SLTFD: Time to make sure chimney is clean

With the cooler nights upon us, it’s time to make sure chimneys is in safe working order.

We at the fire department annually respond to numerous chimney fires, mainly due to creosote buildup in the chimney flue. This type of fire has the potential to extend into your house and do major damage.

To prevent this from happening, the fire department recommends periodic cleaning of your chimney.

– Sallie Ross-Filgo, South Lake Tahoe Fire Department

Schools using eDays to make up for weather

By Thomas M. Kostigen, USA Today

Extreme weather is prompting school systems to think outside the box to figure out alternatives for students losing too many days in the classroom due to calamities from blizzards to heat waves to floods and more.

But the solution to make up for lost days is sparking anger among some parents. Upset parents in Jefferson County, Ala., say they see no reason for a new requirement that students learn remotely for two “eDays” this school year.

The eDays have been scheduled in advance for Oct. 9 and March

18 to allow “learning to continue without utilizing makeup days, and provides an option for learning when we have extreme weather, flu epidemics, or other unforeseen events,” according to a school newsletter.

Parents say the requirement puts an undue burden on them to stay home with their children those days, potentially missing work.

Read the whole story

Craft beer brewers balance drafts and drought

By Julie Watson, AP

FALLBROOK – Amid severe drought, the water board in this Southern California town imposed restrictions on Fallbrook Brewing Co., just as the tiny brewer doubled capacity to meet demand for its craft beers.

To cut monthly water use by about 10 percent, owner Chuck McLaughlin bought an extra 310-gallon tank to catch water used in the brewing process to reuse it for cleaning equipment. His new brewhouse includes a chiller that uses two-thirds less water than his old one.

As a small business, there’s no extra money to pay potentially thousands in fines if he exceeds the limit.

So far, “it’s been very close,” said McLaughlin, whose brewery is run out of a former consignment shop in Fallbrook, a town

of 30,000 people about 60 miles north of San Diego.

California has more craft breweries – small, independent beer makers that use traditional ingredients – than any other state. More than 570 are in operation and another 240 are slated to open, according to the California Craft Brewers Association. Craft breweries contributed $6.5 billion to the state economy last year alone, producing 3.5 million barrels.

A typical craft brewery uses up to 7 gallons of water to make 1 gallon of beer. Some in California have decreased that ratio to less than 5-to-1, but they are still being asked to cut back to meet the state mandate, which aims for California's overall urban water use to go down by 25 percent when compared with 2013.

No other state in the drought-plagued West has taken such action.

Breweries are digging wells, installing wastewater treatment plants and seeking exemptions from local water boards that control water use and can impose fines. Some are shelving planned expansions.

If Mother Nature doesn't bring significant showers and snowstorms this fall and winter, some breweries may be forced to leave the state.

Sierra Nevada Brewing Co. and other established California breweries, such as Stone Brewing Co., recently opened plants on the East Coast. But they say the motive was not the drought but to cut transportation costs to those markets.

Still, "a lot of brewers are looking to open up new breweries and a lot of them have concerns over water availability in the state of California," said Cheri Chastain, Sierra Nevada's sustainability manager. "Drought has the potential to move a lot in the industry outside the state or prevent it from growing."

Officials in the city of Chico told Sierra Nevada this spring to drop its water use by 32 percent. The nation's largest private craft brewery already had cut its usage by 25 percent and said further cuts would hurt production. The local water board agreed to exempt the water it uses to produce beer and asked Sierra Nevada to work toward reducing water used for its restaurant and landscaping by 42 percent.

Bear Republic Brewing Co. has taken some of the most drastic measures. The company last year pulled out of 15 U.S. markets and four countries after the Northern California town of Cloverdale informed the brewery it did not have enough water to sustain it.

But instead of moving, Bear Republic spent $466,000 to dig two wells for the town of 9,000 residents. It spent an additional $4 million on its own water treatment system, which uses electrically active microbes to purify wastewater, allowing the brewery to recycle up to 25 percent of the water it uses for equipment cleaning.

"We have to make sure to protect our future, not only for the community but for our 157 employees who have a home here — just packing up and leaving would be devastating to them," owner Richard R. Norgrove Sr. said.

But he adds: "We also have to look to the outside world to see where we're going to build our long-term growth if we can't do it here."

That could mean building a second plant where there is ample water.

Stone Brewing Co. in Escondido is spending $1 million on expanding its $8 million wastewater treatment system installed in 2008 and aims to use only 3 gallons of water for every gallon of beer it produces.

"We don't have any prediction on what's coming down, and we

don’t want to get penalized,” said Pat Tiernan, chief operating officer.

Tiny breweries like Fallbrook Brewing Co. can’t afford those options.

McLaughlin could find relief by moving his brewery to the neighboring city of Oceanside, whose water reduction target is 20 percent – compared with 36 percent for the town of Fallbrook. Each district’s reduction target is based on how much water that district used per person in 2013.

But like many craft brewers, McLaughlin believes the local community is what makes his beers stand out.

No stranger to water woes, the town was depicted in Frank Capra’s 1952 film, “The Fallbrook Story,” about ranchers fighting the federal government over water rights to a nearby river.

Today it is best known for its annual avocado festival, where children outfit avocados with tiny wheels to race them in the “Avo 500.” One of his brewery’s most popular ales is a saison infused with local avocado-blossom honey.

“‘Be social. Drink local.’ That’s our motto,” he said. “We wouldn’t consider moving outside of Fallbrook. We’ll just pray for rain – maybe hire a rain dancer.”

LTCC to show adventure film

Tahoe Adventure Film Festival presents the 10th year of “Reel Rock” at Lake Tahoe Community College’s Duke Theater.

From big walls to big moves, “Reel Rock 10” features athletes

Tommy Caldwell, Kevin Jorgeson, Alex Honnold, Jimmy Webb, Daniel Woods and a special tribute to the late Dean Potter.

Doors open at 6pm Oct. 23 and show starts at 6:30pm. Tickets are $15 at the door.

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3 people rescued from Desolation Wilderness

By Bill Lindelof, Sacramento Bee

A CHP helicopter crew and rescue personnel with mountain climbing experience had to be called upon the get three young people from Sacramento off a rocky Sierra Nevada outcropping.

The El Dorado County Sheriff’s Office got a cell phone call for help in the early morning hours Saturday from the three stranded hikers. They were on a ledge in the Desolation Wilderness and could not safely go up or down.

All three were cold but did not have major injuries.

Read the whole story

Letter: Riva Grill workers

moonlight at B&B

To the community,

Every Monday at St. Theresa Church's Grace Hall, the Bread & Broth cooks use their well-honed culinary skills to prepare the nutritious and tasty meals enjoyed by our very grateful dinner guests. These wonderful meals are made possible by the funding provided by B&B's Adopt A Day of Nourishment sponsors.

On Sept. 21, the hosting AAD sponsor was Riva Grill. In addition to donating $250, Riva Gill sent a sponsor crew who brought their dining skills to provide a warm and welcoming atmosphere for the evening's guests.

"We had such a great time, it's so good helping others," said Riva Grill server Antoine Eshak.

Fellow Riva Grill volunteers were servers Cesar Sentillan and Maura Jones, and bartenders Melissa Gibson-Taylor and April Vogt. The Riva Grill crew was great and paid the B&B cooks a big compliment.

"The food was as good as Riva's, our chefs should come here to take some lessons," added Eshak. Based on the number of seconds served, the dinner guests agreed.

As with each dinner served by B&B for those in need, the collaboration between AAD sponsors and B&B volunteers is what makes the meals so successful. B&B would like to thank Riva Grill for the funding and help they provided at their sponsorship dinner.

In addition, B&B would like to acknowledge the wonderful setting and delicious appetizers and drinks that the Riva Grill provides for the Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce's BAHM for Charity held in February. B&B has been a grateful recipient of proceeds from this fun and charitable

event.

For B&B information, please contact me at 530.542.2876 or carolsgerard@aol.com.

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth

Older Americans becoming addicted to drugs

By Al Jazeera

The U.S. consumes 80 percent of the world's supply of painkillers, and overdoses from prescription opioid drugs kill at least 16,000 Americans every year – more than cocaine and heroin combined.

Once thought to be a problem of the young, opioid addiction is becoming more common among elderly Americans.

"I was taking exactly what the doctor prescribed, when the doctor prescribed, how the doctor prescribed," says Larry Moore, who calls himself an "accidental addict." He said he wasted years of his life in "a deep, deep hole" hooked on painkillers.

When asked who should have stopped it, he says it should have been the doctors. "I was just doing what the doctors told me to do."

Read the whole story

Downed plane registered to man from Bay Area



The plane split apart after hitting trees before landing next to a house on Tionontati Street in El Dorado County on Oct. 10. Photo/LTN

By Kathryn Reed

The pilot of the plane that crashed Saturday in Lake Tahoe is believed to be the owner of the aircraft, according to a Lake Tahoe Airport official. The FAA registry lists the plane as being owned by Conrad Yu from Oakley.

People who saw the occupants get into the plane just after 5:30pm Oct. 10 said only a man and woman were on board. The Beech 35 Bonanza crashed into a neighborhood moments after takeoff . Debris was scattered about the back yard of the house that was partially damaged after the plane erupted in flames.

The bodies were recovered Sunday from the crash site on

Tionontati Street, which is on the outskirts of South Lake Tahoe. The names of the victims have not been released.

The FAA and National Transportation Safety Board both were on scene Sunday, with the NTSB taking the lead. NTSB investigators expect to be in town for several days.

“We are gathering the facts. We will be looking at where the aircraft came to rest, we will look at the engines and then they will be moved to a secure location,” Terry Williams with the NTSB told *Lake Tahoe News*. “We do a thorough investigation into the cause and factors that may have led to it.” The NTSB often takes more than a year to release reports on plane crashes.

An issue at this elevation is density altitude. On warm days the lift, thrust, and engine performance of a plane can be compromised. Wind may also have been a factor on Saturday.

“There is someone at the airport who witnessed the whole event. They heard problems,” Lake Tahoe Airport Manager Sherry Miller told *Lake Tahoe News*. She said the person watched the plane take off and go into the trees. “It could be that it didn’t sound right or it could sound like not enough power. I’m not sure which one it was.”

She said the pilot did not purchase fuel at the airport.

An El Dorado County sheriff’s sergeant on Saturday told *LTN* the pilot landed at the airport, stayed around a bit and then took off on the fatal flight.

The South Lake Tahoe airport does not have a staffed tower. According to Miller, it would not have made a difference if it were operational.

“Air traffic controllers don’t make decisions for pilots,” Miller said. “They do not give instructions to pilots in how to operate their aircraft.”

She added that this includes not telling a pilot which way to bank to avoid a neighborhood.

Ozone cuts will transform Calif. trucking industry

By Tony Barboza, Los Angeles Times

At a laboratory in downtown Los Angeles, a big rig spins its wheels on massive rollers as a metal tube funnels its exhaust into an array of air quality sensors. Engineers track the roaring truck’s emissions from a bank of computer screens.

The brand-new diesel truck is among the cleanest on the road, the engineers at the California Air Resources Board testing lab say. Even so, its 550-horsepower engine spews out more than 20 times the smog-forming nitrogen oxides of a typical gasoline-powered car — and that won’t be good enough for the state to meet stricter federal smog limits adopted this month.

Cutting ozone, the lung-damaging gas in smog, to federal health standards while meeting state targets to cut greenhouse gas emissions will require a radical transformation of California’s transportation sector over the next two decades, air quality officials and experts say.

Read the whole story

SLTPD looking for man who threatened woman

South Lake Tahoe police are looking for a man who threatened a woman Saturday morning with an alleged gun.

The woman told officers a man approached her about 9:40am Oct. 10 near Park and Cedar avenues, telling her to go with him or he would shoot her. The suspect told the woman he had a gun and appeared to be holding an object concealed in his sweat shirt pocket, according to police.

She ran for safety and the suspect left before officers arrived.

The suspect is described as a Caucasian or light skinned Hispanic male in his mid-20s, about 5-feet-6, medium build, spoke clear English, has a scar or injury near his right eye, was wearing black wire-framed glasses (not sunglasses), a grey hooded sweat shirt with the hood over his head and dark pants. And he was possibly riding a white bicycle.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report