski World Cup slalom Tuesday

night, taking 15. But under the lights, it was a pair of young U.S. Ski Team members that shined, with Paula Moltzan (Lakeville, Minn.) and Lila Lapanja (Incline Village) scoring their first career World Cup points.

Veronika Velez Zuzulova of Slovakia won the race for her third career World Cup win. Sarka Strachova of the Czech Republic was second, followed by World Cup slalom leader Frida Hansdotter of Sweden in third.

Moltzan and Lapanja joined Stiegler in qualifying for the second run, and both scored their first career World Cup points. Lapanja was 23 and Moltzan finished 25th. Stiegler, qualifying for the first time in her career for a second run at Flachau, was 15.

Skiing in only her third World Cup start, Lapanja came out of the 37 start position and laid down a smooth first run, finishing 22. Lapanja, who made her World Cup debut earlier this season in Aspen, went back to the NorAm circuit and won a pair of slalom races in Panorama, British Columbia, last month before joining the team in Europe after the holidays.

"I had to be a little bit smarter with my tactics (on the second run), let the skis go out a little bit more, but I was a little bit impatient because I was so amped," Lapanja said. "I feel pretty good, but I'm a competitor and I already know what I want to do differently to go even faster. But this is an amazing start and I can't wait to see what the future holds."

End of drought not an easy thing to know

By Paul Rogers, San Jose Mercury News

Now that 2016 has gotten off to a wet start, with a series of El Niño storms drenching California in recent days, the question is turning up with increasing frequency at dinner parties and coffee shops:

“How will we know when the drought is over?”

The answer, water experts say, is more complicated than you’d think.

Simply put: The drought could end this year, according to state water officials. But for that to happen, as California enters the fifth year of the worst drought in the state’s history, rains will have to continue arriving in pounding, relentless waves through April to fill depleted reservoirs and dry rivers and push the Sierra snowpack to at least 150 percent of normal.

Read the whole story