

# Truckee food institution changes hands

By Dave Zook, Moonshine Ink

Overlooking downtown Truckee, with the huge glowing “Hilltop Lodge” letters, Cottonwood has become a Truckee staple, offering comfortable reverie, fine dining, and live music. After 26 years, ownership is changing hands, but with a plan to keep the same atmosphere and food flowing for years to come.

“People deserve to know that it’s going to stay the way it has been, and the consistency will remain,” said Mike Blide, who became co-owner of Cottonwood in 1996 and served as its general manager. “We are happy that it’s going to stay family owned.”

Cottonwood opened on New Year’s Eve in 1988 with Jennifer Haag and then-business partner Ed Coleman as the initial owners. In 1995, Blide and Jennifer married, and the following year the couple bought out Coleman. Cottonwood grew in popularity due to its nightly specials, busy bar, and live music on Thursday and Friday nights.

**[Read the whole story](#)**

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## USFS waiving fees for part of long weekend

The U.S. Forest Service will waive fees at most of its day-use recreation sites five times in 2015, beginning with Jan.19, in

honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

No fees are charged at any time on 98 percent of national forests and grasslands, and approximately two-thirds of developed recreation sites in national forests and grasslands can be used for free. Check with your local forest or grassland or on [Recreation.gov](#) (link is external) to see if your destination charges a fee. Use the Forest Service map to find a national forest or grassland near you.

The 2015 fee-free days observed by the Forest Service are Jan. 19, Feb. 16, June 13, Sept. 26 and Nov. 11.

The fee-free program is in cooperation with other Federal land management agencies under the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act. Fees are waived generally for day-use areas, such as picnic grounds, developed trailheads and destination visitor centers. Concessionaire-operated sites may be included in the waiver if the permit holder wishes to participate. Contact your local national forest or grassland to learn what fees might be waived.

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## Parvo outbreak forces SLT dog park closure

By Kathryn Reed

A rash of parvo cases in South Lake Tahoe has forced the city to shutdown the dog park for the next 10 days.

The Lake Tahoe Humane Society has reported 11 cases of the potentially fatal virus in the last 10 days.

“The fatality rate is huge if it goes untreated – almost 100 percent,” Niki Congero, executive director of the South Shore humane society, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “The earlier someone catches it, the better chance the dog has to survive.”

The initial signs are lethargy, diarrhea – including blood in it, loss of appetite, then vomiting.

“It is like the worst kind of stomach flu,” Congero said.

Because the incubation period is seven to 10 days, that is why the dog park will be off limits that long. The city will thoroughly clean everything to ensure the transfer of the virus is not possible. One of the dogs with parvo had been at the dog park on Al Tahoe Boulevard.

It is easy for dogs to transfer the virus to one another. Usually it is through feces, just by sniffing it and getting a little on their nose, or stepping in it.

“You could go to one house, get a dog hair, go to another house and the dog hair comes off and that dog could get it,” Congero said in describing the ease with which parvovirus spreads.

“If everyone picked up their poop, this problem would not exist.”

It can spread to the coyote population, too. It is not, however, transmittable to cats or people.

Treatment includes fluids and antibiotics.

But Congero stresses it's a lot cheaper to spend money to vaccinate dogs. Puppies should get a series of shots starting at 8 weeks, then again at 1 year, which is good for three years. Adult dogs need to keep up with the vaccinations just like other preventative care.

At boarding facilities in the area they all make sure a dog's

vaccinations are up-to-date before they are allowed in. Parvo, distemper and rabies are the big three for doggie day care centers.

“Anyone that comes in with any sickness, we turn them back away,” Paige Rice, owner of Tahoe Best Friends, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

People suspecting their dog has parvo should immediately call their vet. Do not go in with the dog because the vet will want to take precautions so other animals are not put in harm's way.

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## Snippets about Lake Tahoe



Brian Krolicki

- Brian Krolicki of Stateline, who was just termed out as lieutenant governor of Nevada, is considering a run against Sen. Harry Reid, D-Searchlight, in 2016.
- Here are the El Dorado-Tahoe and Sierra roadwork schedules from Caltrans for the week.

- Kentucky Sen. Rand Paul, who is contemplating a run for president, is headlining a private dinner at the Hyatt Regency in Incline Village on Jan. 17. Tickets range from \$500 to \$2,600.
  - The 6th annual Ullr Fest, to raise funds for the Diamond Peak Ski Team, is Jan. 23-25. For more info, go online.
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# Training alone may make one more resilient

**By Jon Gugala, Outdoor**

Six days a week for five years, pro runner Brett Gotcher would meet with his McMillan Elite teammates to run. During the snowy, windy winters in Flagstaff, Ariz., they would huddle together between 8:30 and 9am; in summer, when the high desert heat is at its worst, they'd meet between 7 and 8 a.m. Under this rigid program, Gotcher ran his personal best in the marathon—2:10:36, which stands as the fourth-fastest debut ever by an American.

“Just having people out there is huge,” says the 30-year-old Adidas-sponsored athlete.

But there was a downside: Not everyone improved at the same pace.

Finally, not long after he placed fifth in the U.S. Olympic Team Trials marathon in 2012, Gotcher decided to leave Flagstaff, return to California, and train alone.

**Read the whole story**

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# Skiing or boarding – which burns more calories?

By Amanda MacMillan, Outside

*Q: My buddy and I have a bet going. He says snowboarding burns more calories, I say downhill skiing does. Who's right?*

**A:** You and your buddy should probably buy each other a Shotzski and call it even, because the most accurate answer to your question is a big fat, “It all depends.”

According to the nonprofit trade association Snowsports Industries America, alpine skiing burns approximately 500 calories an hour while snowboarding lags slightly behind at 450. Neither stat includes time spent on the lift. But those numbers are just estimates – there are no published comparison studies—and the experts we spoke with say that in reality, it's likely more of a toss up.

“Your skill level, the difficulty of the slope, and your technique are all going to affect the muscle groups you're working and how many calories you're burning,” says Kevin Jordan, a ski and snowboard instructor at Aspen Snowmass in Colorado and ambassador for Learn to Ski and Snowboard Month. (That's January, by the way!)

**Read the whole story**

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# If it snows again, SLT ready to plow paths

South Lake Tahoe's snow removal policy is to deploy snow plows when 3 inches of snow accumulates on roadways. Clearing of snow on roadways and city owned buildings and facilities is the primary purpose during a significant snow event.

This winter the city has launched a pilot program to include snow removal on class 1 bike paths as a secondary feature during a significant snow event.

Money from Measure R/S is available to contract snow removal services by Alpine Smith on the following paths:

- Both sides of Ski Run Boulevard.
- Eloise Avenue to Ponderosa Street (behind Motel 6).
- Harrison Avenue bike path to Lakeview Commons.
- Rubicon Trail to Tallac (behind Meek's Lumber).
- Silver Dollar to Sussex Avenue (behind Fitness Evolution).

City staff will provide snow removal to the following Class 1 bike paths during a significant snow event when 3 inches of snow has fallen and after all roadways and city owned buildings and facilities have been cleared of snow.

- Al Tahoe Boulevard
- Campground by the Lake
- Lakeview Commons to Alta Mira
- Lyons Avenue
- Rufus Allen Boulevard

- Ski Run Boulevard to Linear Park.

As a pilot program, the cost of providing these services will be evaluated by staff and it will determine if this is a feasible program that can be support in future fiscal years.

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## Organizers scramble to save SnowFest

TAHOE CITY – SnowFest almost wasn't going to happen this year.

The annual winter carnival that started in the early 1980s on the North Shore has been threatened because of mismanagement and diminishing sponsorship. But enthusiasts have rallied to ensure the event takes place this year – Feb. 27-March 8.

Events are staged from Homewood to Truckee to Squaw Valley to Incline Village. They include parades on the street and by torchlight on a mountain, polar bear plunge, luau, dog sled race, food and wine events and more. It's a huge fundraiser for area nonprofits.

It started as one weekend, grew to two and is now 10 days.

Ruth Schnabel, who has been brought back to organize this year's event, gave a presentation last week at the North Lake Tahoe Resort Association's Tuesday Morning Breakfast Club at Granlibakken Resort.

She gave a brief history of the event. She said in 2000 the nonprofit's board hired a man out of Los Angeles to run SnowFest. He left the organization in debt \$250,000. SnowFest has been on financially shaky ground ever since.

Last spring another executive director was hired. He resigned after four months, but did nothing during that time, according to Schnabel. Today SnowFest is operated by volunteers. The office space is probably going away soon.

Schnabel said from an outsider's perspective the event would go on as it always has – same look, feel, events. From the inside, though, it is barely functioning. She said an infusion of \$10,000 in cash would help with some basics for this year and provide a little nest egg going forward.

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#### **Notes:**

- The event is Feb. 27-March 8.
- For more info, go online.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

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## **LTCC board to vote on faculty raises**

**By Kathryn Reed**

Faculty and some administrators at Lake Tahoe Community College are expected to see fatter paychecks.

The college board tonight is being asked to approve raises for full-time and adjunct faculty, as well as give one-time bonuses to three interim deans.

“Many employees on this campus work harder than they ever have because we have cut costs, reduced staffs, and combined job

duties,” LTCC President Kindred Murillo told *Lake Tahoe News*. “They have done this repeatedly over the budget cuts, loss of (full-time equivalent students), and other issues, and we believe a 2 percent increase is reasonable and fair.”

The last raise for full-time instructors was in 2008. This salary increase is retroactive to July 1, 2014. The contract is for three years.

Scott Lukas, chair of the Faculty Academic Senate, told *Lake Tahoe News*, “We were interested in a raise that would get us to our comparable pay levels with the other schools in our small school list. The 2 percent that we agreed to was not at the level that we wanted, but I think that the district would not go anywhere above this 2 percent. So, in a sense, it was 2 percent or nothing.”

He said the union is not done with seeking salaries that are “fair compared to other schools”.

The salary boosts will cost LTCC about \$100,000 a year. With adjunct instructor numbers not constant, the savings will fluctuate.

“LTCC, as typical of many small districts, has some of the lowest salaries in the state, so we have to be very thoughtful about recruitment of employees overall. While these are very good salaries for our local area, they are not attractive statewide,” Murillo said.

What remains to be seen is if this raise will do anything to improve morale at the South Lake Tahoe two-year school.

“I have heard that morale is low, but I would be wrong to comment on others and their perceptions. Probably, if I had to guess, this could relate to pay, increased workload, loss in benefits and the like,” Lukas said. “The bottom line is that the faculty at LTCC are really great faculty and they deserve a fair salary.”

One thing the faculty brought to the table is an early

retirement incentive. For this to occur at least four people have to retire and there has to be a cost savings to the college.

Even though raises have not taken place for six years, negotiations have been ongoing, with changes to the faculty contract along the way.

"We moved our benefitted employees from 100 percent paid premier plan to a 100 percent standard plan that saved the district approximately \$200,000 for FY 2014-15, and will save the district in the future as health benefit costs continue to increase," Murillo said.

Because most employees are not full time they do not receive the health and welfare benefits.

In years past, the classified staff usually received what the faculty negotiated for. But a few years ago those workers formed a union. Negotiations with the Classified Employees Union have yet to begin.

In the next few months LTCC officials will be conducting meet and confer sessions with confidential classified, directors, and administrators. Those first two groups don't have contracts, while administrator contracts are tailored to the individual.

Also on the Jan. 13 board agenda is an item to give Executive Dean of CTE & Instruction Virginia Boyar, interim Executive Dean of Student & Academic Support Services Suzanne Gochis, and interim Executive Dean of Instruction Michelle Risdon each an annual pay increase of \$10,000 effective Jan. 1.

These are one-time salary spikes to compensate the three for the added workload because the positions of vice president of Academic Affairs and Student Services and executive director of Institutional Research, Planning, and Advancement remain vacant.

The college is saving \$155,000, before bonuses for the deans, by not filling those jobs. But the plan is to eventually fill them.

“I plan on recruiting again (for the vice president job) once we finalize working on some issues around enrollment management, and the timing to recruit in the state system is right,” Murillo explained. “There is going to be a lot of movement in administrators this year because of retirements and president openings. This movement will trickle down and it will play into our strategy for recruitment.”

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## **Opinion: Library needs to upgrade wireless capacity**



Steve Haerr of South Lake Tahoe uses the library's Internet. Photo/Denise Haerr

**By Kay Henderson**

Seven months ago, through the passage of Measure L, local residents voted to continue financial support of a key community resource, the South Lake Tahoe Library. Now we face

our first major post-election challenge. There has been greatly increased use of our library's Internet connection due to people using our WiFi capability to access information via personal devices, such as phones, tablets, and laptops.

As a result, our library's Internet connection, put into place in the 1990s, is no longer adequate and service has become very slow.

We are not the only library facing this challenge. This past fall, I conducted a phone survey of the branch managers of other libraries in the Tahoe basin and Truckee. Across five counties and two states, demand for WiFi in our local libraries has surged and managers have worked hard to meet that need. Some have succeeded and others are still working on the problem.

A common thread is that installing a fiber-optic line, which can handle the large amount of use in a library, is expensive.

Upgrading the Internet service at the South Lake Tahoe Library is badly needed.

As branch Manager Katharine Miller notes, "The library in any community serves as a key access point for information. We want people to have access to both physical books and online resources. To do that, we need to ensure the speed of our Internet service meets the demand of the public."

South Lake Tahoe Friends of the Library is working to meet this need. On Jan. 20 at 6pm at the library, we will be looking at this issue. Heidi Hill Drum and Bev Ducey from the Tahoe Prosperity Center will background us on the work their organization is doing to determine needs and write grants to upgrade Internet and cell phone service throughout the basin. The branch manager will then discuss various options for improving Internet service at our library and possible means of funding. A question and answer session will allow audience members to get information on specific topics and share

suggestions. Light refreshments will be served.

We invite all interested members of our community to attend.

*Kay Henderson is past president South Lake Tahoe Friends of the Library.*