

Tips for trick-or-treaters

I would like to encourage everyone buying costumes for Halloween to check the labels and make sure they are made of flame retardant materials.

Materials made of 100 percent polyester are best suited for Halloween costumes. These costume materials may be purchased at most local fabric stores. The use of commercial flame retardant sprays is not recommended.

Avoid Halloween costumes that are loose or baggy to prevent fabric from coming in contact with any open flames.

Children should carry flashlights or use battery operated lights.

Jack-o-lanterns that have an open flame device should be placed up off the ground so that long or full costumes and young trick-or-treater's hands cannot come in contact with the flames.

The use of masks that obstruct vision should be avoided.

Costumes should incorporate reflective tape in their design so children can be easily seen at night.

Trick-or-treat while it's still light outside, and stay in your neighborhood, visiting only the homes you know. Finally, always check your children's candy before allowing them to eat any of it.

Have a fun and safe Halloween.

– Sallie Ross-Filgo, South Lake Tahoe Fire Department

Experienced guide to relive Alps experience

Alpenglow Sports presents a unique evening with Dave Miller, technical director and senior guide at Shasta Mountain Guides.

Miller is also the owner of California Alpine Guides and one of only a few Americans to have the coveted international UIAGM/IFMGA mountain guide status. Miller has been climbing and exploring the mountains of California for more than 35 years and has traveled the globe in search of mountain adventure.

The Home Brew Series presented by Alpenglow Sports and Tahoe Art Haus & Cinema is designed to showcase local athletes who live regular lives and accomplish extraordinary feats in the mountains. The series is designed as mellow, free, and community-centric for all ages and abilities.

Miller's show is the first installment in a three-part series that runs once per month from November through January.

Leaving drought-stricken California behind in the spring of 2014, Miller spent 40 days ski touring across the Alps. While the show is free, attendees are encouraged to arrive early for good seating.

Tahoe Art Haus & Cinema will serve refreshments and participants are encouraged to remain after the show for additional festivities.

The event is Nov. 4 at 7pm. Tahoe Art Haus & Cinema is located at 475 North Lake Blvd., Tahoe City.

Free lunch for veterans

Carson Valley Inn is serving a free spaghetti lunch for all veterans and active military – plus one guest – on Veterans Day.

The event will be in the Valley Ballroom from 11am-3pm Nov. 11. Present military ID for entrance.

There will be a Veterans Day colors presentation, the national anthem and an invocation at 11am.

The Carson Valley Inn is located on Highway 395 in Minden near the start of Highway 88.

WCSO to screen Halloween candy, offers tips

The Washoe County Sheriff's Office will offer free Halloween candy X-ray screening at the Washoe County Courthouse on the day after Halloween.

Court security staff will screen candy inside the Court Street entrance to the courthouse in Reno from 9am-6:30pm Nov. 1.

The X-ray machine will detect metal objects only. Parents who feel candy has been tampered with should dispose of the candy immediately.

Here are some Halloween safety tips from the sheriff's department:

- Never allow a child to trick-or-treat alone.

- Accompany children to the door of every house they approach.
 - Don't allow children to enter a home or apartment without adult supervision.
 - Children should not approach strange vehicles.
 - Remain visible. Wear bright clothing or use reflective strips on costumes. Carry a glow stick or flashlight.
 - Obey all traffic and pedestrian regulations. Look both ways before crossing, walk on sidewalks, obey traffic signals and stop signs.
 - Always walk; never run across streets or lawns.
 - Trick or treat at friendly homes. Warn children to stay away from houses that are not well lit.
 - Do not go onto properties that are marked "Keep Out," "No Trespassing" and/or "No Solicitors Allowed".
 - Never allow a child to eat Halloween candy until an adult checks it. Dispose of anything that seems to have been tampered with, opened or unwrapped.
 - Instruct children to shout for help and make a scene if anyone tries to grab them or force them into involuntary situations.
 - Children should immediately report anything suspicious to their parents and/or law enforcement.
 - Consider alternatives to trick-or-treating such as community Halloween events or organize your own party at home.
 - Be sure to have a plan for what your child should do if you do become separated.
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Nev. ranks among worst states

for domestic violence

By Jackie Valley, Las Vegas Sun

When most people think of domestic abuse, they picture the victim as a young woman.

But here's the reality: The abused person very well could be a wealthy neighbor who keeps the beatings a secret for fear of social repercussions. Or the quiet husband who's ashamed to admit his wife throws punches behind closed doors. Or the celebrity whose megawatt smile belies the shoving she endures. Or the woman who confides in police that her female partner loses her temper too often. Or the grandmother who gets pushed around by her impatient son.

On Oct. 20, a 52-year-old man stabbed his ex-wife to death in their home with their children nearby, according to Metro Police. Jodi Joyce suffered a fatal wound to her chest. James Joyce then stabbed himself in the stomach, inflicting critical injuries, police said.

Domestic abuse, which includes emotional and verbal abuse, is all around us, and the number of occasions it rises to physical violence is stunning. Metro Police fielded nearly 60,000 calls last year from people saying they were being assailed by someone in their household.

The actual number of victims is likely much higher still, because many are too scared or ashamed to admit they've been abused. For nine of the past 10 years, Nevada has ranked among the top 10 states for the rate of women killed by men, according to the Violence Policy Center. The center's most recent report, based on 2012 data, ranked Nevada sixth.

Because domestic violence is a shadow crime without a national database tracking numbers, estimating its scope in Las Vegas as it compares with other cities is difficult. But we

certainly don't lack catalysts – booze, drugs, clashing work schedules, gambling, sex and a tough economy.

Read the whole story

Estate planning critical to protect the living

By Carl Edwards

Half of all Americans with children do not have a legal will, according to a survey done by the legal service RocketLawyer.

While the survey was conducted in 2012, the attitudes Americans have on inheritance and legacy matters seems to remain the same through the years, individuals would rather focus on the here and now.

These parents love their children, and I think the concept of dying and not being there for their children is simply not an option they consider. Many of these folks are young and still in their prime earning years.

More surprisingly, however, is that fact that 41 percent of baby boomers age 55 to 64 do not have a will.

The time to plan for your financial legacy is now. Here are suggestions on how to move forward:

- Documentation is vital; sort out your will ASAP. A will is the most basic estate planning document; it tells the world exactly where you want your assets distributed when you die. While you're not legally required to have a certified professional create a will, you should strongly consider one.

These documents may be contested by people who are unhappy with the decisions you made. You deserve the peace of mind in knowing that your life's economic work and other wishes will be executed as specified, and your family will be grateful to you for not leaving them with the headache of trying to sort out your estate. Other crucial documents include your living will, power of attorney, durable power of attorney (including for health care), joint ownership and living trust.

- Utilize executors and gifts effectively in your estate. Real property, financial investments, cash and personal possessions encompass the financial assets that you own. Once you have identified specific gifts you would like to distribute, you can apportion the rest of your estate in equal shares among your heirs, or you can split it into percentages. For example, you may decide to give 45 percent each to two children and the remaining 10 percent to a sibling. Choose your executor, the person responsible for carrying out the wishes outlined in the will, wisely.

- Consider an Irrevocable Life Insurance Trust. Many individuals think of the income tax free benefits that may be had from life insurance, but they never realize that the same life insurance may push them into estate tax nightmares. An irrevocable life insurance trust can be established to assist you in passing your estate to your heirs without the surprise attack of life insurance that gets eaten by unexpected estate or inheritance taxes.

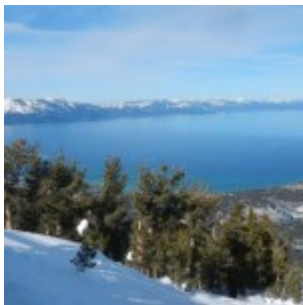
You don't have to be super-rich to benefit from a tactful and ongoing approach to estate management.

- Trusts can be another powerful estate management tool. A trust is a legal entity that can own property. Properly structured trusts completely avoid probate and avoid the delays and expense that often accompany probate. Trusts are not a matter of public record. They're a tool for maintaining privacy. And, even after your death, trusts can provide some

measure of control over how assets are distributed to children and other beneficiaries. In addition, trusts are much more difficult to contest than a will.

Carl Edwards is a chartered financial consultant.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



- Heavenly Mountain Resort started snowmaking Oct. 26.

- There will be a free reception for mixed media artist Charli Beck on Nov. 1 from 6-8pm at Bona Fide Books – 1069 Magua St., No. 4, Meyers.

- Check this video out about a private chairlift near Lake Tahoe.

- Douglas County Sheriff's Office has updated its website so critical community information is now also available in Spanish.

- Gas prices are continuing to drop across the nation, with the national average just pennies-shy from dipping below \$3 per gallon.

Proposed rate hike dismays Lukins' customers

By Kathryn Reed

Where has the money gone? Why was the maintenance deferred? How can people be expected to pay more?

Those were just a few of the questions asked Oct. 27 by some of the approximately 30 customers of Lukins Brothers Water Company. The meeting at Lake Tahoe Airport was an opportunity for people to voice their opinion and ask questions about the 55.6 percent general rate increase the company is seeking that could take effect next year.

Taking down the comments was Adam Thaler of the California Public Utilities Commission. The CPUC is the decider if any increase will be granted.

This type of increase is for operations. This includes plant operation supplies, employee salary and benefits, postage, liability insurance, utilities and other costs.

Several people were angry at the prospect of Lukins adding a retirement plan for the employees when so many companies are doing away with them.

Lukins has not had a general rate case increase in more than six years. That is why the company is billing this as a 9.2 percent increase for each of the last six years.

But ratepayers whose monthly bill would go from a flat rate of \$36.41 per month to \$55.84 are not seeing it that way.



Theresa Brown voices frustration with Lukins water service on Oct. 27 as others listen. Photo/Kathryn Reed

"I feel robbed. I can't afford it," Theresa Brown said. She said for 50 years there has been sand in the water. She doesn't want to pay more for this service.

Thaler said service is one of the criteria the CPUC looks at when it investigates whether a rate increase should be granted.

Jen Lukins, who runs the company, admitted this was the worst summer for sand coming out of spigots. She attributed it to the drought.

"We are now doing monthly flushings," she said.

Ratepayer Carolyn Meiers said things are "deplorable" – and questioned why there is so much deferred maintenance.

Gary Norton said, "It should have been cleaned up a long time ago when things were cheaper."

While the South Lake Tahoe water company is privately owned, it is regulated by the state. Nearly everything it does is controlled by the state. It was explained that the state prevents a district of this size from offering low-income discounts because then a disproportionate number of the 963 ratepayers would be subsidizing the others.

Lukins said she would prefer timelier rate increases, but the process for applying for them makes it too cumbersome to do so.

Opinion: What will winter hold?

By Sandy Evans Hall

Let me get my crystal ball. With the little dusting of snow that we received this month and the change to a much chillier temperature outside, I bet you are all thinking about winter. Am I right?



Sandy Evans
Hall

Since I have no crystal ball, let me look at my recent Destimetrics report from Sept. 30 and see what's happening at ski resorts across the U.S.:

- GOOD – Early data through March 2015 shows a 7.4 percent gain in occupancy for the upcoming season.
- GOOD – At this point, occupancy is gaining in all five months of the season that data are available.
- GOOD – The average daily rate (ADR) is up a strong 7.5

percent at \$391.

- GOOD – Revenue is also up a very strong 15.5 percent at \$76 with increases in all four months.
- NOT SO GOOD – The Dow Jones Industrial Average declined very slightly in September, losing 0.3 percent, or minus 55.55 points to finish the month at 17,042.9.
- BAD – Consumer confidence declined sharply in September, losing 7.9 percent to finish the month at 86 points. This is the first time the index has been below 90 points since June 2014 and is the first decline in confidence since April.
- GOOD – The national unemployment rate declined sharply in September, shedding two basis points and closing the month at 5.9 percent, the first time the rate has been below 6 percent since June 2008.

So, we have a combination of good, not so good and bad. Certainly early booking patterns are a good sign and how the economy plays out over the coming months will have some impact on the industry. Unemployment numbers are good for the economy but are bound to play havoc with hiring for the ski season. Weather is a big wild card and fingers and toes are crossed that we don't see a ridge set up again this year.

Sure wish I had a crystal ball.

Thinking, dreaming snow.

Sandy Evans Hall is CEO/executive director of the North Lake Tahoe Resort Association.

Letter: Asking the supervisors to listen

Publisher's note: *The following letter was sent to the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors in advance of the Oct. 28 9am meeting at Lake Tahoe Airport.*

To our Board of Supervisors,

I would never be so bold as to say I know what everybody in Meyers wants for this community, but my shop has been like Grand Central Station ever since the Oct. 16 Planning Commission meeting. Overall consensus – extremely disheartened – and not just because the meeting was impossible for the average, gainfully employed, Meyers person to attend.

Disheartened because this whole mess could have been avoided if the agencies had just been honest and forthcoming. Our community's fear of a huge Catalyst Project, stress of unraveling rumors and the waste of time searching out the facts was completely unnecessary. The county's Planning Commission came all the way up here from Placerville, only to get a bunch of well-spun information, some of which just barely resembled the truth.

"Theme Zoning". Seriously? Myself and others, including candidate for supervisor Sue Novasel, felt obligated to correct staff on several counts, but it appeared as though the Planning Commission had decided on their recommendations for the Meyers plan already.

I was disheartened because one of the planning commissioners, when referring to building height and density, stated, "It really doesn't matter anyway".

Well, it matters to me. When the TRPA rezoned us without notice it changed west Meyers particularly, our density for

future building went from 10 units per acre to 40 units per acre, among other things, and this new Meyers plan aligns perfectly with what the TRPA has planned for us, not what we, the people who live and work here, want for us. West Meyers is a highly controversial portion of the Meyers' commercial corridor since it was the proposed location for the much despised Catalyst Project.

We are all disheartened that the Planning Commission recommended continuing with an informal advisory council for Meyers. This is precisely why communication between the county and the community failed. We need to follow the Brown Act or we will forever be hearing things like "Did we vote on that? She said we voted. Well, I guess we voted but I don't remember."

I am sure, after meeting with members of this board previously, that you are honest, hard working people and will listen to our businesses and residents with a fair and open mind and will not be influenced by the TRPA or Nevada chamber. This plan has too many issues yet to work through, far too many to write in this note.

Please consider a legitimate survey of the community's vision for the new Meyers Community Plan – and let me get back to work.

Angela Olson, Meyers