

Holiday fair benefits Barton hospital

The 44th annual Barton Auxiliary Holiday Faire is Nov. 9.

Barton Auxiliary volunteers and employees from the Attic, Barton's thrift store, have selected their favorite holiday and winter donations to sell. Items available for purchase will include jewelry, crystal, antiques and collectibles, holiday decorations, winter wear, vintage dolls, purses, and other gift items.

The faire will take place between 9am-3pm at the St. Theresa Grace Hall on the corner of Lyons Avenue and Highway 50 in South Lake Tahoe. Santa Claus will make a guest appearance between 10am and 2pm. Lunch, bake sale items, and Barton's famous cheese balls will also be available for purchase.

All proceeds benefit Barton Memorial Hospital.

For more information, call 530.541.3378.

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Barry

Barry is a sweet Great Dane mix puppy who has fur like a cow – beautiful big black and white spots.

Barry has had a rough time of it so far in life, as he was abandoned when his owner moved. He must have had bad experiences with men, too, as he is quite suspicious of them. He is shy at first, but warms up quickly to women, and within minutes wants to climb into their laps and give kisses. Barry needs to go to a kind person who has the time and patience to work with him and build up his confidence.

Barry is neutered, microchipped, tested for heart worm, and vaccinated. He is at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many other dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes. Go to the Tahoe animal shelter's Facebook page to see photos and descriptions of all pets at the shelter.

Call 530.573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet.

For spay-neuter assistance for South Tahoe residents, go online.

– Karen Kuentz

\$24 mil. overhaul of MontBleu casino-hotel



Suites at MontBleu are more contemporary.
Photos/Provided

By Kathryn Reed

Even though MontBleu has been around for more than nine years, remnants of when the hotel-casino was Caesars Tahoe still exist. But those are all about to disappear with a \$24 million remodel of the Stateline property.

“The rooms have not been touched since the Caesars days. It was the mid- to late-’90s since anyone did anything to the rooms. Some of the rooms have Caesars’ logos in them,” General Manager Steve Ditchkus told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Each of the 401 rooms, plus the 36 suites, is practically being gutted. A Tahoe-esque feel is being incorporated with all of the wood that is being used, along with neutral colors.

For a society that needs to be plugged in even on vacation,

the rooms will be wired with multiple outlets.

Flat screen TVs are being added. The headboards, nightstands and other furniture are new.

Bathrooms are also getting a much-needed overhaul, with such improvements as walk-in showers. New vanities and fixtures are coming.

Mountain modern is the overall theme.



Gone are all references to
Caesars Tahoe.

Ditchkus said the price of rooms will go up, but how much has not been decided. That's one of the things he plans to discuss with his bosses when he's in Las Vegas this week.

The remodel is designed to cater to what Ditchkus calls their demographic – “the avid gambler from the Bay Area.” This is why the 45,000-square-foot casino floor and showroom are also getting a face-lift.

While carpet was laid when the property changed hands, it is time to be replaced. Ditchkus calls the new carpet, which is in, “elegant”.

Several televisions will be added to the box office.

The showroom – which has Caesars pillars – will get new carpet and tables. The bars are going to be revamped so they are easier to access.

“It will have a new look and a new feel,” Ditchkus said. The showroom should be done by Christmas.

The sports book is going to move to the Zone Bar side, with the bar being redone. Outside upgrades are also in the works, including painting the building, redoing the parking lot and porte cochere.

MontBleu, while it has had outdoor concerts in recent summers, is staying away from that concept and instead is letting Harveys and the future Hard Rock capture that market. Outdoor festivals like this year’s craft beer and crawfish events are what MontBleu plans to do more of.

No changes are planned for the restaurants.

MontBleu is an Edgewood Companies property. The lease with Las Vegas-based Tropicana Entertainment, which operates the hotel-casino, expires in 2028. Ditchkus said it is too soon to know what will happen when that date arrives, but added negotiations are always ongoing with the landlords.

Opinion: Abuse of power by EDC officials

By Larry Weitzman

This column’s theme for the last several months has been about mismanagement within the Chief Administrator’s Office of El Dorado County, and it goes right to the top. It all started with the climate of fear and the unfounded claims made by Terri Daly, the county’s chief administrative officer.

Then it went into the CAO’s hiring practices in recruiting

people who by their past history were clearly incompetent and perhaps with a little spoils system thrown in.



Larry Weitzman

Next it has gone to the huge budget deficits (\$25 million or more annually) that are becoming apparent because of an excess of hiring new employees, massive spending on outside consultants and recommending huge raises to county employees including the assistant chief administrative officer. Now those deficits look to be even larger because of potentially overstated revenue projections, but that will be for a later column.

If you thought it couldn't get any worse, it has and it goes to the actions of the then acting head of the Community Development Agency and now assistant CAO, Kim Kerr, at the time they occurred. What could she have done that was so bad? How about authorizing contract change orders well beyond her authority and spending money without the required procedures and approval of the Board of Supervisors. And it just didn't happen once. According to county documents, it happened on at least seven capital improvement programs, including projects like the Highway 50/Missouri Flat Road interchange and several Green Valley Road improvements.

Pursuant to Section 20142 of the California Public Contract Code and conforming Board of Supervisors resolution 102-2012 passed on July 24, 2012, (it superseded BOS resolution 106-93), change orders subsequent to the award of a contract are limited in their amount to 10 percent of the original

contract amount except when the original contract is in excess of \$250,000 which in that case the limit of total change orders is \$25,000 plus 5 percent of the original contract amount not to exceed \$210,000, no matter the original amount of the contract. Any contract less than \$50,000 has a \$5,000 change order cumulative limit. Actually, it is an easy concept to understand, except for Kerr, who either intentionally or negligently ignored the law. Either way there is no excuse. These violations became public when a County of El Dorado Document Master Report, File Number 11-1196 enumerated the various violations of the Public Contract Code. In that master report it lays out that these illegal contract change orders totaled 48, as much as 48 times that the head of the CDA at the time issued 48 change orders that exceeded her statutory authority. Payments have been made on 36 of these illegally issued CC0s, but 12 are still outstanding and unpaid.

Those 48 illegal CC0s that have illegally authorized total \$1,295,559. Records show that most were signed by Kerr as acting CDA director, but other county staff are involved as each CC0 requires at least four signatures starting with the resident engineer, assistant director, director of transportation and the (acting) CDA director.

Someone within the CAO's office (the CDA operates within the CAO's office) discovered these mistakes and without BOS retroactive approval, not only will these CC0s remain illegal, but the 12 remaining unpaid CC0s will remain unpaid without BOS ratification of the prior acts. But that doesn't excuse the actions of certain county official(s) who approved these CC0s without BOS approval.

There are two people upon which these illegal actions fall upon. The "buck" stops with ACAO Kerr, who headed the CDA during this period and the CAO herself, Daly. They should know the rules as Resolution 102-2012 was passed on July 24, 2012, in open session by a 5-0 vote of the BOS and Daly's name appears on the document attesting to the resolution. Daly and

Kerr were well aware of the rules and laws governing change orders. But it looks like they didn't think these rules were very important as one or both of them violated the California Public Contract Code and BOS Resolution 102-2012 48 times.

Zebras don't lose their stripes and the modus operandi of ACAO Kerr hasn't changed. Her slipshod management style as the recent city manager of Ione is obviously apparent in her actions as EDC's ACAO. Kerr as Ione city manager failed to reconcile Ione's bank accounts for more than two years and Amador County Grand Jury reports called her incompetent saying that "the city manager for the fiscal period 2007-2011 (Kim Kerr's tenure) did not demonstrate she possessed the proper qualifications and expertise to perform the duties required for that position."

Now comes the cover-up. It appears that the CAO plans to place an item on the next BOS calendar attempting to get retroactive approval for the acts of the ACAO by simply ratifying her actions. It will be interesting if this item shows up under the consent calendar with Daly trying to slip it through and hiding it from the BOS and the public, just like Daly did during her tenure as Amador County CAO sticking Amador County with a \$20 million lease they didn't need. You see Terri Daly is responsible for hiring Kim Kerr and giving her a raise in salary while knowing of her past "indiscretions" as city manager of Ione. Daly is responsible for Kerr's actions as an employee of EDC.

Then there is the issue if these potential violations of the California Public Contract Code rise to the seriousness to cause an investigation by the district attorney. Public officials are given the public trust and need to be held to a higher standard just as former District II Supervisor Ray Nutting was. His misdemeanor violations of the law cost him his job and a whole lot more.

In another twist of fate, it appears that Municipal Resources

Group, a company that was hired for the sum of \$250,000 to eliminate the “climate of fear” and create a “Climate Action Plan” in EDC, hasn’t been paid. In a letter to the BOS it seems that CAO Daly signed, pursuant to BOS approval and at her request, a contract of which she has neglected to pay invoices totalling \$63,356 for the months of July, August and September. The purpose of the contract was to address the alleged problems supposedly enumerated in the “Climate of Fear” study created by the law firm of Van Dermyden Maddux, a study which cost \$140,000. The Balancing Act analysis of the Van Dermyden Maddux study said if there is a climate of fear in EDC government it starts and ends at the top, in the CAO’s office. The question becomes why wouldn’t the CAO submit these invoices to the county auditor for payment? Could the reason be that the CAO didn’t like the preliminary information received from MRG. Perhaps they are pointing the finger in a direction Daly doesn’t like proving prior columns correct.

Thank you Terri Daly for flushing \$390,000 down the toilet looking for answers of which you already knew by looking in the mirror.

Larry Weitzman is a resident of Rescue.

CalFire allowing residential burning

CalFire’s Nevada-Yuba-Placer and Amador-El Dorado units have lifted the suspension of residential burning within state responsibility areas effective 8am Nov. 3.

While cooler temperatures have helped to diminish the threat of wildfire, residents are asked to use caution while

conducting debris burns. Residents must follow burning requirements and maintain control of their fire at all times. Property owners may be held liable if a fire escapes their control and/or burns the property of a neighbor.

To reduce your risk of causing a wildland fire, review the requirements listed below to safely burn your debris piles:

- Only dry, natural, vegetative material such as leaves, pine needles and tree trimmings that originated on the property may be burned. Burning household garbage is not allowed.
- Piles will be no larger than 4 feet in diameter.
- Provide clearance around the pile that is 10 feet in diameter by removing all material that will burn, down to bare mineral soil.
- Have a water source on hand such as a charged garden hose or a minimum of a 5 gallon backpack, pump type water extinguisher.
- Responsible adult needs to be in attendance at all times.
- Never burn on windy days.
- Only burn on permissive burn days.

Contact your nearest CalFire station and/or local fire department to acquire the proper permit.

For more info, call 530.621.5842.

LTCC to put on 'Leading Ladies'

Lake Tahoe Community College presents the madcap comedy "Leading Ladies" Nov. 14-23 in the Duke Theatre.

The leading ladies referenced in the play's title are two Shakespearean actors who are so down on their luck that they

are performing "Scenes from Shakespeare" on the Moose Lodge circuit in the Amish country of Pennsylvania. When they hear that an old lady in York, Pa., is about to die and leave her fortune to her two long-lost English nieces, they scheme to pass themselves off as the women and get their share of the cash.

Romantic entanglements abound, especially when Leo falls head-over-petticoats in love with the old lady's vivacious niece, Meg, who's engaged to the local minister. Meg knows that there's a big, wide world out there, but it's not until she meets "Maxine and Stephanie" that she finally gets a real taste of it.

Performances of "Leading Ladies" are Nov. 14, 15, 20, 21 and 22 at 7:30pm, with Sunday matinees on Nov. 16 and 23 at 2pm.

High school and college students with a current school ID may attend the Nov. 20 show for free while seating is available. Tickets are \$10 for general admission, \$7 for seniors and groups of eight or more, and \$5 for students with a valid student ID and children under 13.

Tickets can be purchased in advance at LTCC's bookstore. The box office will be open for ticket sales one hour before all performances.

Calif. leads nation in cycling traffic deaths

By Jerry Hirsch, Los Angeles Times

If you are going to be killed by a car while riding a bicycle,

there's a good chance you are male, older than 20 and living in California or Florida.

That's the finding of a report issued Monday by the Governors Highway Safety Association that also noted that between 2010 and 2012, U.S. bicyclist deaths increased by 16 percent.

California, with 338 cyclists killed in collisions with motor vehicles, and Florida, with 329, had the highest totals during that period, the report said.

They also had the largest increases in annual cyclist traffic fatalities from 2010 to 2012. Florida's deaths rose by 37 to 120 in 2012 while cyclist traffic fatalities in California rose by 23 to 123. California had the most bicyclists killed of any state in 2012.

Nationally, cyclist traffic deaths jumped from 621 in 2010 to 680 in 2011 and 722 in 2012. The 16 percent increase was far greater than other motor vehicle fatalities, which rose by just 1 percent during this same time period.

Read the whole story

Reno duo arrested in Truckee on multiple charges

Two Reno residents were arrested Oct. 31 in Truckee on numerous felony charges related breaking into residences.

On Halloween officers were notified of two subjects inside a vacant residence for sale. The real estate agent encountered the two subjects exiting the residence. The agent had noticed the two subjects broke into the residence through a back

window, moved furniture around and started a fire in the fireplace.

Within minutes an officer spotted the vehicle and made a traffic stop. The vehicle was driven by Breanna Sherven and Hector Avila was the passenger.

Officers said a search of the vehicle revealed methamphetamine packaged for sales, drug paraphernalia, stolen property linked to a burglary in Oroville, numerous suspected stolen cell phones, a realistic replica of a pistol (later identified as an airsoft pistol), 9mm ammunition, and evidence pointing to two burglaries in the Armstrong tract subdivision in Truckee.

Anyone with additional information is asked to call Truckee police at 530.550.2320.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

North Shore film series features Alps

Alpenglow Sports' first installment of the 2014-15 Winter Film Series is Nov. 13 with local hero Dave Nettle at the Olympic Village Lodge.

Now in its ninth year, the series is designed to inspire, motivate and educate. All shows are free and raffle prizes from sponsors are sold to raise funds for local nonprofit organizations. To date, the event has raised more than \$40,000 for the community. Past beneficiaries include the Sierra Avalanche Center, High Fives Foundation, Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue, Disabled Sports Far West, Project Mana, Tahoe Safe

Alliance, and many more.

For the kick-off, Nettle will entertain the audience with scintillating images and ski touring tales from Europe's Maurienne Alps. This area is home to some amazing alpine ski mountaineering.

The show will wrap up with an assortment of backcountry ski images ranging from the Vallee Blanche in Chamonix to the Northern Selkirks of British Columbia and back to the Sierra.

The show begins at 7pm. Call Alpenglow Sports at 530.583.6917 with questions.

Calif. Ebola rules require quarantine for some travelers

By Sammy Caiola, Sacramento Bee

Just two days after the U.S Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommended a 21-day isolation period for travelers at the highest risk of Ebola, the California Department of Public Health has issued its own quarantine order, one of a handful of states to do so.

The order, released Wednesday by department Director Dr. Ron Chapman, says any person arriving in California from an Ebola-affected country who had contact with an Ebola-infected person will be quarantined for 21 days. This policy, like the ones issued by New York and New Jersey, appears to be stricter than that issued by the CDC on Monday, which only applies to people deemed "high-risk" because they were caring for an infected person without proper protective clothing or were exposed to

the virus through needle-stick or injury.

Ebola-affected areas, as defined by the CDC, currently include Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Travelers returning from those countries who did not come into contact with someone with a confirmed case of Ebola will not be subject to quarantine, according to the state order. There have been no confirmed cases of Ebola in California.

Read the whole story