

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



- WalletHub ranked Nevada the second best state for a road trip.

- Classical music scores from the hit PBS TV-series “Downtown Abbey,” Hollywood classics “Sense and Sensibility,” and the Hitchcock masterpiece “Psycho” along with flamenco and dance-inspired symphonies will highlight the second weekend of Lake Tahoe SummerFest. Ana Vidović, premier classical guitarist of her generation, along with Jeremy McCoy, a critically acclaimed double bass player with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, are the guest artists Aug. 7-9.

- The Granite Chief Wilderness Protection League had created a website and Facebook page to bring awareness to what the proposed Squaw Valley-Alpine gondola would mean to the Granite Chief Wilderness area.

- SMC Contracting and Lake Tahoe Hard Rock have agreed to mediation regarding payment for the work done at the Stateline hotel-casino. Talks are scheduled for August.

- Me and Bobby McGee will be at the Boathouse Theatre on the South Shore on July 15 at 7:30pm. For more info, go online.

Opinion: Senseless killing of Tahoe bear



Someone on the South Shore killed this bear last week.
Photos/Toogee Sielsch

By Toogee Sielsch

On July 9, a family living on Minniconjou Drive in a neighborhood off Pioneer Trail in South Lake Tahoe had the pleasure of enjoying seeing one of our furry forest denizens cruising through their neighborhood. These are the kind of folks who feel getting a view from a safe distance of one of the black bears that live in the basin is a true gift to be cherished.

Later that evening they remember hearing what they described as a single large firework explosion or maybe a gunshot.

I can't even imagine what went through their minds when the next day, Friday, while taking a walk on a trail through the forest-meadow interface below their neighborhood. They found the lifeless body of the untagged, beautiful, healthy, and muscular 2 1/2-year-old black bear they had seen alive and

well the day before. They immediately returned home and made a call to Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care.

Apparently one of their neighbors from Minniconjou Drive, or one the nearby streets like Jicarilla Drive, didn't quite feel the same way about the bears living in the basin that this family and many of the rest of us that live here in the Tahoe basin feel.



Sunglasses give perspective of how big this bear was.

At 5:40pm July 10, I received a call from LTWC asking if I could go take a look at a possible dead bear. My youngest son, Ian, and I met the family at the end of Minniconjou Drive. They showed us where the carcass was. As we approached the dead bear, I was struck by his body position. He was on his back, head rolled to one side, and tongue out and bitten through at the base of two trees.

I took pics on the approach and from other angles before I moved in and did a field examination on the body, looking for any wounds or signs of trauma. I was baffled by the lack of

blood at the scene. On the bear's backside I found multiple small puncture wounds. I must admit that my first impression is that this could possibly be an accident and the bear received those puncture wounds falling out of a tree. But I also know that the first thing a black bear learns when its mother takes it out of the den for the first time is how to climb a tree and stay up it in danger. And there weren't any freshly broken branches around the body, which would be scattered if it had hit and was injured by branches in the fall.

My second impression was that the puncture wounds were buckshot wounds and the bear was shot while climbing up the tree and let it's grip go and fell to its death.

Ian and I dragged the 200- to 225-pound, 2 1/2 year old bear uphill as it was getting dark and not wanting to leave the carcass to the other wild animals in the area and thereby destroying any evidence.

On Saturday, California Fish and Wildlife Game Warden Darrell Stevenson was called to examine the body at LTWC and confirmed the wounds as being from large buckshot from a shotgun. At 2:30pm on Saturday, I walked Stevenson through the site where the bear was found dead. He had spent much of the morning going door-to-door on Minniconjou Drive and adjacent streets interviewing folks for any information.

Above are the facts, and now on to the opinion section of this piece: What kind of inferior life form feels that for nothing more than knocking over a few trash cans, which isn't a bear's fault that they are left out, a bear deserves a death penalty? Not to mention some wingnut is shooting off a firearm in an inhabited neighborhood here in our town? Some folks like to frame we animal activists as crazy, but this horrendous action defies crazy, and tips into the realm of psychotic. Ann Bryant of the Bear League is setting up a donation fund for the information that leads to an arrest and conviction of the

scumbag who did this heartless deed. Anyone having any information about this crime may call the Bear League at 530.525.7297.

This crime might very well go unpunished, but please, let's not let it go unnoticed.

Toogee Sielsch is a resident of South Lake Tahoe.

USFS expanding firefighting capabilities

The U.S. Forest Service has a new firefighting tool in its arsenal.

Tanker 118 on July 10 started flying wildfire suppression missions from Sacramento.

The Forest Service began using air tankers to drop fire retardant in the 1950s. For the past 35 years, the agency has used air tankers contracted from private industry. The 2014 National Defense Authorization Act authorized the transfer of seven HC-130H aircraft from the Coast Guard to the Forest Service for use in wildfire suppression.

The first HC-130H, known as Tanker 118, is currently located at Forest Service Air Station McClellan in Sacramento, which will be its base of operations for the next two years.

Tanker 118 has been located at the Coast Guard Air Station Sacramento since mid-June while maintenance, installation and testing of the Modular Airborne Firefighting System unit and contractor pilot and maintenance crew training have been taking place

Tanker 118 will only fly wildfire suppression missions within 500 nautical miles from its base so it can return there each night for maintenance by contract crews and support from Coast Guard crews.

The Forest Service, Coast Guard, and Air Force have been working together to complete the significant amount of work that is needed on all seven HC-130H aircraft before they can begin flying wildfire suppression missions. These modifications include demilitarization; performing wing and airframe modifications; designing, contracting for, manufacturing and installing retardant tanks; and equipping them with radios, Aircraft Flight Following, and other equipment. The work is expected to be completed by 2019.

The Forest Service now has of 22 air tankers available full time for wildfire suppression this fire season. The agency also has the ability to activate up to eight military C-130s.

Steve Young to talk at Rotary breakfast

National Football League hall of famer Steve Young and former head coach and current ESPN analyst Herm Edwards will be addressing the Tahoe Douglas and South Lake Tahoe rotary clubs during the second annual Breakfast with Celebrities.

The July 15 event is at MontBleu in Stateline.

In addition to socializing, Young and Edwards will be fielding questions from those in attendance.

Tickets are \$30 and include breakfast. They may be purchased

online.

Slots remain important cog in Nev. gaming

By J.D. Morris, Las Vegas Sun

Although Nevada casinos don't make nearly as much money from slots as they did before the recession hit, the machines are starting to make a comeback.

Slot revenue dropped sharply in 2008 and 2009, much like the rest of the state's gambling business, and still remains far below its peak from before the economic downturn. After a few years of more stable performance, however, recent financial indicators suggest that the situation is improving.

Through May of this year, statewide slot revenue increased 4.3 percent compared with 2014, according to Michael Lawton, senior research analyst for the state Gaming Control Board. On the Strip, which accounts for the bulk of Nevada's total gaming revenue, slot revenue is up 6.1 percent for the calendar year.

Read the whole story

Newspaper racks destroyed in S. Lake Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

Vandals have caused more than \$5,000 worth of damage to newspaper racks in South Lake Tahoe and Meyers.

The two culprits have been caught on video, though positive identification has yet to be made.

“Every three to five years this happens, but this is the biggest damage that has happened,” Steve Anderson, who owns South Tahoe Newspaper Agency, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “They have some type of bar they are using. They put it between the door and racks. It’s about 4-feet-long.”

San Francisco Chronicle and *Sacramento Bee* racks are being targeted. The South Lake company, which has been operating since 1961, also handles the *Reno Gazette-Journal*, *USA Today* and *Wall Street Journal* racks.

Anderson is collecting the money from the racks each night, so the reward hasn’t been much for the thieves.

But the loss has been big for Anderson in other ways. Each of the 13 boxes that have been destroyed costs about \$400. This type of box is no longer made so he will either have to refurbish old ones or take the sales of the papers into the businesses.

The vandals on Thursday and Friday hit racks at Ernie’s, Bert’s, Getaway Café, Tahoe Keys Liquor, Rite-Aid, Red Hut at Ski Run Boulevard, and Raley’s near Stateline.

Anderson said the two are driving a blue compact vehicle, and that they are middle-aged white men. The police are analyzing the video for a better description.

Anderson is offering a \$1,000 reward for information that leads to the arrest and conviction of the people responsible for the vandalism. Anyone with information, should call the South Lake Tahoe Police Department at 530.542.6100.

Longtime SLT residents to tell stories of the past

Lake Tahoe Historical Society is hosting a fireside chat with Roberta Mason and Tom Davis on July 15.

The free talk will be at Lake Tahoe Airport beginning at 7pm.

Mason will be talking about higher education and Davis about entertainers who have visited the South Shore. Mason last year retired from the Lake Tahoe Community College board. She was an original member and was instrumental in getting the college built. Davis is on the City Council. He many years working in the Stateline casinos.

For more information, call 530.541.5458.

Incline roundabout lanes to be altered

The Nevada Department of Transportation will reduce Highway 28 eastbound entering the Incline Village roundabout from two to one lane in an effort to enhance safety.

Currently, two travel lanes are in place on Highway 28 east entering the roundabout intersection with Mount Rose Highway. Beginning July 14, temporary pavement markings will be placed to reduce the eastbound highway to one lane. The traffic configuration will be evaluated and, if effective, could be delineated with permanent roadway striping in the future.

“Traffic roundabouts such as this can be instrumental in reducing severe crashes and helping keep traffic flowing through an intersection,” NDOT District Engineer Thor Dyson said in a statement. “But, we continue to see signs of speeding or unsafe merging into the roundabout. Traffic safety and mobility are our top priorities. For safety, the reduced lanes will be tested as a way to slow speeds and help keep drivers in the roundabout safe and mobile.”

NDOT, in partnership with the Tahoe Transportation District, constructed the \$2.4 million roundabout in 2012.

Then and now: From ranches to suburbia

In October 2014, Then & Now highlighted Jack Van Sickle’s Crescent V Ranch near Stateline. Since then, I’ve come across remarkable photos of how fast areas like that can change.



An aerial view of South Lake Tahoe in 1940. Photo/U.S. Geological Survey

As early as 1940, the T-bone meeting of today's Park Avenue at Highway 50 existed (just below center in the photo), as did the Pioneer Trail off-shoot seen to the right. The large blank area above Highway 50 was Jack Van Sickle's Crescent V Ranch.



Development in South Lake Tahoe in the 1950s started changing the look of the area. Photo/Lake Tahoe Historical Society

Ten years later, that junction shows the historic Cecil's Market facing what is now Tahoe Tom's gas station, the round-

roof quonset hut Lakeside Theatre to the right, as well as the original Tahoe Drive-In Theatre seen in snow on Van Sickle's spread. Its entrance driveway became more of Park Avenue in the Crescent V Shopping Center.



The Park Avenue area of
South Lake Tahoe in 2015.
Photo/Google Earth

Today, Park Avenue above Highway 50 is renamed Heavenly Village Way and the Crescent V Center named after Jack Van Sickle's ranch in 1962 now is named the Village Center.



Near Covina in 1940.
Photo/Ed Crook collection



Near Covina in 1959.
Photo/Ed Crook collection

For comparison, see how quickly development occurred in Southern California within only 19 years – 1940-1959 – near Covina.

– *Bill Kingman*

Sensory overload on trot up Horsetail Falls



Horsetail Falls swooshes down through a wall of granite.
Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

If the drought continues for a number of years, one day it may be called “Ponytail Falls” instead of Horsetail Falls. But for now, the water is flowing as though there is no drought.

From a distance, especially driving west on Highway 50, the falls look like a horse’s tail – thus the name. It’s one of the most spectacular waterfalls in the area – from afar and close up.

This is one of those destinations where the end point can be anywhere one chooses because there are so many scenic vistas along the way.

There is designated a loop. While pretty, it doesn’t go up to the falls. But there also isn’t a sign saying when to get off this section of trail.



Pyramid Creek is either in view from or can be heard while on the trail.

Pyramid Creek is the early focal point. Downstream this water eventually ends up in the American River.

There was enough granite that AJ had booties on for the first time.

At times the trail is not well defined. Our group of 12 who was hiking there in June took a couple U-turns and crossed the creek before we finally found our way to the end point we all agreed to. There we sat on slabs of granite eating our lunch, watching the water descend in all its glory. Absolutely stunning.

The water tumbling down comes from Lake Aloha. It's possible to hike there and to other lakes in Desolation Wilderness from this point. But this is only recommended for more advanced hikers.

Almost every year at least one person is seriously hurt or dies in this area because of climbing beyond his or her ability level, not respecting how cold the water is or the swiftness of the current.

Parking spaces fill fast, so go early – or don't go on a weekend. Our trek was about 4 miles round trip.

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Several pools are inviting, though the snow-fed creek is quite chilly.

Getting there:

From South Lake Tahoe, take Highway 50 west toward

Placerville. The trailhead is outside the basin. Parking is on the right at Pyramid Creek. There is a fee to park.