Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• The following restaurants have been noted by OpenTable as having the best scenic views: Christy Hill in Tahoe City, Gar Woods Grill in Carnelian Bay and Brooks' Bar in Stateline.
• The 25th annual Foam Fest returns to Squaw Valley on Aug. 30 from 2-6pm for an afternoon of craft beer tasting, live music and a raffle, with all proceeds benefiting Disabled Sports USA Far West – a nonprofit organization that has led the way in adaptive sports and recreation for people with disabilities.
• The community is invited to meet Jane Flavin, executive director of Live Violence Free, on Aug. 20 from noon-1:30pm at the center – 2941 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe.
• Lake Forest boat ramp in Tahoe City will close Sept. 7 at 7pm and reopen in January while the existing concrete ramp is replaced and other improvements are made.
• Learn how to prepare for any adventure from short hikes to long overnight trips. Review the minimum essentials of what to bring and learn what to do if an emergency arises during a free talk Aug. 19 from 6-7pm in the board room at Lake Tahoe Community College in South Lake Tahoe.

Ancient Sierra trees barely weathering drought

By Jim Robbins, New York Times

SEQUOIA NATIONAL PARK – High in the Sierra, biologists are struggling to find ways to protect some of the world's oldest

and most storied trees from drought, forest fires and climate change.

The trees are the giant sequoias, some of them 2,000 to 3,000 years old, and they are just one of several ancient Western species, including redwoods and bristlecone pines, that face a daunting future.

Although the sequoias are not at immediate risk, even from California's current drought, scientists say they were not built to withstand decades of dry and warming weather. Their seedlings and saplings are susceptible to fires, which are likely to increase, especially at higher elevations. And if the drought persists, the lack of melting snow may keep the seedlings from developing a robust root system.

"If there's long-term drought, within 25 years, we could see seedlings in trouble," said Nathan Stephenson, an ecologist with the U.S. Geological Survey. "In 50 years, the whole population could be in trouble," he went on, and within a century "most of the big trees could be gone."

Sequoias are found in only one place on earth: the Sierra Nevada Mountains in California. There are 65 to 70 groves, most in a narrow 70-mile band on the west side of the range at 5,000 to 8,000 feet. They include one tree here called the General Sherman, the world's largest by volume. Preservation efforts are hampered by the fact that so little is known about big trees, from their root systems to how they die.

As the climate changes, so do conditions in which sequoias and other big trees grow. The coastal redwoods of California, for example, are fog drinkers, taking as much as 40 percent of their water in through their needles. In the past half-century, the number of days in which the trees are shrouded by fog has declined by 30 percent.

In some places, that appears, paradoxically, to be contributing to increased growth: With less fog cover there is

more light, said Todd E. Dawson, a biologist at the UC Berkeley. But on the redwood range's southern and eastern edges, which are warmer and drier, scientists are documenting changes in the big trees.

Read the whole story

Hikers, bikers, swimmers keep SAR team busy

By Kathryn Reed

One fatality and multiple rescues have kept El Dorado County's search and rescue team out in the field much of the last week.

As the search team was getting one victim onto a helicopter Aug. 12, they got a call of a person having drowned at Eagle Lake. Because they were in the vicinity it did not take them long to locate the man.

"He was swimming out to the island and got into some trouble," Deputy Greg Almos, who is in charge of the department's SAR team, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Michael Christensen, 27, of Elk Grove was later pronounced dead at Barton Memorial Hospital.

The earlier incident involved another male tourist. The SAR team got the call at 11:15am Tuesday saying an unresponsive male was by Eagle Lake and not moving.

Almos said a trauma nurse at Renown Medical Center in Reno

said when the victim regained consciousness he told the medical staff he had been caught in a flashflood on Monday that swept him down a drainage.

He had been lying there unresponsive for nearly 24 hours before someone found him. Almos said despite suffering traumatic injuries, the man – whose name has not been released – is expected to live.



El Dorado County search and rescue, CalFire and Lake Valley firefighters carry a cyclist off Corral Trail on Aug. 11. Photo/Provided

Afternoon thunderstorms contributed to a rescue on Aug. 11, too. A man not from Tahoe – whose name was not released – went down while cycling on Corral Loop in South Lake Tahoe.

The team had to carry him out on a litter in a downpour. He reportedly injured his pelvis.

The team almost was deployed to Pyramid Peak on Aug. 13 to search for a missing hiker when a follow up call came in saying the person had walked out safely.

A multiday rescue in Alpine County last weekend resulted in finding a West Sacramento man who had been lost in the wilderness for five days without food.

Mike Vilhauer, 58, went fishing by himself Aug. 8 at Lower Sunset Lake. He got disoriented when he left his campsite.

A California Highway Patrol helicopter spotted his vehicle last Friday, which gave rescue teams a good idea where to start searching. El Dorado's search teams from Tahoe and Placerville were called Saturday to assist.

Scott Gabler, a veteran and decorated member of EDSO's SAR team, located footprints mid-afternoon Aug. 10. Tracking began and then Washoe County's Raven helicopter eventually found Vilhauer.

"He had spent two days where he we found him. He had written poems to his wife," Almos said, adding, that Vilhauer's condition had deteriorated. Vilhauer has recovered from his ordeal.

Almos said it's been a busy summer for search and rescue, though the year started off slow. From Jan. 1-April 20 the team responded to 16 calls. Normal is closer to 25. As of Aug. 15, there have been 61 calls for all of 2014.

NTPUD institutes mandatory water conservation

North Tahoe Public Utility District's board of directors this week voted to implement Stage 2 mandatory water conservation measures and established an enforcement plan for customers.

The district had been under a Stage 1 voluntary conservation program since February.

The prohibitions include:

• Washing sidewalks, driveways, and other hard surfaces
• Excessive plumbing leaks not repaired
• Excessive irrigation run-off
• Irrigating between 11am-6pm
• Non-commercial washing of privately-owned vehicles, trailers, RV's, bikes and boats except from a bucket and a hose equipped with a shut-off nozzle for rinsing
• Water for single-pass evaporative cooling systems
• Water for new non-recirculating industrial clothes wash systems
• Filling or refilling swimming pools
• Use of potable water for dust control except as a condition in a permit issued by a state or federal agency
• Use of fire hydrants except for public health and safety or unless used for dust control as a condition in a permit issued by a state or federal agency – must have a hydrant meter.

Violators will first be warned. Then fines will be issued for subsequent offenses.

U.S. wine market fastest growing in world

By Cathy Huyghe, Forbes

NAPA – "If you're in the wine business and you're not making money today, it's not the industry's fault. Check your business model."

That’s Adam Beak, Bank of the West’s managing director of the North Coast Agricultural Banking Center/Premium Wine Group, during a phone interview last week from his office in downtown Napa.

Beak would know. He oversees all winery, vineyard and wine industry related business for Bank of the West’s portfolio of almost 300 clients, which range from large international businesses to small, vertically-integrated ultra premium players. Dealing with clients from distributors and negoçiants to cork and glass producers, Beak’s perspective on the financial health of the wine industry is closer to 360 degrees than most.

The American wine market in particular is the fastest-growing market worldwide, with overall wine sales totaling $36.3 billion. American tastes are also evolving and maturing: quality and consumption across all price points continue to grow, but especially in the premium and luxury wine categories. “Premium” wine is defined as $10-13, “Super premium” as $13 to 25, and “Luxury” as $25 and above.

Most of the growth in recent years has been in the luxury category, whose recovery outpaced even the premium categories since the meltdown of 2008-2009. “What that indicates to me is that we’re seeing a trade-up, an evolution, and a maturation of the US wine palate,” Beak said. “All the trends are moving positively.”

Read the whole story

Boys & Girls Club sets fall schedule

The Boys & Girls Club of Lake Tahoe has several programs available for the fall for all ages.

Middle and high school students may choose between programs such as Project Runway, a design and fashion program; Debate Club; Junior CrossFit;Masterchef; or having fun with friends in the specialized teen room where every Friday is movie night.

For elementary school ages there are Lego programs, drama classes, arts and crafts, an indoor hockey league, cooking, storytime and more.

Copies of the fall program can be picked up at 1100 Lyons Ave. or go online. Membership is $100 for the entire school year.

Ed foundation has money for LTUSD programs

Lake Tahoe Educational Foundation is accepting applications for its fall grant cycle.

The foundation provides $40,000 to $60,000 annually in enrichment grants for programs that benefit Lake Tahoe Unified School District students.

The money is raised through Snow Sports week in February and the Food Fest in October..

Applications are available online. They are due Sept. 26.

Truckee hospital part of lung cancer trial

By Sammy Caiola, Sacramento Bee

A national lung cancer trial launched earlier this summer with the help of a UC Davis oncologist has the potential to dramatically affect the way cancer drugs will be developed in the future.

The trial, called Lung-MAP, puts a cancer-fighting approach into action that uses genomic profiling. This involves testing a patient's tumors for "bio markers," or genetic identifiers, that can help physicians determine which genetically targeted drugs will work for them.

The current course of treatment for lung cancer presents patients a range of therapies, some toxic, that are not targeted for that individual's cancer. Elizabeth Lacasia, a stage 4 lung cancer patient and active support group participant at the Bonnie J. Addario Lung Cancer Foundation in the Bay Area, called it "throwing spaghetti on the wall to see if something sticks."

The launch is a collaboration between the National Cancer Institute, the Southwest Oncology Group, Friends of Cancer Research, the Foundation for the National Institutes of Health and five pharmaceutical companies. As part of the newly formed National Clinical Trials Network, or NCTN, the study will have access to more than 400 trial sites nationwide, 200 of which have already launched. The rest will join in the coming

months.

Sites at the Gene Upshaw Memorial Tahoe Forest Cancer Center in Truckee and the Rideout Cancer Center in Marysville also have been activated, along with the UC San Diego Moores Cancer Center.

Read the whole story

Man survives for 5 days in Sierra without food

By Siemny Chhuon, KXTV

WEST SACRAMENTO – A West Sacramento man was rescued after being missing for five days in the wilderness.

Mike Vilhauer, 58, is now in the comfort of his own home. It's a place, at one point, he didn't think he'd see again.

"I started thinking, 'I'm going to be here and this is going to be it,'" Vilhauer recalled.

He was fishing alone last Wednesday at Lower Sunset Lake in Alpine County when he went looking for bait. He intended to go on a quick hike – 15 or 30 minutes at the most. But then he got lost from his campsite.

Vilhauer went five days without food.

"I did my own version of survivor man, the idiots version," Vilhauer said. "Drinking out of puddles, dried stream beds."

Read the whole story

Judge orders Calif. to teach English learners

By Brian Melley, AP

LOS ANGELES — California was ordered to educate all children who don't speak English after reports revealed a quarter of its school districts fail to meet that requirement, which is mandated by both the federal government and California itself.

Judge James Chalfant said it is particularly important that the California Department of Education determine the best way to make sure the requirement is met in a state where more than fifth of students are deficient in English.

"You've got to go ferret this out because you can't have even one child that isn't getting their instructional services," Chalfant said in issuing Tuesday's order. "You have a report that 20,000 aren't getting their instructional services. That's not good enough."

The American Civil Liberties Union, which represented three Spanish-speaking Compton students in the lawsuit that led to Chalfant's ruling, claimed language barriers held students back a grade or led to low test scores.

ACLU lawyer Mark Rosenbaum said he was thrilled with the ruling, but added it was unfortunate he had to go to court to make the state investigate why children aren't getting proper instruction.

"The state can't disconnect the 911 phone when it gets news that children are not receiving instructional services," he said.

Attorneys for the state wouldn’t comment after the ruling. The Department of Education also declined to comment.

The ACLU brought the suit after finding figures on the state Education Department’s website that showed 20,300 English learners were not given language instruction. The numbers were reported to the state by school districts statewide as part of a broader census.

Statewide, 251 school districts reported deficiencies in educating English learners. They ranged from Los Angeles Unified School District, which said it didn’t educate 4,150 of 194,904 English learners, to Twain Harte-Long Barn Union Elementary in the Sierra foothills, which failed to teach its lone English learner, according to the ACLU. The results showed that Compton, where the three students were from, failed to educate 1,697, or 16 percent, of its 10,505 English learners.

Chara Crane, deputy attorney general, argued that the report was not reliable because some of the districts didn’t respond properly and it was not intended to monitor English language instruction. The state also said the case shouldn’t be in court because the three Compton students were all proficient English speakers.

But Chalfant asked why a school district would say it wasn’t providing classes if it was providing those services. At the least, he said, the state had a duty to investigate further.

Rosenbaum said that when confronted with the figures, the state put out a press release proclaiming it educated 98 percent of students who needed English instruction. He said that amounted to an admission schools weren’t following state and federal laws requiring an equal education for all students.

Crane said the ACLU had not provided evidence of one student who had been deprived of services.

Chalfant returned again and again to the state’s own findings, saying there was credible evidence it had failed to provide necessary schooling.

“I’m ordering you to do something,” Chalfant said, although he added the specifics were up to the state. “If I’m wrong, the court of appeal will have something to say.”