

Calif. introduces pass to Tahoe state parks

California State Parks is launching the annual Park Pass Program, bringing back the popular Golden Poppy and introducing a Tahoe area regional pass.

The program consists of four passes with a variety of admissions to parks statewide.

The passes are:

- Tahoe Regional Annual Pass (\$75): The pass includes admission to D.L. Bliss State Park, Ed Z'Berg Sugar Pine Point State Park, Emerald Bay State Park, Kings Beach State Recreation Area and Donner Memorial State Park.
- California Explorer Annual Pass (\$195): Offers vehicle entrance to 134 state parks, including the Southern California beaches along the Orange, Los Angeles and San Diego coasts.
- Golden Poppy Annual Pass (\$125): This popular pass is making a comeback, and includes vehicle entrance to 112 state parks.
- Historian Passport (\$50): Includes admission for up to four people to State Historic Parks that generally charge a per-person admission fee.
- Off Highway Vehicle Day Use Annual Pass (\$50): unchanged from last year.

Passes are available online.

More than 13,000 expected at Colossus poker event

By Associated Press

The prizes will no doubt be plenty but so will the competition when the 46th annual World Series of Poker returns for 49 days next year.

The premier poker tournament with more than 60 separate events produced by Caesars Entertainment is returning May 27 to July 14 to the Rio All-Suite Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas.

Organizers announced a new event will join the lineup in 2015. Dubbed "the Colossus," the no-limit Texas Hold 'Em event will have a \$565 buy-in – the lowest, organizers said, for an open event in the tournament in 35 years – with a guaranteed total prize pool of at least \$5 million. Organizers expect more than 13,000 entries.

The closely-watched Main Event that attracts several thousand players battling for a one in nine chance to win \$10 million is scheduled for July 5 to July 14. The buy-in is \$10,000 and the final nine players return in November to vie for the top prize.

This year's winner, 27-year-old Sweden's Martin Jacobsen, was one of three Europeans at the final table who spent hours of intense head-to-head gameplay over two days to eventually take home \$10 million.

More than 82,000 people entered the 2014 World Series of Poker's 65 events in 2014. The event got its start as a small single table in 1970 at Benny Binion's Horseshoe Casino, where the players ultimately voted on the winner in the end.

This year, the tournament handed out more than \$227 million in

prizes, in addition to coveted gold bracelets awarded to the top winner in the tournament's individual events.

Buy-ins at the 2015 event range from \$75 to \$111,111 and feature niche events for seniors, women and one that promises at least \$1 million to the winner. The full schedule of events is expected to be released in January.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



- Lake Tahoe is considered one of the 17 most beautiful travel destinations of 2014. Check this out to see the other 16.

- Jenni Charles and Jesse Dunn of the Dead Winter Carpenters are playing for free Dec. 27 at 9pm at Moe's BBQ in Tahoe City.

- South Lake Tahoe Police Canine Association, with help from Pet Station, are making a few pets' Christmas a little brighter by dropping off a large box of dog toys, multiple shampoos and conditioners, dog and cat treats, cat litter, and more at the animal shelter in Meyers.

- According to WalletHub, Reno is the eighth best place for singles.

- Nevada state Sen. James Settelmeyer, R-Minden, plans to introduce a bill allowing dogs in stand-alone bars assuming the business wants to allow the four-leggeds.

Menus will sport calorie labels for alcohol

By Mary Clare Jalonick, AP

WASHINGTON – Don't want to be confronted with the number of calories in that margarita or craft beer? Then avoid the menu and order at the bar.

New menu labeling rules from the Food and Drug Administration will require chain restaurants with 20 or more outlets to list the number of calories in alcoholic drinks, along with other foods, on menus by next November. The idea is that people often don't know – or even think about – how many calories they are imbibing.

But the rules don't apply to drinks ordered at the bar or any drinks that aren't listed on the main menu. The wine list will also be guilt-free – individual calorie amounts aren't required there either. And unlike other beverages and foods, most bottles and cans don't have to list full nutritional information.

After years of lobbying for more nutritional information on alcoholic beverages, public health advocates say the menu labeling rules are a first step.

"Alcoholic beverages are a key contributor to the calories Americans are consuming, and most of the time when people have a drink they have absolutely no idea what its caloric impact is," says Margo Wootan of the Center for Science in the Public Interest. Her group petitioned the government more than a decade ago to require that bottles and cans be labeled with robust nutritional information.

The FDA's proposed menu labeling rules in 2011 exempted alcohol. But FDA Commissioner Margaret Hamburg said the agency decided to include it in the final rules this year after those who commented on the rule were largely in favor of such labeling because of its potential impact on public health.

The beer, wine and spirits industries objected, arguing that they were regulated by the Treasury Department, not the FDA, a setup that dates back to Prohibition. Treasury's oversight, which includes minimal input from FDA, has "well served the consuming public," a coalition of alcohol groups wrote in a 2011 comment asking to be left out of the menu labeling rules.

The new rules are designed to not be too burdensome for the alcohol industries or restaurants. Endless combinations of mixed drinks won't have to be labeled at bars, unless they are listed on a menu, and the FDA is allowing restaurants to use estimates of calories and ranges of calories without listing the exact amount in every different drink. That means menus will list the average amount of calories in a glass of red or white wine, but won't list calories by every brand of wine on the wine list. Same with beers and spirits.

So every winery or craft brewery won't have to pay to have their products' nutritional content analyzed – for now, at least.

The labeling rules have "more of an indirect effect on our business," says Wendell Lee of the California-based Wine Institute. Lee says brand-specific menu calorie labels could be especially burdensome on the wine industry, where every vintage and varietal is different.

Craft brewers, with many varied brands and styles, have similar concerns.

The regulations "could have a slight chilling effect" on small breweries if some restaurants decide to go beyond them and list calories for individual beers, said Paul Gatz of the

Brewers Association, which represents craft breweries.

The rules could have advantages too, he said.

"The more customers know about a brewery, the more they feel connected with it," Gatza said.

Off the menu, labeling rules appear further away.

For years, most alcohol companies have tried to put off mandatory bottle and can nutrition labeling as public health advocates have fought for it. Rules proposed in 2007 would have made such labels mandatory, but the FDA never made the rules final.

Last year, Treasury's Alcohol and Tobacco Trade and Tax Bureau said for the first time that beer, wine and spirits companies could use labels that include serving size, servings per container, calories, carbohydrates, protein and fat per serving. The labels are voluntary and will likely be used mostly by liquor companies touting low calories and low carbohydrates in their products.

Current labeling law for bottles and cans is complicated.

Wines containing 14 percent or more alcohol by volume must list alcohol content. Wines that are 7 percent to 14 percent alcohol by volume may list alcohol content or put "light" or "table" wine on the label. "Light" beers must list calorie and carbohydrate content. Liquor must list percent alcohol content by volume and may also list proof, a measure of alcoholic strength.

Wine, beer and liquor manufacturers don't have to list ingredients but must list substances people might be sensitive to, such as sulfites, certain food colorings and aspartame.

Tom Hogue of the Tobacco Trade and Tax Bureau said the current goal is to make sure that companies that want to label may do so, and that labeling is consistent. It is important that

labels “don’t mislead the consumer,” he said.

Fire damages Kings Beach condos

Updated 9:30am:

Five condominium units in Kings Beach were damaged Dec. 24 by fire, smoke or water.

“The fire went through the attic. We’re not sure how it started,” Dave Zaski with North Tahoe Fire Protection District told *Lake Tahoe News*. “It took us a while to chase the fire around.”

The blaze at 9200 Brockway Springs Drive was reported at 8pm.

Also helping put out the structure fire were crews from Northstar, Truckee and Meeks Bay fire departments.

Zaski said two of the damaged units were occupied. Four people, two from each unit, who lived there will need to find other living quarters.

The fire started in one unit and then spread to the others. Investigators are on the scene to assess the damage and determine the cause.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Opinion: Giving up Christmas – a new tradition

By Kathryn Reed

I have struggled with Christmas for a number of years. This is the first year I've chosen not to celebrate it. Leading up to this day has been liberating, we'll see if I feel the same way when the day is over.

It's been liberating because there are no decorations, no year-end letter to write, no shopping, no baking. Every day is just another day. And it's a day in Tahoe, so that's pretty darn special already.

I will be working on a story today, ironically, with a bit of a Christmas theme. But working on the holiday is nothing new. That's the hazards of the news business. And personal beliefs must be cast aside when it comes to work.

For many years, Christmas was not celebrated on Dec. 25 in my family because of my schedule or my sister's – she is in the medical profession.

But this will be the first Christmas I have chosen not to be with family.

If memory serves me correctly, I was 30 the first time I didn't spend the holiday with my parents. They went off to see my sister in the Midwest; I was living in Las Vegas. I admit it was hard. A new tradition I wasn't quite ready for.

I'm wondering how my mom and sister are reacting to me not being with them today when originally I said I would be there. A new tradition for them.

My struggles with Christmas are that I'm neither religious, nor do I believe in Santa. So, that leaves me asking the

questions – What am I celebrating? And why?

I don't need Christmas to appreciate my family and friends. I certainly don't need to be buying presents for them or receiving any to show appreciation or feel appreciated.

I asked my mom, who is religious, years ago about why people give gifts at Christmas. Her answer didn't satisfy me. If gifts are to be given to someone, why not do so on their birthday – when it's all about them?

I don't need Dec. 25 to signify having some special meal. I can do that whenever or on other occasions that I believe are worthy.

I like receiving cards from family and friends – more as a year-end wrap than to wish me a Merry Christmas. I actually like receiving snail mail.

I'm skipping sending out correspondence this year – for reasons that go beyond giving up on Christmas. My plan is for 2016 is to send out new year's cards; or maybe in 2015 I'll send something out on my birthday – the start of my personal new year. Whatever I decide, it will be another new tradition.

I still like seeing all the lights on buildings and friends' houses decorated – even if I don't truly get the point of it. And the holiday parties are wonderful – who doesn't like a good party?

What I don't expect to change is to wish people Happy Holidays, Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah and Happy New Year. Nor am I offended when any of those greetings are said to me. No one means anything mean by expressing good times, good wishes upon someone. I won't be offended in whatever way they are said to me.

Whatever you are or are not celebrating today or this December, enjoy. And don't begrudge others their time to

celebrate what is important to them on whatever day that may be. And don't judge those who for whatever reason are not celebrating what you are celebrating.

Christmas memories for Tahoe's fallen children



The Children's Memorial in South Lake Tahoe is awash in the Christmas spirit. An anonymous Santa decorated the site with mini stockings. Photo/Provided

Author to read from war memoir

Brian Turner, celebrated author and director of Sierra Nevada College's MFA program in creative writing, will read from his latest book, "My Life as a Foreign Country: A Memoir", on Jan. 8 in Prim Library.

Turner has enjoyed tremendous national attention and accolades for his writing about his experiences of war).

Turner, who enlisted in the U.S. Infantry after earning his MFA from the University of Oregon, served in Bosnia-Herzegovina with the 10th Mountain Division and as an infantry team leader in Iraq with the 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team. The book retraces his war experience – pre-deployment to combat zone, homecoming to aftermath – in an account which combines recollection with the imagination's efforts to make reality comprehensible.

A reception begins at 6pm, reading at 7pm at the Incline Village college.

Study abroad program looking for high school students

The application deadline for the 2015-16 Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (YES) Abroad scholarship program is Jan. 7.

The program provides full scholarships to U.S. high school students to experience overseas communities and cultures, preparing students to collaborate on today's global challenges

such as human rights, community development, workforce development, climate change, and global health.

Sponsored by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, the YES Abroad program enables students to study for one academic year in countries that may include Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ghana, South Africa, India, Indonesia, Macedonia, Malaysia, Morocco, Oman, Philippines, Thailand, and Turkey. The merit-based scholarship covers domestic and international travel; applicable visa fees; medical benefits; room and board; tuition at the local high school; orientations; and fees for educational and cultural activities.

Participants in the program fully immerse themselves into the culture of their host family while attending local high school.

Go online to learn more about the program and to apply.

Sign up for master food preserver training

The University of California Cooperative Extension is training people to become a master food preserver volunteer.

People will be taught university-based, scientific information and then be able to share that knowledge to others in El Dorado County through free public classes, newsletters, farm day, farmers markets, kids expo, the county fair, and other educational events.

There will be a program overview meeting for anyone interested

in becoming a master food preserver on Feb. 3 at 10am at the Bethell-Delfino Agriculture Building, 311 Fair Lane, Placerville. Class size is limited to 12 students.

Classes begin March 3 and meet consecutively for 12 weeks with graduation in May. Classes are Tuesdays from 9am-2pm, consisting of approximately one hour of lecture and the rest hands-on lab.

The training fee is \$95. Highest priority for applicants is given to residents of El Dorado County. Residents from neighboring counties who are willing to volunteer in El Dorado County may also apply.

Complete the online application by Feb. 12.

For more information, contact Robin Cleveland at 530.621.5528 or rkcleveland@ucdavis.edu.