

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



- North Lake Tahoe Resort Association's latest ad campaign is all about how to enjoy the outdoors; in particular how to participate in human-powered sports. The campaign is strictly on social media.

- Dennis Cocking is coming out of retirement to do legislative affairs work for South Tahoe

Public Utility District.

- Professional snowboarder Elena Hight of South Lake Tahoe has a new website.

- The Tahoe 200-Mile Endurance Run is Sept. 5-9. It starts and ends at Homewood Mountain Resort.

- Army Spc. Sara E. Wiseman of South Lake Tahoe received an outstanding achievement medal as the brigade public affairs officer.

Human remains found in Placerville field

Human remains were discovered in a field Sunday on the West Slope.

El Dorado County sheriff's deputies said an autopsy will be conducted to determine the identity of the woman and cause of death.

A person walking by the field southeast of Missouri Flat Road near Highway 50 in Placerville found the remains Aug. 17 at 4:30pm.

Identities released of men on board downed plane

Two Bay Area brothers were in the plane that crashed just short of the Swansboro Airport near Placerville on Saturday night.

Killed on impact was Perry Nieland, 52, of San Jose. Richard Nieland, 55, of San Jose was injured when the Starduster biplane went down Aug. 16 about 7pm. It is unknown who was piloting the aircraft.

The National Transportation Safety Board and Federal Aviation Administration are investigating.

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Shay

Shay is a pretty silver lynx point Snowshoe Siamese cat. She is about 2 years old.

She is a friendly cat who came into the shelter with her equally handsome brother, Liam. We would prefer that they go to the same home. They are most happy when together.

Shay is spayed, microchipped, tested for FIV and vaccinated. She 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

Drought drains recreation revenues at Tahoe



Normally this area at Cove East in South Lake Tahoe is under water. The beach is toward the upper left corner.
Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Susan Wood

With a mere 3 inches of snowmelt adding to the level of Lake Tahoe this year, the dire trickle-down effect of the drought on recreational outlets like Lake Tahoe Balloons has not been overinflated.

By the time the anticipated lake level for Tahoe reaches its natural rim of 6,223 feet by mid-October, businesses and agencies tied to the fun and the sun may see more severe conditions than what is being witnessed now from shore-to-shore.

To many who follow the trends, there's nothing normal about the weather patterns. And this includes the lake's

experiencing more abnormal monsoonal weather conditions that reduce evaporation and provide heavy downpours. The positive of the whacky weather is that it delayed the lake's hitting the natural rim.

"I used to be able to get right up there close to shore. Now I have to be a quarter mile out. That makes it difficult," Harley Hoy of Lake Tahoe Balloons told *Lake Tahoe News*.

For many years, Hoy has run his company out of the Tahoe Keys Marina. But he may be forced to move if the lake level keeps sinking and the marina operators fail to live up to their pledge of dredging the boat channel. It's been a tricky situation for boats getting in and out of the popular South Shore marina, and it's only getting worse.

Hoy said he was told the dredging would occur this summer. Now he's heard October, and that may be too late for his business. He's sought another place to run the company.

"If the guy would have the common courtesy, he would see that one day there could be in an accident and someone will find him negligent," Hoy said of marina General Manager Robert Spinnato, who did not return *Lake Tahoe News*' phone calls. Hoy cited the removal of lights once placed outside the channel that have made conditions hazardous going into the Keys.



Paddlers have more area to maneuver because motorboats can't get close to shore without serious consequences.

Dangerous boating conditions

Between the sand washing out and the rocks exposing themselves in Lake Tahoe, concerns have been rising for the U.S. Coast Guard. The federal agency, which has a station in Tahoe City, was forced to send a crew out to help with an unprecedented call to rescue more than 200 passengers on board the Tahoe Queen paddle-wheeler because it was stuck on a sandbar off shore.

“It’s been awhile since we’ve had any commercial incident like this,” Coast Guard Officer in Charge Daniel Polhemus said.

The matter is under investigation.

“The lake continues to go down, and boaters may not realize how the low lake level is creating hazards. Boulders normally covered up by 5 feet of water are now exposed. It’s a dangerous situation for (those at) marinas not familiar with the drought effects,” Polhemus told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Sand Harbor, Kings Beach and Camp Richardson have joined the list of closed marinas with El Dorado Beach, which often closes to motor boat traffic. The upside is human-powered vessels such as paddleboards have easier access to the water.

Polhemus described Cave Rock, one of the more promising launching spots, as “extremely dangerous” without local knowledge of the terrain. The Tahoe Keys Marina is characterized “very, very shallow,” while Ski Run Marina – home of the Queen – is considered iffy to negotiate around.

In the Coast Guard’s home-base of Tahoe City, Polhemus has seen owners paddling their boats out as a safer alternative to dealing with bringing the motors down in shallow water.

The Coast Guard warns boaters about driving their trailers down too far on the ramps and urges boat captains to slow down considerably.

"We're asking people to be extra careful," Tahoe City Marina Manager Jim Phelan said, adding he's noticed some boaters have lost use of slips. Some sailboats have experienced more challenges than usual because they can't use rudders in shallow water. Phelan expects more limitations as the lake nears its natural rim.

"Under normal conditions, we would have hit the rim in a few weeks," federal water master Chad Blanchard told *Lake Tahoe News*.

But the downpours and cloud cover from the strange July and first part of August have been "extremely helpful" in slowing the process, he added.

It's like the summer is struggling with occasional tropical storms to make up for three years of drought given last year's lackluster winter and dismal snowmelt runoff. In 2012 during the period starting in April, Lake Tahoe rose 7.68 inches. The following year was worse with 5.76 inches. This year marks the fourth worst lake level runoff in 114 years with only 3.48 inches.

This trend has culminated into how more than 80 percent of California continues to suffer extreme drought conditions.

The consequences are far-reaching and dire to some who rely on the health of the environment. Moreover, the concerns have not been limited to those doing business at the lake.

Victor Babbitt of Tahoe Fly Fishing applauds the recent storms that have cooled things off in the waterways based on how fish behave.

"Every time we have a thunder shower, it helps in a huge way," he said.

Babbitt has been worried about the fish going into shock when the water is too shallow and warm. Catch-and-release fishing

in times of elevated temperatures may increase stress and hinder survival of fish populations. Avoiding 70-degree water holes is the key.

“The fish try to move to different parts of the river,” he said.

But they could run out of places to go – especially in the Truckee River that feeds from Lake Tahoe.



Rafting companies normally fill this expanse of the Truckee River by the River Ranch.

Commercial rafting ran out of water

As of July 24, the Truckee River rafting companies that usually do a banner business in August stopped operating because of the water level. Water officials have been forced to accommodate the lake instead.

Although concessions were made in early spring to give Aaron Rudnick with Truckee River Raft Co. a head start on renting boats, it didn't help much because the tourists weren't in the region then like they are now.

The low water level has made conditions dangerous with many rocks exposed like the ones in the rapid called “the pit” near

the River Ranch.

The rafting company usually makes up to 40 percent of its revenue in August.

"This is huge. Every weekday in August is like a weekend day, and every weekend day is like the Fourth of July," Rudnick lamented to *Lake Tahoe News*. "You miss out on all that."

Rob Curtis, the general manager at the River Ranch, found it necessary to be creative with making up for at least 60 percent of lost revenue from rafters frequenting the inn located at the end of the rafting companies' river run. The usual 1,000 lunches served on the deck on most weekend days have been cut in half, prompting the small, boutique hotel to implement the "no rafting event series." One example is a crawdad festival designed to draw the masses.

When the rafting companies cease operating, the effects span other areas of responsibility.

The two companies located at the heart of Tahoe City clean up the trash in the river – but this requires they run their rafts. Placer County had to step in to establish a partnership with the Tahoe City Public Utility District and the U.S. Forest Service to do the cleanup, especially considering individual raft runners on bottomless inner tubes may have the tendency to dump more in the river, Rudnick pointed out.

"We needed to deal with this because it could be a problem," Placer County Supervisor Jennifer Montgomery said.

Montgomery added that local government has taken extra steps in conserving water including the turning off of water features and fountains. She estimated Placer County has saved about 15 percent of its water consumption in doing so.

Finding alternatives

From government to industry, most entities dealing with

recreation are watching their water use.

Lake Tahoe Golf Course has cut its water use in half, manager Joe Lockwood indicated. Its usual everyday, 11-minute sprinkler rotation is now down to 5 minutes every other day.

“Thankfully, our water comes from a well. And we hand water so that controls the amount of water better,” Lockwood said.

The same goes for Edgewood Tahoe Golf Course, as it was forced to buy water from its so-named Stateline-area water company.

South Lake Tahoe’s Bijou Golf Course is making sure it doesn’t over water.

The city also sweeps its pool patio at the recreation center, so no water is used to clean up debris, Recreation Manager Lauren Thomaselli pointed out.

Opinion: Gaming mergers long overdue

By Howard Stutz, Las Vegas Review-Journal

The combined \$11.5 billion in lottery company-slot machine company mergers in the past few weeks has the investment community relieved.

The gaming equipment sector, in the eyes of some analysts, has been bloated.

A soft replacement market for new games left slot machine manufacturers with a backlog.

In the past few years, many new products never made it from the Global Gaming Expo trade show floor to a casino.

A shake-up was needed.

In July, Italian lottery company GTECH Holdings announced it would buy slot machine giant International Game Technology for \$6.4 billion. Less than two weeks later, New York-based lottery provider Scientific Games Corp. said it was acquiring Bally Technologies for \$5.1 billion.

The deals for the Nevada-based companies – the world's No. 1 and No. 2 slot machine providers – involve cash and stock transactions, along with debt assumption.

Fitch Ratings Service gaming analyst Alex Bumazhny said the buyouts were overdue.

Read the whole story

A lot of people never unplug from their devices

By Brian R. Fitzgerald, Wall Street Journal

How addicted are you to your devices?

In a recent survey by CivicScience that was charted by Statista, 70 percent of U.S. respondents said they unplug from their gadgets once or week or less. Some 43 percent said they don't unplug from personal electronics at all.

That makes sense: With phones in our pockets, e-readers on the nightstand, multiple social networks to update and TVs

everywhere (including in our pockets), it is more challenging than ever to go device-free. (We're not counting sleep, though people are known to sleep with their smartphones close at hand.)

Read the whole story

Burned bear cub making progress at LTWC

By Associated Press

A black-bear cub burned in a devastating Washington state wildfire is making a slow recovery at Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care.

The cub, named Cinder, still has third-degree burns on her paws that require new bandages every other day, and she's still on pain medications and antibiotics, the *Wenatchee World* reported

But Denise Upton, a caretaker at Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care, says the cub has a good appetite and has been enjoying fresh fruit and trout brought in by local fishermen.

"She's a good patient," Upton said. "She's eating everything we put in there."

Methow resident Steve Love discovered the 37-pound bear under a horse trailer in his yard in north-central Washington's Methow Valley, where the largest fire in recorded state history burned about 400 square miles and destroyed 300 homes. The fire had swept past his house two weeks earlier, and the bear was so badly burned on her paws she was walking on her

elbows.

A Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife officer captured her, and a volunteer pilot flew Cinder to California on Aug. 4.

Upton said it's too soon to know whether Cinder can be returned to the wild. The bear lost some of her claws, which could make it difficult.

Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care successfully rehabilitated one other bear cub after a wildfire in 2009 and released him back to the wild, she said. They know from his radio tracker that he survived at least a year, until the batteries in the tracking device died.

Upton said Cinder doesn't like people.

"And that's a good thing," she said. "I think she's going to be a perfect candidate, once she heals."

K's Kitchen: Roasted pepper-goat cheese app

By Kathryn Reed

I went a little overboard with buying bell peppers at the farmers' market. And there was goat cheese in the fridge that needed to be used. Surely, there must be something I could do with the two of them.

I had Sue roast the peppers on the barbecue. It is important to pay attention to them. She was a bit paranoid about burning them, but that is actually what you want to do. You want the

skins to be black and blistered. You won't be eating them, so don't worry about all those carcinogens.

While goat cheese alone on a cracker is just fine, I decided to create something a little more substantive. And they looked pretty. While that wasn't important for the two of us, presentation does make food more appetizing.



Roasted Peppers with Goat Cheese

2 bell peppers
1 small red onion, sliced thinly
Goat cheese
Crackers
Fresh lemon

Roast peppers on barbecue until charred. Place peppers in sealed plastic bag for a few minutes, allowing steam to create. Once cool enough to handle, remove skins.

Remove seeds. Thinly slice peppers.

Spread cheese on crackers. Top with peppers and red onion. Squeeze a few drops of lemon juice onto each cracker.

Roundabout conundrum goes to Placerville voters

By Peter Hecht, Sacramento Bee

An argument blisters amid the weathered storefronts of old Placerville. It boils down to this: When is a traffic circle just a circle? And when is it a conspiracy?

Voters in the town of 10,500 residents are going to the polls in November to decide on a local initiative that would ban the city from constructing anything resembling a “roundabout” or “traffic circle” or “other similar traffic features.”

Measure K would also require a public vote on any project – such as a subdivision or commercial development – if it contains a road with such potentially offensive curvature.

The local initiative has become a curious metaphor for the growth and development battles consuming El Dorado County. Ever since the city announced plans two years ago to build a downtown traffic circle that was to wrap around a 1926 monument erected by the Druids of California, many people suspected ulterior motives.

Federal studies say a traffic roundabout – a circular intersection around a center island – can increase road capacity by 30 percent to 50 percent compared with traditional intersections. They are seen as reducing pollution because vehicles can merge into traffic in the circles and exit on desired streets without idling and spewing exhaust at stop signs or lights.

Read the whole story