

Boeger Winery founder receives prestigious award

Greg Boeger has received the 2018 wine lifetime achievement award from the California State Fair.

He and his wife, Sue, started Boeger Winery in 1972. It is the oldest winery in El Dorado County.

Greg Boeger grew up on his grandfather's Nichelini Winery in Napa. This is where he developed his knowledge of grape growing and winemaking.

In El Dorado, Boeger became a pioneer in experimenting with underdog varietals such as Barbera, Carignane, Refosco, Charbono, and Aglianico. Barbera emerged as the winery's golden child early on and has garnered 120 medals for this one varietal, including multiple "Best Barbera of California" and "Best Barbera of the Sierra Foothills" at the California State Fair.

He shares the lifetime achievement award with the Bogle family.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- Former Sen. Harry Reid, D-Nev., and former Secretary of State John Kerry will appear together as part of the inaugural Harry Reid Public Engagement Lecture Series event at 3pm April 3, at Lawlor Events Center on the UNR campus.

- Lake Tahoe Community College and Lake Tahoe Unified School District boards have a joint meeting planned for April

24, 5:30pm at LTCC.

- According to the California Health and Human Services Agency, Barton Memorial Hospital has one of the lowest 2017 C-section rates of birthing hospitals in the state.
 - Luke Bryan will be at Harveys on July 25 at 7pm. Opening will be Morgan Wallen.
 - California Tahoe Conservancy board has canceled its March 1 meeting because of the storm.
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SLT council names vendors for Lakeview Commons

By Kathryn Reed

Tie goes to the local, at least when it comes to awarding bids in South Lake Tahoe.

That was one of the reasons the City Council used this month in voting for which business would get the next three-year contract to operate the boat launch facility at Lakeview Commons.

While Tahoe City Kayak and Paddleboard had 169.17 points, South Tahoe SUP had 168.80. The council voted for the latter. The room was also full of supporters for the South Lake Tahoe business.

Also on the Feb. 20 agenda was the food and beverage concession. That decision was less controversial.

While Lakeview Café had been the operator and bid again, it is

Sierra-at-Tahoe that the council elected to be the new concessionaire. Out of a possible 100 points in the staff assessment, Sierra received 92 and Lakeview Café 80.3.

Councilman Tom Davis voted against this decision. It was more of a vote for the current vendor because there was no evidence presented that it had done anything wrong to not to keep operating.

Sierra-at-Tahoe General Manager John Rice told *Lake Tahoe News*, "While this new venture will be mutually exclusive from the Sierra brand, we are excited to provide the same excellent service and guest experience that is synonymous with our winter offering. We believe in quality recreational experiences and plan to deliver excellent service to the guests that enjoy the Commons Beach area."

Sierra goes beyond the normal ski resort food as **this story proves**. What the menu at Lakeview Commons will be this summer is still being worked out.

"Sierra-at-Tahoe has primarily been a winter recreational business, and have hosted a few summer events over the 25 years we have been here. We hire a group of very talented individuals, many of whom we can't offer full time employment to," Rice said. "We see recreational opportunities in our community as matching the level of talent we have on our team and providing employment opportunities. We plan to have about 12-15 people rotate through the food concession as well, some of us on salary taking a shift or two."

Prior to the meeting a protest to the bid process was submitted by Day Go Adventures regarding the boat launch. The owner claims the current unrest in the city necessitates holding off on awarding a three-year contract to anyone. However, City Manager Nancy Kerry was never directly involved in the process.

Nonetheless, the protest should be on the March 6 council

agenda. The electeds will have the choice to stick with their decision, award the contract to the protester or reject all bids.

Also expected at that meeting are the actual contracts for the concessionaires.

The contract for the boat launch could not be awarded at the last meeting because findings needed to be made as to why the council was going with someone other than the high bidder.

Those findings included:

- South Tahoe Stand Up Paddle's experience, proven record, and knowledge of the local area.
- There being less than one point separating South Tahoe SUP from the high bidder, Tahoe City Kayak and Paddleboard.
- Council wanting to support people who reside in the city limits.
- South Tahoe SUP branding of local events like Lake of the Sky race.

The other companies that bid on the boat launch concession contract were Sierra-at-Tahoe, Kayak Tahoe and SUP Tahoe.

Opinion: California's water war heating up

By Dan Walters, CALmatters

After one year of torrential respite, drought may have returned to California, and with it, a renewal of the state's

perpetual conflict over water management.

State and federal water systems have told farmers not to expect more than a fifth of their paper allocations, the state Water Resources Control Board is weighing a new regime of mandatory conservation, and supporters of more reservoirs are complaining about the glacial pace of spending \$2.7 billion set aside in a water bond for more storage.

The drought that seemed to be washed away by last year's heavy rain and snow storms had spawned some water management changes that would have seemed unthinkable a few years earlier – most notably a landmark groundwater management system that's still being developed.

If, indeed, drought has returned at least semi-permanently, it will fuel another round of policy debates, and it's likely to include the mother of all water conflicts – the state's convoluted water rights structure.

It would take a book to fully explain those rights, but there are generally three varieties, to wit:

- “Riparian rights” attached to land directly fronting on rivers and other bodies of water are the most senior;
- “Appropriative rights” that were claimed prior to 1914 come next;
- Post-1914 appropriative rights bring up the rear.

Whether those rights should be overhauled, or even abolished, has been kicked around in academic, political and agricultural circles for decades, the latter because farmers account for about three-fourths of California's human water consumption.

Two unresolved issues dominate the discussions: whether the most senior rights are absolute, or can be legally modified, and if modified whether their holders are entitled to compensation.

Had the drought not been interrupted by last winter's storms, both of those issues appeared to be headed toward showdowns.

The state Water Resources Control Board attempted to impose its conservation mandates on senior rights holders, and they worried aloud that it was a backdoor abrogation of those rights.

By law, they argued, they were exempt from such allocations, while the board said it could supersede water rights because of a provision of the state constitution barring "waste or unreasonable use."

One test of the issue involved the Byron-Bethany Irrigation District, near Tracy, which was accused of taking water from the Delta for 13 days after it and other districts with senior water rights had been told to curtail pumping.

"We are a test case," Byron-Bethany's manager, Rick Gilmore, said at the time. "I think this has become a larger issue. I think the water board wants to use this as a precedent so they can start to gain more control over senior water right users."

The district and the board stepped back from a decisive confrontation, but the issue is popping up again this year as the board works on new and permanent conservation rules.

Last week, the board delayed a vote on those rules after some water agencies again questioned its authority. "You are making an adjudicative determination without due process," said Rob Donlan, an attorney for a group of water suppliers.

Water rights seem destined to be the next big water war front as California faces what could be a semi-permanent state of drought and attempts to reallocate its finite supplies.

It could be fought out case-by-case in the courts, which would take decades, or the next governor and the Legislature could, as was done with groundwater regulation, deal with it

comprehensively, including fair compensation to whose rights are curtailed.

As expensive as that obviously would be, it might be cheaper than doing nothing, or fighting it out case-by-case.

CALmatters is a public interest journalism venture committed to explaining how California's Capitol works and why it matters.

EDC's newest judge comes from Public Defender's Office



Mark Ralphs

El Dorado County is down one less judge with the gubernatorial appointment of Mark Ralphs to the bench.

The 57-year-old from Diamond Springs has been an assistant public defender at the El Dorado County Public Defender's Office since 2007, where he has served as a deputy public defender since 1997. He is based in the South Lake Tahoe office.

He was a sole practitioner from 1990 to 1997.

"On behalf of the El Dorado Superior Court, I am delighted to

hear that Gov. (Jerry) Brown has appointed Assistant Public Defender Mark Ralphs to our bench. He is a longtime resident of our county who has raised his family here. Mark's work as an attorney in private practice as well as for the government have provided him with the diverse skills necessary to handle the challenges of being a judge," El Dorado County Presiding Judge Suzanne Kingsbury told *Lake Tahoe News*. "For the past several years, Mark has been assigned to the South Lake Tahoe branch of the Public Defender's Office, and I have had an opportunity to observe his excellent work. He will be a hard working, fair and unbiased jurist."

Ralphs fills the vacancy created by the retirement of Superior Court **Judge Nelson Brooks** last March. The term expires in 2022.

El Dorado County is still down two judges because of **Steve Bailey's resignation** last year as well as Jim Wagoner's.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Nevada DMV proposes gender policy change

By John Potter, KTVN-TV

Transgender Nevadans will score a victory if a proposed policy change at the DMV takes effect. The gender shown on their driver's license could be of their own choosing. It's part of the recent national trend, of state and local governments better accommodating transgender people.

The Nevada DMV now wants to let those folks decide if it

should be an “M” or an “F” on their own driver’s license. That one letter change on the driver’s card means a world of difference. You use your driver licenses for ID while shopping, or job interviews. But the issue comes up when your appearance says one thing and your driver’s license says another. The difference can generate ridicule or distrust.

Read the whole story

Ski towns and their housing issues

By Megan Michelson, Powder

A pervasive housing shortage is afflicting mountain towns from Stowe to Telluride. The issue is not just a question of locals being able to afford million-dollar homes—it’s also about availability.

“There is very little vacancy for ownership or rental units, and what is vacant is very unaffordable,” says Stacy Stoker, housing manager for Wyoming’s Teton County Housing Authority, which oversees affordable housing in the Jackson Hole area. “Less than three percent of the land in the county is able to be developed. This means that there is not a lot of land for building affordable housing.”

Aspen, Colo., has a vacancy rate of less than 1 percent for rental units; in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, it’s zero; in Mammoth Lakes it’s less than 2 percent.

Breckenridge, Colo., houses 50 percent of its workforce—so half of the town’s employees commute from elsewhere. Vail and

Aspen house less than 30 percent. Truckee shelters 41 percent of its employees. Mammoth and Jackson are doing well by comparison, each housing around 63 percent of its workforce.

Read the whole story

EDC's top official to host meeting in Tahoe

El Dorado County CAO Don Ashton is hosting a round table discussion on March 21 in Meyers.

Topics will include:

- Where the county gets its money
- How much is mandated to be spent and where
- How much is discretionary and options about how to spend it
- The process driving the decisions about what gets funded and what doesn't, and the consequences of those decisions.

It will be from 5:30-7pm at the CCC center in Meyers.

Hottest pepper varieties to

try this year

By Melinda Myers

Turn up the heat and add a bit of spice to your meals with hot peppers. Add them to your garden, flower borders and containers for added beauty and easy picking.

Your biggest challenge will be narrowing down your choices. Let All-America Selections winners help. This nonprofit organization tests new edible and ornamental varieties nationally for their suitability to home gardens and containers.



Red Ember, a 2018 All-America Selections winner, is full of flavor and adds beauty to flower or container gardens. Photo/All-America Selections

Grow a few cayenne peppers if you like Mexican, Cajun and Asian cuisine. They also add a bit of zip to dips, stews and marinades. Brighten your meals and garden with the brilliant red and tasty fruit of Red Ember. This 2018 AAS winner is

pretty enough for flower gardens or containers. You'll be harvesting earlier and longer, providing more time to use and enjoy them. For a mildly spicy option with the same great flavor try Cayennetta. Its heat and cold tolerance makes it a great choice no matter where you garden.

If you like it even hotter, include a few habaneros in the garden. Then add heat and flavor to jerk chicken, chili, jam and other recipes. For those that like the flavor of habanero, but can't stand the heat, try Roulette habanero. It looks and tastes like a habanero in every aspect except its not hot. Roulette is the perfect solution for families with different heat tolerances.

Add a full spectrum of color to containers and small space gardens with the early ripening Hungarian Mexican Sunrise and Sunset wax peppers. The conical shaped fruit transition from green to yellow, then orange and red. The fruit can be harvested and eaten at any stage. But the longer it is on the plant, the better the flavor. Mexican Sunrise is semi-hot while Mexican Sunset is for those that like a bit more heat. Both can be eaten fresh, stuffed, baked, grilled or pickled.

Grow a few Aji Rico peppers to add warm heat with a hint of citrus to your dishes. Eat them fresh or cook into salsa and hot sauces. Control the heat with the number of seeds left in the fruit. The more seeds that remain; the greater the heat.

Roast them, use them fresh or string a few Giant Ristra peppers together to dry and use throughout the winter. Don't be fooled by its appearance. This 7-inch chili pepper looks like a sweet Marconi but has the spiciness of a cayenne.

For those who want to crank up the heat try Emerald Fire at 2,500 Scoville units. Not the hottest pepper on the market, but this jalapeno is certainly one to respect. The deep green fruit resists cracking and matures to red. Use them fresh, stuff with cream cheese, grill or can for later use.

If your taste lies on the other end of the heat spectrum start with Chili Pie and work your way to some of these hotter varieties. These miniature bell peppers are mildly hot when the fruit turns red. Be careful not to mix them in with your sweet bell peppers.

Heed this warning when growing and using any hot peppers. Clearly mark or better yet grow your hot peppers away from sweet peppers to avoid an unwelcome surprise. Keep your hands away from your eyes when working with hot peppers and wash them thoroughly when done.

Most important, have fun growing and using hot peppers in your garden, containers and meals. These beauties combine nicely with other vegetables, herbs and flowers to create stunning garden beds and containers. And their spicy flavor is sure to help you create memorable meals this season.

Melinda Myers has written more than 20 gardening books, including "Small Space Gardening." She hosts the Great Courses "How to Grow Anything: Food Gardening For Everyone" DVD set and the nationally syndicated "Melinda's Garden Moment" TV and radio segments.

Multiple powder days in the immediate forecast

Mother Nature appears to be making up for lost time.

The storm that should arrive on Thursday in Lake Tahoe could have snow accumulations measured in feet instead of inches.

The National Weather Service in Reno is calling for 3-5 feet

above 7,000 feet, and a couple feet at lake level.

A winter storm watch is in effect from March 1 at 4am through March 3 at 10am.

Temperatures are going to remain in the 20s and 30s as highs, with lows in the teens much of the week.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*