

Letter: Soroptimist give back via B&B

To the community,

Soroptimist International of South Lake Tahoe sponsors many events and grants that improve the lives of others. This year, the Soroptimist have chosen to focus on the issue of hunger and joined with Bread & Broth to host their second Adopt A Day of Nourishment on Nov. 17.

For over 25 years, the B&B program has been feeding members of the South Lake Tahoe community at St. Theresa Church Grace Hall every Monday and thanks to the generous support of our donors, sponsors and volunteers, a second meal has been added on Fridays at the Lake Tahoe Community Presbyterian Church.

"Many thanks to Bread & Broth for this wonderful program benefiting our community," said Brenda Knox, Soroptimist president-elect. Knox, along with fellow Soroptimist members Ellen Goldberg, Colleen Manzar, Linda Mitchell and Kimberly Templeton, spent three hours helping the B&B volunteers provide the dinner guests with a great experience of warm welcomes, nutritious food and a safe and secure place to gather. Helping the community is a major focus of the SISLT.

Thanks to their spirit of service, the Soroptimist members generously donated \$250 to cover the dinner costs and send a great team of sponsor volunteers to help ease the lives of those experiencing hunger. Kudos to the Soroptimist International of South Lake Tahoe for consistently giving back.

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth

Winterize your home to save money

By Jeff Wuorio, Deseret News

Mention winterizing a house to most homeowners and the knee jerk responses are bound to begin flying: Time consuming, expensive, unnecessary.

Tackling the last comment first, it's true that energy takes a smaller bite out of most homeowners' budgets than it used to. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, energy now accounts for about 5 percent of disposable income, down from a high of 8 percent in the 1960s.

And a homeowner's energy bill could be even less.

"Very few houses these days are as energy-efficient as they could be," says TV home improvement expert Danny Lipford.

Nor does making your home as energy smart as possible mandate blocking out weeks free time or a carte blanche budget. Buttoning up your home for the winter can be relatively quick and inexpensive if you know where to put both your efforts and cash to the best use.

Read the whole story

Plenty of work for seasonal retail workers

By Steve Matthews, Bloomberg

Wanda Tucker was hired on the spot for a part-time job with Gap Inc. Banana Republic chain earlier this month after searching for a full-time position since April.

“I thought I was just going in for an interview,” said Tucker, 53, of Rex, Ga., who’d finished five years of Army Reserves postings before entering the workforce. “It has been a blessing to have some money coming into the household.”

Workers are facing the most favorable job market for seasonal work since the 18-month recession that started in December 2007, getting hired with fewer interviews and in some cases with higher pay.

[Read the whole story](#)

FDA releases sweeping calorie labeling rules

By Lindsay Abrams, Salon

All those foods that will basically kill you as soon as your order them? Now they’re at least going to have to warn you first.

The Food and Drug Administration, after much delay, has finally released its national calorie labeling requirements.

As mandated under the Affordable Care Act, the rules, which go into effect one year from now, will require chain restaurants and other food establishments with 20 or more locations to post calorie counts on their menus.

Here's what it will look like:

When you sit down at a restaurant, you'll be able to see how many calories each item contains. If you drive through for take-out, the calories will be there, too. Ordering pizza for delivery? Despite big pizza's best efforts to fight it, calories will be listed by the slice. The prepared food offered at grocery stores is covered, too, an inclusion that the National Grocers Association finds "disappointing." Buying a snack from a vending machine? You'll have to be able to see the labels before you make your selection. Your deli sandwiches, salad bars salads, scoops of ice cream and bakery muffins? Check, check, check and check. Even movie theater popcorn, long a Trojan horse for unexpected calories, will be labeled. And, in a move that surprised some food policy experts (in a good way), so will alcoholic beverages – at least, those that are listed on menus (drinks mixed at bars are exempted).

Read the whole story

Ski resorts selling the lifestyle to Chinese market

By Liz Flora, Jing Daily

Top tourism destinations across the globe are vying for the business of China's booming number of affluent outbound

travelers, but one type of luxury world-class destination is still hoping to catch up: the ski resort.

Since the sport requires extensive training and is new to the average Chinese traveler, destinations from Switzerland to Canada are working to take a shortcut to visitor growth numbers by selling the luxury ski lifestyle along with their world-class slopes.

Over the weekend, an inaugural event in Beijing called Ski&Style spotlighted that lifestyle by bringing together top resort representatives from Switzerland, Iceland, France, Canada, and Japan to present their destinations to Chinese VIPs as they sipped Champagne, attended exclusive parties, and viewed a ski style runway show. The aim of the event was to demonstrate that a ski vacation abroad could be worthwhile even for those at the beginner level, which is the case for many of China's skiers.

"In China, ski has been promoted through the angle of the sport. What we wanted to show is that ski before all was a destination, and is a destination," says Delphine Lignières, the CEO of event organizer China Rendez-Vous. "It means that somebody who is not skiing should enjoy the winter lifestyle over there. What we wanted to show as well is that actually, après-ski is the best moment of the day. It's a moment where you mingle with friends; you are enjoying life."

Read the whole story

'Mockingjay' doesn't live up

to 'Catching Fire'

By Jeremy Miller

Having destroyed the Hunger Games, Katniss must now move forward to her biggest challenge yet: bringing down the Capitol.

"Hunger Games Mockingjay Part 1" picks up right where "Catching Fire" left off. Katniss awakens in District 13, the once rebellious district that challenged the Capitol some years ago. She's given a pretty bleak tour and meets the president of the resistance, Alma Coin (Julianne Moore). Coin and Katniss' once enemy Plutarch (Philip Seymour Hoffman) are convinced that Katniss is the future of the rebellion as she's earned some serious street credit throughout the districts for shaking things up quite a bit at the games.

It takes a little convincing as Katniss is in perma-panic mode over the mystery of where on earth Peeta (Josh Hutcherson) is.

She soon discovers some colliding information. First, Peeta is being puppeted by President Snow (Donald Sutherland) at the Capitol, and that her home District 12 has been destroyed.



The Miller Meter – 3 out of 5 stars.



Katniss agrees to be the poster-child for the resistance and they start production on some promo pieces full of epic sentiment that could rival any Ridley Scott trailer. Meanwhile, President Snow has Peeta telling everyone to cease fighting, as the outcome isn't what they think it'll be. These two just can't seem to get on the same page.

That right there is essentially the plot.

Now, before I dive into my thoughts on the film I'd like to preface it with this: I did not read the books. It's not that I don't enjoy reading; the medium just doesn't do it for me. I'm a movie guy. The argument that "the book was better" simply doesn't work in the context of a conversation with me about movies.

OK, that being said, here it is. I liked the movie. I did not love it. I love the characters of the Hunger Games and I love the story. It subtly reminds me of the Matrix trilogy with less epic fight scenes and more comfortable love scenes.

What I don't understand is how I spent two hours in the theater and don't really know why. "Catching Fire" was awesome, as far as sequels go. The middle movie in a trilogy always catches the heat. It's building the story for the epic third chapter that we all selfishly want to skip to. "Catching Fire" achieved that purpose so why then do we need a third chapter split into two parts?

On my drive home I planned it all out in my head and we could have done part one in 40 minutes. Add that to a 2.5 hour run time and we could have had part one and part two in one action

packed epic third installment.



I did love the acting, as always, minus of course Liam Hemsworth who serves a purpose but doesn't put forth a whole lot of passion. The story, script and acting were all on point; my only other beef other than its seemingly unnecessary existence was the visual experience. There were several instances that somewhat sloppy camera work took away from the power of a scene.

My 3/5 rating is based on the fact that it was a good movie, but I didn't need it. I want the war. I want action and emotion and epic loss and conflict. I didn't get any of that from part one, but I admittedly still had fun.

Here's my closing thought: The "Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King" had a massive run time of 3 hours and 21 minutes. Why? Because that's all they needed to give us an amazing climax and closure to the trilogy. Guess what, we all sat through it, we all loved it, and the Academy gave it 11 Oscars. Why then must they split a single movie's plot into two when one would have sufficed? Maybe it had something to do with the \$121 million opening weekend. Clever studio execs.

Go see the movie, you'll like it, it'll be fun, but don't expect anything but filler story and tidbits of action with a little bit of confused teenage hormones sprinkled on top.

South Lake Tahoe resident Jeremy Miller has more movie reviews [online](#).

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



- South Lake Tahoe City Council is having a special meeting Dec. 4 at 9am to certify the election results.

- The ice skating rink at the Northstar Village is free between noon-9pm daily.
 - Reno Jazz Orchestra brings Jazz for the Holidays to Northern Nevada on Dec. 20 at the Nightingale Hall at UNR at 7:30pm. Tickets are available online; students \$10, adults \$25.
 - Gov. Jerry Brown has reappointed Amy Horne of Truckee to the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board. She has been on the board since 2003.
 - The South Lake Tahoe Izod and Van Heusen stores are closing Dec. 24.
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Wet December on tap for California

By Tim Hearden, Capital Press

SACRAMENTO — Prospects are building for a wet December throughout California, federal forecasters say.

The large low-pressure system that promises abundant rain and snow this weekend will likely be the first in a series of

storms to parade through the Golden State, said Michelle Mead, a National Weather Service warning coordinator here.

Above-average rainfall is favored throughout the state in December, according to the federal Climate Prediction Center. Then El Nino conditions portend chances of above-average precipitation south of Sacramento in January and February, the center predicts.

“The storm track is definitely looking like we’re getting more systems lining up in the Northern Pacific that will have the potential to impact Northern California,” Mead said, noting the intensity of storms will depend on whether a high-pressure ridge builds off the coast.

Read the whole story

Wildlife-vehicle collisions near Tahoe increasing

Caltrans and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife are cautioning motorists of an unusually high number of collisions between drivers and wildlife on Interstate 80 and Highway 50 in Placer and El Dorado counties.

“There were an unprecedented 23 incidents involving large animals on Highway 50 and I-80 in just six days from Nov. 14-19,” Caltrans Director Malcolm Dougherty said in a statement. “Drivers need to use caution and watch out for wildlife as they travel through the Sierras and other rural areas.”

Here are a few tips for motorists:

- Be particularly alert when driving in areas frequented by wildlife and give yourself more time than usual to react safely by reducing your speed.
- “Sweep” the roadway from side to side with your eyes as you drive. This increases your chance of seeing anything that might become a hazard.
- Pay particular attention when driving during morning and evening, as wildlife are most active during these times.
- If you see an animal cross the road, know that another may be following it.
- Don’t litter. Odors from all kinds of products may entice animals to venture near roadways.

Officials say there are probably several factors behind the animals’ increased movements near highways. One is the deer rut, or mating season, and bucks are always more active this time of year. Recent wildfires in the mountains and foothills also destroyed a considerable amount of vegetation, forcing wildlife to travel farther than usual to forage. The drought has stressed existing vegetation, likely reducing its normal nutritional value and forcing animals to eat more than usual. Bears are getting ready for hibernation and are foraging far and wide to get enough nutrition to make it through the winter.

Restaurants getting people to put phones away

By Katy Hall, Huffington Post

Most Americans say phones don’t belong at the table during meals, though the vast majority of millennials admit to

checking their phones during dinner.

Concern over the practice has sparked some restaurants to encourage customers to put away their phones – with mixed results, depending on the tactic.

Each Wednesday night at Sneaky's Chicken in Sioux City, Iowa, servers ask guests if they'd like to put their phones in a special box during the meal. If they do, they get a 10 percent discount on their dinner. Christy Wright, who co-owns Sneaky's with her parents and sister, said the policy took shape after her family members took a look at their own smartphone habits.

"We noticed that within our own family we were way too connected to our phones and thought maybe we could get others to join us [in disconnecting] for just a bit," Wright told the *Huffington Post*.

Research has shown that having your smartphone within reach probably won't make you a better dinner companion. Even if you're not checking your email or Instagramming your brunch, the mere presence of a smartphone can reduce empathy and diminish a conversation between two people, according to a study published earlier this year in the journal *Environment and Behavior*.

Read the whole story