

Touching goodbye to fallen firefighter



People line Highway 50 in Meyers on Aug. 13 to honor firefighter Michael Hallenbeck. Photos/LTN



First responders and South Shore residents pay their respects.

It was a somber occasion that brought people on the South Shore to the curbside Thursday morning.

It was an opportunity to pay tribute to fallen U.S. Forest Service wildland firefighter Michael Hallenbeck. Hallenbeck died Aug. 8 after being struck by a tree while fighting the Sierra Fire that was burning outside the boundary line of Sierra-at-Tahoe.

The procession started in South Lake Tahoe and ended at Green Valley Mortuary in Rescue. U.S. flags were suspended from two ladder trucks in Meyers, under which the procession passed.

Private services for the 21-year-old will be Saturday.

“This tragedy reminds us of the dangers firefighters face every time they suit up. Anne and I are grateful for U.S. Forest Service Firefighter Mike Hallenbeck’s service and on behalf of all Californians, we extend our deepest condolences to his family, friends and colleagues,” Gov. Jerry Brown said in a statement.

Hallenbeck was stationed with the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit. This was his first fire. For the past couple winters the Shingle Springs man had worked at Sierra-at-Tahoe. The resort had a candlelight vigil for him on Aug. 12 and will have an event in his honor this winter.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

How Americans fell in love with the open road

By Peter J. Blodgett

Tens of millions of Americans have hit the road this summer. The all-American road trip has long been a signature adventure, but once upon a time the notion of your own motorized excursion of any length would have seemed impossible.

In 1900, Americans were hampered by wretched roads and limited by the speed and endurance of the horses that powered buckboards, coaches, and wagons. If they had an urge to travel far distances, they had to rely upon the steam locomotive.

As fantastic as it might have seemed at the turn of the 20th century, the idea of supplanting the iron horse with the horseless carriage did catch the fancy of some intrepid men and women. Eager to test the technological limits of their new contraptions, a few hardy souls set off upon far-reaching expeditions between 1900 and 1910.

Colorado attorney Philip Delany, recounting his 1903 excursion from Colorado Springs to Santa Fe observed: "and so the machine is conquering the old frontier, carrying the thudding of modern mechanics into the land of romance. . . ." Such travel meant seeing "the wildest and most natural places on the continent," encountering more than a few hints of danger on steep and rocky mountain roads, and reliving the exploits of American pioneers. "The trails of Kit Carson and Boone and Crockett, and the rest of the early frontiersmen," he declared, "stretch out before the adventurous automobilist."



Four-wheel drive was not an options in the 1930s.
Photo/Lake Tahoe Historical Society

At the same time, some city dwellers simply sought an escape. Early 20th century urban environments had their drawbacks: sidewalks overflowing with scurrying pedestrians; streets crowded with unending waves of trolleys, delivery wagons, carriages, and pushcarts; the persistent stench rising from mounds of horse manure; raw sewage emptying into open gutters; rotting piles of uncollected garbage and dense clouds belching from factory smokestacks.

Upper-middle-class tourists motored through the countryside and then camped by the side of the road, finding the sentimentalized image of the gypsy or the tramp quite a compelling identity to assume. They reveled in their sense of independence from stodgy summer resorts and the tyranny of inflexible timetables set by railroads or steamship lines. They delighted in the beauty and serenity of unspoiled countryside. In the same article quoted above, Philip Delany observed that "when [the automobilist] is tired of the old, there are new paths to be made. He has no beaten track to follow, no schedule to meet, no other train to consider; but he can go with the speed of an express straight into the heart of an unknown land."

In its infancy, however, an automobile could not deliver most Americans from their urban frustrations – for most Americans could not afford to own and operate one. At a time when average annual salaries might not reach \$500, many automobiles might cost between \$650 and \$1,300, securely beyond the grasp of all but the wealthiest. Moreover, with few garages, filling stations, and dealerships outside of city limits, even the infrastructure required for the care and feeding of the automobile could be difficult to locate and could drain the motorist's wallet. During their earliest years, neither automobiles nor auto touring could be considered within the reach of the masses. Automobility would only become pervasive over time, thanks to rising wages, falling prices for used cars, expanding opportunities to buy these machines on credit,

and, especially, the introduction of Henry Ford's revolutionary Model T in 1908.

Even for those Americans who could afford the first horseless carriages, to go off the few familiar paths in most parts of the country, especially in the great distances of the trans-Mississippi West, required a large measure of self-reliance. One motor traveler characterized the roads of his native Wyoming in 1909 as "deep ruts, high centers, rocks, loose and solid; steep grades, washouts, or gullies . . . " He went on to note that, "unbridged streams; sand, alkali dust; gumbo; and plain mud, were some of the more common abominations." Between the obstacles presented by such abysmal road conditions, the likelihood of frequent mechanical breakdowns, and the rarity of supplies to sustain driver and vehicle, these early outings always required an audacious spirit.

Aspiring long-distance auto tourists back then were counseled by self-proclaimed experts to carry abundant quantities of supplies. Those who made the first transcontinental drives between 1901 and 1908 hauled along ropes, blocks and tackle, axes, sleeping bags, water bags, spades, camp stoves, compasses, barometers, thermometers, cyclometers, first aid kits, rubber ponchos, tire chains, pith helmets, assorted spare parts, and sufficient firearms to launch a small insurrection. Mary C. Bedell's impressive list of gear, published in her entertaining 1924 account of auto touring, "Modern Gypsies", typifies what was carried by the most dedicated motor campers both in scale and variety: "tent, duffle bags, gasoline stove, Adirondack grate and a kit of aluminum kettles, with coffee pot and enamel cups and saucers inside" – an array of equipment that added "four or five hundred pounds" alone to the weight of the fully loaded automobile. A car so laden, puffing along western trails, bears a striking resemblance in the mind's eye to a hermit crab staggering across the ocean floor burdened with its house

on its back.

Even as motoring Americans loaded up their cars with the contents of their local hardware stores, however, the growth in their numbers year by year provided alluring prospects to entrepreneurs in small towns and great cities throughout the West. Garages, gas stations, roadside cafés, and diners began to pop up along more frequently traveled routes while hotels, restaurants, and general stores started to advertise in the earliest guidebooks produced by organizations such as AAA and the Automobile Club of America. Following the lead of Gulf Oil in 1914, gasoline retailers commissioned maps branded liberally with their logos for free distribution at their service stations. Motorists once left entirely to their own devices now encountered a rapidly evolving infrastructure of goods and services.

Meanwhile, governments at the local, state, and federal levels began to invest increased engineering skill, construction efforts, and tax dollars in road improvements. While motor tourists by the end of the World War I might still encounter 10,000 miles of battered gravel trails littered with potholes for every 10 miles of carefully surfaced and maintained roads throughout the country, the increasing pace of improvements made it far easier to drive through the West than it had been for those who had attempted such a journey only a decade before.

Although still new to the American scene by 1920, the road trip thus had begun to take on a shape familiar to modern eyes. Above all, the automobile was assuming a dominant role in popular recreation as more and more Americans incorporated it into their visions of recreation and leisure. As costs fell and reliability increased, as the successful outings of the few began to inspire the many, and as the thrill of this new technology spread through an ever-wider range of the populace, motoring for pleasure insinuated itself as a notion in the minds of many Americans. Indeed, less than a decade after the

turn of the 20th century, author William F. Dix could assert that the automobile had become nothing less than a “vacation agent” for motor-savvy Americans as it “opens up the countryside to the city dweller, [and held out the promise of] great national highways stretching from ocean to ocean and from North to South.” Over those highways, he continued, “would sweep endless processions of light, graceful, and inexpensive vehicles . . . carrying rich and poor alike into a better understanding of nature and teaching them the pure and refreshing beauties of the country.”

While Dix fell far short as a prophet of social or technological developments, his sense of how inextricably linked the automobile would become in the leisure pursuits of Americans has been thoroughly borne out by the evolution of the American road trip.

Peter J. Blodgett is H. Russell Smith Foundation curator of western historical manuscripts at the Huntington Library and editor of “Motoring West Volume 1: Automobile Pioneers, 1900-1909”. He wrote this for What It Means to Be American, a national conversation hosted by the Smithsonian and Zócalo Public Square.

High fire danger weather in Tahoe region

The National Weather Service has issued a red flag warning for the Lake Tahoe Basin, Truckee, Carson and Reno areas from 2pm Thursday through 11am Friday.

The winds will be accompanied by low humidity. This combination can lead to fires quickly spreading out of

control.

Fire officials are asking people to:

- Report any smoke to 911
 - Start zero fires of any type
 - Make sure campfires are dead out and cool
 - Not use chain saws, lawn mowers or weed eaters
 - Make sure trailer chains are not dragging
 - Have an emergency evacuation plan
 - Evacuate early if there is a fire.
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Learn how to photograph night sky

Jennifer Wu, professional photographer, will share her techniques on how to photograph the stars, Milky Way, meteors, the full moon and the crescent moon on Aug. 24 at the Nevada County Camera Club meeting.

She will also discuss light painting techniques that can be used to paint light on trees, rocks, buildings to add another dimension to night photography.

Wu is a nature and landscape photographer, specializing in creating images of the night sky and stars. She is one of Canon's Explorers of Light, an elite group of internationally recognized photographers.

There will be limited seating. RSVP to rsvp@nccameraclub.com with the names of those planning to attend. The event is free. It is from 6:30-9pm at Unity in the Gold Country Spiritual Center, 180 Cambridge Court, Grass Valley.

Standup paddler missing at Lake Tahoe



This is an image from the GoPro found on the adrift paddleboard of the man who reportedly rented the board.

A man who rented a standup paddleboard in South Lake Tahoe is missing.

A boater found the board, GoPro camera, selfie stick and life jacket about one-half mile offshore from Timber Cove Marina on Aug. 12 about 4:45pm. The water there is about 17-feet deep. The equipment was returned to the shop about an hour later.

A man who identified himself as Morym had rented the board from South Tahoe Standup Paddle in South Lake Tahoe on Aug. 12 at 3:30pm for one hour. The renter paid cash and did not leave a credit card, phone number or any other identifying information.

The business called South Lake Tahoe Police Department at 10:10pm.

Officers conducted a shoreline search in the darkness. The U.S. Coast Guard and the El Dorado County Sheriff's Office will assist a SLTPD marine unit with a water search today.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Volunteers are needed for the Aug. 28-30 Tahoe Rim Trail Backcountry Camps which will be near Armstrong Pass. For more info, go **online**.

• Alan G. Walker has been hired as president of Sierra Nevada College. He starts the job Sept. 21.

• Andrew Laughlin, who owns Tahoe City Kayak, has opened Zephyr Cove Adventures.

• The Washoe County Sheriff's Office Records and Civil Sections will be opening its doors one half hour earlier starting Sept. 8. Doors will open at 7:30am on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.

• Tickets for the Polar Express train ride via the Virginia & Truckee Railroad go on sale **online** beginning Aug. 20. Rides begin Nov. 19.

Zephyr Cove disc golf in state of flux



Zephyr Cove's disc golf course is known for its views.
Photos/Jessie Marchesseau

By Jessie Marchesseau

Douglas County Parks and Recreation has no immediate plans for any major changes to the Zephyr Cove disc golf course.

This may come as a surprise to those who have heard the rumors swirling through the local disc golf community alleging that Douglas County had accepted a proposal to make significant changes to the existing course. Hundreds of people even signed a petition trying to stop this work that was never agreed to.

The idea of changing a beloved course which is considered one of the top courses in the country by the Professional Disc Golf Association had people up in arms.

It began after Tahoe residents and disc golf enthusiasts Mike Plansky, Will McKissock and Dan Deegan presented a plan for changes and improvements to the Zephyr Cove disc golf course at the Douglas County Parks and Recreation Commission meeting on June 2. The plan proposed adding a three-hole pitch and putt area near the picnic tables, a six- to nine-hole kids course adjacent to the parking lot, a nine-hole "lakeview loop" and reconfiguring several of the existing 18 holes.

The commission listened to the presentation, but did not approve or move forward with the plan.

"We listen to all ideas, we don't restrict," Scott Morgan, parks and recreation director for Douglas County, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "We *can't* restrict."

The official meeting minutes state that the commission was already aware at that time there were some parties in the community who were not in agreement with some aspects of the plan being presented.

One of those parties not in agreement is original course designer Craig Getty. Getty also had a plan to add an additional nine holes to the Zephyr Cove disc golf course and to reconfigure a number of the existing holes. He claimed to have already had a verbal agreement with the acting park ranger to move forward with his plan. However, Morgan said such an agreement is not possible as rangers cannot give consent for park improvements. Douglas County Parks would have to give approval and conduct a public review to make such changes to the course.

Last fall, Plansky had been working with Getty on Getty's plan for alterations to the course, but when the two couldn't come to an agreement on certain aspects, Plansky began working on a

different plan with a number of colleagues. This is the plan which was presented at the June 2 meeting. Getty, who has designed eight courses in the Tahoe area, said it was the first time someone other than himself had submitted plans to make changes to one of the courses he designed.

Since it was built in 1998, most of the changes to the Zephyr Cove course have been pretty minor and completed under the direction of Getty. Morgan described it as having evolved “organically” over the years and said most of the maintenance and enhancements were done rather informally as a result.



The course meanders through the forest above the tennis courts at Zephyr Cove Park.

This is the first time there has been dissent expressed within the community in response to any maintenance or alterations. As a result, the county has decided to move slowly with respect to changes or improvements to the course and require that all parties come to a consensus before any work is done.

Until that happens, parks and recreation has put a halt on any work to the course beyond standard safety issues and routine maintenance.

The minutes from the June 2 meeting state that Plansky, McKissock and Deegan were encouraged to “form a nonprofit open to the public organization that would not deny membership to anyone who has an interest in serving in the nonprofit.” In short, they must form a nonprofit group where any and all interested parties come together and agree on things before they are done. Consensus required.

The commission also stated that in order to be granted an MOU for the development, operation and maintenance of the Zephyr Cove disc golf course, a Douglas County staff member must be on the board of the nonprofit. In a subsequent meeting with Getty and his associates, Morgan reiterated these requirements.

“We want to recognize an organization that is there to support and preserve the disc golf course,” Morgan said.

Such organizations are not uncommon for the development and maintenance of county facilities such as tennis courts and the Dangberg Ranch. It’s also not uncommon for disc golf courses. For example, the Reno Disc Golf Association recently finished a large disc golf project in Reno, something RDGA President Skot Meyer said would never have been possible without the existence of their nonprofit group. He said that in Reno, it has worked extremely efficiently and been a great benefit to the community. But noted that most of the people in the RDGA have similar ideas; it may take such an organization in Douglas County a while to come to an agreement on things.

Getty is not optimistic: “not much will get done,” he said of having a group overseeing course work as opposed to an individual. He likened it to having an architect and a bunch of carpenters all build a house and giving them all equal

authority. "They all want it done a different way," he said. "The history of how the course was designed should take precedence."

But Morgan insists this is the only way, and the county will not approve anything that is not agreed upon by all parties.

"Sounds like we're all supposed to work together, and that's what we're trying to do," said Plansky, who is moving forward with the development of the nonprofit organization.

While all parties seem to agree that the course needs some work, exactly what that work will be and any progress toward it is unlikely to happen during this disc golf season.

Letter: KOWL defends programming switch

To the community,

KOWL 1490 AM "Tahoe's Talk" was one of the original Rush Limbaugh affiliates from his days being based out of this region in Sacramento.

KOWL canceled the Rush Limbaugh show and it is off air as of this week. As the station owner and GM I made the decision. This was done for economic reasons and not for political reasons. I spent several years as the morning show host on KOWL and was well known as "lefty liberal". However, I would often defend Rush Limbaugh on air as having the right to say what he wants to say as this is America and we have that freedom. He spoke out against a society where everyone boycotts everyone else that offends them.

I repeatedly said that it should be up to the free market and not a knee-jerk reaction to someone's opinion. And now the free market has spoken. Rush has repelled local, regional, and national advertisers from KOWL costing the stations thousands of dollars in advertisers. Since KOWL is a small unrated market, advertisers would rather just avoid the whole station than take the risk of being associated with Rush's increasingly toxic brand.

In addition to that, Rush Limbaugh is one of the only shows in radio to charge a monthly fee to affiliates. I spent a lot of time negotiating directly with Limbaugh's syndicator. I told them that we didn't want to lose his show, but that we couldn't pay him a fee in addition to him losing us money repelling advertisers and they refused to drop the monthly fee. Ironically, they lost the fee anyway and a long time affiliate. I really don't understand why they forced our hand like this, it's now a lose-lose situation.

As further proof that I did not do this for political reasons, I replaced Limbaugh with another prominent conservative who does not charge a monthly fee and is not on the radio industry "controversial programming list" that advertisers avoid: "The Dennis Prager Show". Prager now airs live on KOWL from 9am-noon Monday-Friday in the same spot that Limbaugh occupied for well over 20 years.

KOWL is a news-talk station that represents a variety of opinions from across the political spectrum with national shows. We have live local news each weekday morning and CBS news at the top of every hour. We thank Rush Limbaugh for his years of representing the conservative side and now hand that torch off to Dennis Prager.

Steve Harness, KOWL owner-general manager

Fallen firefighter remembered at vigil

By Kelly Ryan, CBS-13

It was a somber farewell for a firefighter who died in the line of duty in Lake Tahoe as hundreds turned out for a vigil Aug. 12 to remember Michael Hallenbeck.

Friends, family and coworkers of Michael Hallenbeck streamed into the Sierra at Tahoe Resort at sunset ahead of a candlelight vigil for the 21-year-old killed last Saturday while responding to a wildfire.

Kyle Cadwell met Hallenbeck at summer camp, lost touch and became friends again years later.

[Read the whole story](#)

CVS dropping slew of prescription meds

By David Goldman, CNN Money

CVS is dropping more than two dozen prescription drugs from its list of covered medicines for 2016, including Viagra.

The drugs will still be sold at CVS/pharmacy stores, but customers who carry prescription benefit insurance with

CVS/Caremark will no longer receive coverage for them.

CVS (CVS) said the medicines dropped from the list of drugs the company covers all have cheaper equivalents that are still covered by its insurance plan.

For example, customers taking Pfizer's (PFE) Viagra for erectile dysfunction will be able to take Cialis, made by Eli Lilly (LLY). CVS stopped covering Bayer's rival ED drug Levitra in January 2012.

Read the whole story