

Food guru Estee reorganizing restaurant group

By Johnathan L. Wright, Reno Gazette-Journal

After a 2015 he described as “hell, just hell,” chef Mark Estee is reorganizing his restaurant group. Chief among the changes: If a deal proceeds as expected later today, Dec. 11, he will sell a 50 percent stake in Campo, his flagship restaurant in downtown Reno, to a “financial partner.” Estee declined to identify that partner or the amount of the transaction.

In an exclusive interview on the evening of Dec. 10 with Johnathan L. Wright, the food and drink editor of *RGJ* Media, Estee discussed the state of his restaurant group, which stretches from Mammoth, Calif., to Lake Tahoe to the Biggest Little City. The Campo deal was the first subject of the discussion.

“My financial partner will be running the systems at Campo, the COO (chief operating officer) stuff I’m not very good at,” Estee said. “Campo is my baby.”

Read the whole story

CalFire Academy investigating cheating allegations

By Robert Handa, NBC Bay Area

CalFire is taking measures to clean up its reputation after a

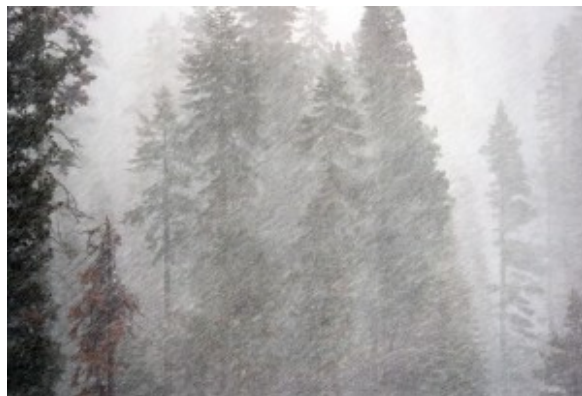
state investigation indicated that some academy cadets may have been cheating.

CalFire is in the midst of getting ready for the winter, and El Niño, and officials definitely want to put the scandals behind them. But they also say they believe some of the allegations about firefighting training are misleading. The agency wants to dispel any public doubts that some firefighters were not properly trained.

A statewide California Highway Patrol investigation indicated some academy cadets said instructors helped students, including manipulating tests, in order to graduate as many cadets as possible. The investigation also revealed there were reported incidents of Instructors drinking alcohol on the job and sexual harassment.

Read the whole story

Snow brings power outage, cancels some classes



Snow was blowing at Sierra-

at-Tahoe for much of Dec.

10. Photo/Provided

Updated: 7:29am

A large part of Meyers is without power this morning. Liberty Utilities has no estimate of when it will be restored.

Initially there were 3,500 customers in the dark. That is down to about 400 in the Christmas Valley area.

They still don't know the cause of the outage.

All schools in Lake Tahoe Unified School District are open Dec. 11.

Douglas County schools are open, too. However, only the main bus stops will be serviced.

Schools in Incline Village are on a two-hour delay.

All schools are closed in Tahoe Truckee Unified School District.

A winter storm warning remains in effect for the Lake Tahoe Basin until 10am Friday, with a few more inches of snow likely. Many parts of the basin received 8 inches or more of snow in the last 24 hours. About a foot of white stuff fell in Meyers. Donner Summit is reporting 16 inches.

It's likely going to be a powder at ski resorts for the next few days. The National Weather Service in Reno is calling for snow through Sunday.

Roads are slick and chain controls are in effect. For the most current road conditions, click on the state icons on the home page of *Lake Tahoe News*.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Tahoe's needy, other nonprofits (except Christmas Cheer) praise EDC Food Bank



Diane Rawski, from left, Carson Alexander and Jennifer Patterson help at the Dec. 2 El Dorado County Food Bank distribution. Photo Copyright 2015 Carolyn E. Wright

By Kathryn Reed

Carson Alexander had to choose between school and volunteering. He chose volunteering.

The South Tahoe High School senior skipped class one day last week in order to help the El Dorado County Food Bank.

He assisted several of the nearly 80 people who showed up at the American Legion Hall parking lot in South Lake Tahoe to get frozen chicken and seafood, and pantry staples. Normally

that number is closer to 200, but the truck came a week late because of the snow.

“Without this, I don’t know what I would be eating,” Steve, who was waiting in line, told *Lake Tahoe News*. He went from making \$120,000 a year as a truck driver to existing on \$900 a month.

He has a 17-year-old son who is an athlete who he is trying to keep fed. Steve said he has lost 40 pounds “because of starving.”

Renee is disabled, raising two kids on her own. Child support is limited.

“It’s a difficult position to be in to need help,” she said. But she is also thankful and grateful for those who make this allocation possible.

For Diane she is most thankful for the protein the Food Bank distributes, and the fact that the food is healthy.

They all praised the summer farmers’ market where the Food Bank brings fresh produce.



In 2015, El Dorado Food Bank has provided 176,071 pounds of food to people and nonprofits in South Lake Tahoe. Photo Copyright 2015 Carolyn E. Wright

The Dec. 2 truck was the last one for the year. The next one is not scheduled until late January. The truck comes once a month to hand out food to people who qualify based on their income. The truck also makes rounds to about a half dozen nonprofits to fill their pantries.

Diane Weidinger, who runs Bread & Broth, said her nonprofit depends on the Food Bank.

“If it wasn’t for the product we get from (them), we would have to buy everything. That would cost a lot of money,” Weidinger told *Lake Tahoe News*. “We receive all of our protein from the Food Bank.”

Bread & Broth makes a hot meal every Monday for about 100

people. The organization just started Bread & Broth 4 Kids, which provides food for youngsters and their families over the weekend. B&B also works with Lake Tahoe Presbyterian Church to provide soup to the needy every Friday through a program called Second Serving.

In South Lake Tahoe, the Family Resource Center, Kelly Ridge Senior Apartments, and Senior Plaza Apartments also receive goods from the Food Bank.

The Food Bank is a nonprofit based on the West Slope. It has nothing to do with county government.

But not every entity on the South Shore likes the Food Bank.

“I hate them,” Joann Shope with Christmas Cheer told *Lake Tahoe News*.

She and Mike Sproull, who runs the Food Bank, don’t have nice things to say about each other’s organization.



Protein and fresh produce are welcome deliveries from the El Dorado County Food Bank truck. Photo Copyright 2015 Carolyn E. Wright

There was a time when the Food Bank supplied Christmas Cheer. Shope contends they were given things people wouldn’t eat, like kale. Sproull said some of what he gets is from the U.S.

Department of Food and Agriculture. He doesn't have total control over what his warehouse is filled with.

Shope believes the two organizations are similar. The reality is her group is only helping their clients, which she claims is 1,000 a month, and the Food Bank is helping people directly as well as other nonprofits.

Christmas Cheer is always claiming to be out of cash, with bare shelves.

"We need turkeys badly or hams or anything; food or cash," Shope said last week. This is for the annual distribution of a Christmas dinner that takes place Dec. 21-22 at South Tahoe Middle School.

Shope pays thousands of dollars a year to get food from the Nevada Food Bank.

Most of the nonprofits using the El Dorado County Food Bank pay \$25 a month. Bread & Broth upped its payment to \$100/month last year.

"We feel because of our Adopt a Day program and how successful it is we want to support (the Food Bank). It is important to nonprofits that the truck comes up once a month with product. We all depend on it," Weidinger said.

The Food Bank got the attention of the folks who distribute funds from the American Century Championship golf tournament, receiving a check for \$7,500 this fall. Christmas Cheer got nothing. The Food Bank must spend all of that money on the South Shore.

Shope and Christmas Cheer board member Tom Davis have criticized that decision.

"We are sophisticated. We know how to raise money," Sproull said. In the South Lake Tahoe community alone the Food Bank supplies more than \$300,000 worth of food a year.

His goal is to have a warehouse on the South Shore. While Sproull has talked to folks here about doing so, it has not come to fruition. There is only so much land available for such an enterprise, and so many volunteers who could make it work.

Sproull envisions it would be open four to five days a week for people to get food. That is what Christmas Cheer is afraid of because then it might not be relevant.

The warehouse would also then be a site where nonprofits could come get food. What the nonprofits would likely have to give up is some control and the direct access to donors like grocery stores.

Opinion: Exercising self-discipline matters

By David Mochel, Huffington Post

I do not consider myself religious in any traditional sense, nor would I say that I am deeply patriotic, but I am tired of “American” and “Christian” being used as descriptors of what is happening in the popular discourse.

I am tired of letting the loudest among us be those who call for un-American behavior in the name of patriotism. I am tired of letting the dialogue be monopolized by those who pass off prejudice as faith. Compassion matters. Dignity matters. Exercising self-discipline when we are scared and angry matters.

Human beings are biological creatures with lots of biological

impulses. But we also have the capacity to see beyond our temporary urges for violence and oppression. We have the ability to anchor ourselves in, and act out of, enduring and inspiring principles. If we do not use the wisdom we have access to, then what exactly makes us human?

Read the whole story

Finding ways to thwart the jerk at work

By Phyllis Korkki, New York Times

Most of us have days at work when we walk around with a spring in our step and perform our tasks with gusto – and other days when our feet drag and we just can't seem to get motivated. A new study encourages employees to look more closely at the people around them as one reason for that disparity.

A team of researchers that included Gretchen Spreitzer, a management professor at the University of Michigan Ross School of Business, found that some employees are “de-energizers” who spread their dispiriting attitude to others. In nonacademic parlance, these people are known as jerks. Professor Spreitzer wrote the study with Alexandra Gerbasi and Andrew Parker of Grenoble École de Management, Christine L. Porath of Georgetown University, and Rob Cross of the University of Virginia.

Almost everyone knows of prima donnas who get away with bad behavior because they are so good at their jobs. What managers may not realize is that this type of behavior spreads a dark cloud over everyone else, and the whole organization suffers,

Professor Spreitzer said.

Read the whole story

ZCES giving tree provides for those in need

Zephyr Cove Elementary School is looking for community members to take a name for the school's giving tree.

Counselor Jenay Aiksnoras tracks all of the students at the school and identifies the ones in need. Families in need complete a form requesting assistance in purchasing gifts for their children. The children get to request specific items; things their parents can't afford.

Unlike a toy drive, people know exactly what to buy for the child whose ornament they have chosen.

Unwrapped gifts are to be turned in with the ornament Aiksnoras by Dec. 17.

Jack Daniel's has special blend for Sinatra's 100th

By Christopher Null, Drink Hacker

Jack Daniel's is making a second stab at Sinatra's legendary love of JD with another ultra high-end bottling of its

signature Tennessee Whiskey. If you thought Sinatra Select was ostentatious, wait until you get a load of Sinatra Century, which arrives at more than twice the price.

Sinatra Century – bottled in honor of Frank’s 100th birthday – is made from the same type of alligator-charred barrels as Sinatra Select but otherwise offers no particular production information (including, as usual, any age statement). What JD has done, however, is work with the Sinatra family to taste and select the barrels that went into this bottling.

Bottles are individually numbered and come in elaborate gift packaging. They are bottled at 100 proof, perhaps another nod to the Ol’ Blue Eyes’ centennial. He would have been 100 on Dec. 12

Read the whole story

Help available for El Dorado County homeowners

El Dorado County through the HERO Property Assessed Clean Energy Program has money for residents to help finance energy- and water-efficiency improvements.

The money is paid back over time through property tax bills. Interest may be tax-deductible, and homeowners may see immediate savings on utility bills.

Residents of the unincorporated areas of El Dorado County may submit applications for HERO financing. South Lake Tahoe and Placerville launched this financing program in the past year as well.

HERO has a wide variety of products to help homeowners save water, including high-efficiency toilets, faucets and showerheads; drip irrigation systems; rainwater catchment systems; gray water systems; and artificial turf and other drought-tolerant landscaping.

A wide variety of energy-saving products are available through HERO as well.

For more info, go **online**.

Water conservation poster contest for K-5

South Tahoe Public Utility District is putting on a poster contest for Lake Tahoe Unified School District students in grades K-5.

The purpose is to highlight new and creative ways to save water inside the home. The theme of the poster contest is Promoting Indoor Water Conservation.

K-2 are asked to create a poster demonstrating or promoting ways to save water inside the home, while grades 3-5 are to design a public outreach poster to encourage South Lake Tahoe residents to conserve water indoors.

Submissions must fit on a 12 inch by 18 inch piece of paper or smaller and artwork must be completed using paint, crayons, colored pens or pencils, colored or glitter glue and/or markers. Computer media will not be accepted. Artwork may include up to 20 words.

Two winners will be selected from each grade level. Winners

will be notified by Jan. 31 and invited to attend the Feb. 4 board meeting.

The deadline for submissions is Jan. 8 at 5pm at the district office, 1275 Meadow Crest Drive
South Lake Tahoe.

For more info, call Donielle Morse at 530.543.6268.