Farm conquers Truckee's harsh growing climate



Little Roots is proving farming at high elevation is possible. Photo/Todd Karol

By Ally Gravina, Moonshine Ink

Little Roots Farm, occupying a half-acre of land in Truckee's Prosser neighborhood, is the only commercial farm within a 50-mile radius. Owned and operated by Todd Karol and Stacie Schultze, graduates of Sierra Nevada College, Little Roots focuses primarily on eight varieties of microgreens and also carries 10 to 20 other types of produce depending on the season.

What makes these guys so interesting is that they are the only commercial farm to tackle the industry in a climate many would consider hostile.

After graduation, the couple knew they wanted to work in the food industry while continuing to build their community in Tahoe, but they weren't too keen on the idea of working in restaurants, and thus Little Roots Farm was born.

Read the whole story

Holiday craft making at SLT Library

In celebration of the holiday season, the South Lake Tahoe Library welcomes families of all ages to join the Winter Extravaganza.

Creation stations will be set up with easy to make, seasonal decorations suitable for all ages.

Santa and Mrs. Claus are scheduled to drop by, so bring a camera.

The event will be Dec. 2 from 10am-2pm at the South Lake Tahoe Library at 1000 Rufus Allen Blvd.

Placing blame for NorCal's deadly fires

By Sonali Kohli, Los Angeles Times

More than two dozen investigators have spent weeks scouring wine country trying to solve the mystery at the heart of the most destructive wildfires in California history: What caused the infernos that killed 43 people and destroyed more than 8,000 buildings?

The answers will have wide-ranging ramifications for the region, which faces staggering losses and a challenging

rebuilding effort. Losses from insured properties alone are expected to far exceed $1 billion, and the total bill for the fires will be still higher. Just fighting the fires cost $189 million, according to CalFire

CalFire is likely to take months to determine the official cause. But in wine country, there is already one prime suspect: utility giant Pacific Gas & Electric.

Read the whole story

Paiute cutthroat trout return to native waters



A Paiute cutthroat trout is caught and measured. Photo/USFWS

By Kathryn Reed

Two years after an Alpine County creek was chemically treated, native Paiute cutthroat trout have returned to those waters.

That was the whole purpose of treating Silver King Creek and

its tributaries from Llewellyn Falls downstream to Silver King Canyon. The lower reaches of Tamarack Creek, Tamarack Lake Creek and Coyote Valley Creek were also treated.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S Forest Service, and California Department of Fish and Wildlife used rotenone, a fish toxicant, to kill off the nonnative fish that had been stocked there since the early 1990s.

This summer the agencies restocked Silver King Creek with 86 native Paiute cutthroat trout. This is the only place in the world where this fish is a native.

According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife website, the Paiute was listed as endangered on March 11, 1967, and reclassified as threatened on July 16, 1975.

Ultimately, the plan is to put fish back in their historic range below Llewelyn Falls.

The irony is the transplanted fish are likely descendants of fish that originally came from Silver King Creek. It was in 1946 that the Eastern Sierra Packers Association and the U.S. Forest Service took 401 fish from Silver King Creek to North Fork Cottonwood Creek.

It is Cottonwood Creek where the fish came from this summer.

“We have a long-term dataset showing a substantial decline in the population in Upper Fish Valley,” said USFWS biologist Chad Mellison said in a press release. “The team decided we needed to augment this population with other donor populations including North Fork Cottonwood Creek. Secondly, we needed to conduct population assessments in North Fork Cottonwood Creek to determine if the population there was viable enough to support transplantation to Silver King Creek.”

Mellison has been working on the project for 16 years.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

· Here are the El Dorado-Tahoe and Sierra roadwork schedules from Caltrans for the week.

· From Nov. 18-Dec. 2, Washoe County sheriff's deputies, along with the Reno and Sparks police departments and Nevada Highway Patrol will dedicate extra deputies specifically to look for drivers and other occupants in vehicles who are not wearing their seat belts, as well as children who are not properly secured in a car or booster seat.

· Eric Sandel, 76, of Truckee has been reappointed by Gov. Jerry Brown to the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board, where he has served since 1992.

· Truckee's next cannabis dialogue meeting will be Nov. 28, 6pm at the airport.

· Washoe County Sheriff's Office's retired K9 Gunner died. Gunner's partner, retired Deputy John Kimberlin was by his side. Gunner served WCSO from 2007-14.

Opinion: SLT taxpayers fund sexist sculpture



South Lake Tahoe’s champions statue treats women as inferior to men. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

Champions Plaza in South Lake Tahoe was developed to recognize athletes in the area who have reached statewide, national or international recognition in their sport. It was never intended to be just about Olympians or three in particular.

Nonetheless, the idea was born out of the trio who became known as the Golden Girls – Jamie Anderson, Maddie Bowman and Hannah Teter. All have won gold medals in their disciplines at a Winter Olympics, all live in Meyers, and all ride for Sierra-at-Tahoe.

Next year the inaugural inductees will have their names engraved into the Walk of Champions. They include: Anderson, Bowman, Teter, Elena Hight, Glen Plake, Jonna Mendes, Kyle Smaine, Shaun Palmer, Travis Cabral and Travis Ramos. Perhaps

not surprisingly they are all either a skier or a snowboarder.

Let’s hope other sports are soon brought into the fold.

I know who I’d nominate: the 2010 3.5 senior women’s tennis team from Zephyr Cove. They won the national championship that year.

The Zephyr Cove team included Becky LeBuhn, Yrma Haro, Diane Baker Roberts, Patty Yamano, Charna Knerr, Becky Darrow, Susan Glasson, Linda Vollenhals, Karen Neri, Carel James, Carla Paterson, JoJo Conroy, Eddi Quiggle, Julie Zeid, Carol Faccinetti, Mary Rey, and Sandy Paul.

It was up to Neri, captain of the team, to choose who went to nationals in Indian Wells. She picked herself along with Roberts, Vollenhalls, Haro, Zeid, Kerr and Rey.

But it takes an entire team to qualify for playoffs, then districts, then sectionals and ultimately nationals. That’s why all of the women (and one would be posthumously) deserve to be inducted into the Champions Plaza.

In 2015 the City Council approved the criteria and nomination process for future Champions Plaza inductees.

The city is to be commended for carving out a part of Lakeview Commons to honor athletes. We are an athletic bunch, competing in an array of sports.

A sculpture was commissioned and last month the Spirit of Competition was installed. It’s even more magnificent at night illuminated by a handful of lights.

It is Gareth Curtiss who created this nearly 11-foot bronze work of art.

When the City Council saw the first version the three beings were clearly male. Anderson, who is a native of the South Shore and won gold in slopestyle in 2014, voiced her

disappointment to those who would listen – as did others. The council told the artist to try again. Curtiss listened. One of the three is a woman, the other two are clearly male.

I first noticed the art piece earlier this month, driving by with my mom and two of my sisters. I explained to them how it came to be. We swung into the parking lot, got out and looked at it. And we all had a similar reaction – *what the hell?*

One of the male figure's hands is on the ring, while the other two are reaching for it. I felt like I had been hit in the gut, the wind knocked out of me. This sculpture is an assault on all women – athlete or not. It is hard to believe two female councilmembers and a woman city manager could sign-off on what is clearly a piece of work that puts women in second place (second class?) again.

"I honor the artist's interpretation of the spirit of competition with those in competition reaching for excellence as represented by the ring," Councilwoman Wendy David told *Lake Tahoe News*, adding that she "approves" of the sculpture as is.

JoAnn Conner was the councilwoman at the time.

I say shame on anyone who had something to do with approving this $75,000 sexist piece of art.

All hands should have been on the ring or none at all.

Maybe I won't nominate that tennis team; maybe Douglas County will figure out a way to honor athletes without a gender bias.

Kathryn Reed is publisher of Lake Tahoe News.

Ski resort leads crowdfunding to snub Vail

By Natalie Obiko Pearson, Bloomberg News

A tiny Canadian ski resort forged by Scandinavian miners chasing an 1890s gold rush has become the unlikely recipient of a record equity crowdfunding raise, tapping into powder hounds' quest to fend off a wave of consolidation led by Vail Resorts.

Investors are lining up to buy a piece of Red Mountain Resort in Rossland, British Columbia, drawn by its rebellious pitch of "Fight the Man, Own the Mountain." The web-based campaign, the first by a ski resort, appears to have struck a chord with skiers anxious about a flurry of acquisitions that has put 39 resorts in the hands of just three corporations.

"Consolidation sometimes has the potential of stripping the soul and heritage out of these old-school resorts," says Howard Katkov, chief executive officer of Red Mountain Ventures, who's publicly taken jibes at the purpose-built villages and ubiquitous clock towers found at resorts like Vail and Whistler Blackcomb. "It's about preserving what we consider an endangered species." Vail didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

Read the whole story

Trailhead first step to new

Douglas County trails

Douglas County completed construction of the Martin Slough Trailhead on Buckeye Road east of Heybourne Road this fall.

The trailhead includes eight parking spots and is the first phase of an overall project to complete the Martin Slough Trail. When complete, the Martin Slough Trail will provide a 2.6 mile paved multi-use path connecting Jake’s Wetland in Minden to the Gilman Ponds in Gardnerville.

The path will offer the public alternate access to Minden Elementary School, Gardnerville Elementary School, and Carson Valley Middle School, allowing pedestrians to avoid the congestion along Highway 395.

A grant from the Nevada Department of Transportation Transportation Alternatives Program provided $615,238 for construction, which was matched $25,000 by Douglas County, Gardnerville, and Minden. Another $25,000 was provided by the Dean Seeman Foundation and $100,000 by the Ranch at Gardnerville.

A portion of the trail is also going to be constructed by the Carson Valley Inn across their property.

In November 2015 Douglas County received a $106,836 grant from the Nevada Division of State Parks to construct a trailhead on Buckeye Road to access the trail. The original schedule called for both the trail and trailhead to be constructed this year, however the trail has been delayed due to the lengthy federal process to acquire all necessary project clearances.

The grant for the trailhead was set to expire Dec. 31, which necessitated that the county complete the trailhead prior to beginning the trail.

Construction on the trail is expected to begin late next

summer.

EDC on path to temporarily ban recreational pot

By Lake Tahoe News

El Dorado County Board of Supervisors in December is expected to approve a temporary ban on the sales of recreational and medicinal marijuana. Any medical facilities in operation today would be grandfathered in.

They are taking the same approach as South Lake Tahoe and many other jurisdictions in wanting to have a better understanding of all of the state's regulations pertaining to recreational marijuana before saying yes to anything more than what is required by state law.

While it was a year ago that voters in California approved the use of pot recreationally, it wasn't until this week that the state released many of the rules surrounding the practice.

Local jurisdictions are able to implement laws concerning sales of the product and whether it can be consumed in public places.

However, what they cannot regulate is the growing pot for personal use. Those parameters are state laws. People are also allowed to smoke pot where permissible.

Supervisors Sue Novasel and Mike Ranalli were appointed to the Cannabis Advisory Committee, while the Medical Marijuana Advisory Committee was eliminated.

It is Sheriff John D’Agostini’s belief that all forms of marijuana should be banned in the county.

Proposed federal budget, tax cuts could stunt affordable housing

By Michelle D. Layser, The Conversation

Low-income Americans are already struggling to keep a roof over their heads due to a growing affordable housing shortage.

But budgets drafted by the Trump administration and Congress, along with provisions in the tax cut package, are bound to make matters worse.

As a researcher who studies the intersection of tax law and housing policy, I am concerned about how these proposed changes would reduce the volume of new housing for low-income people and cut aid that people facing economic hardship use to cover their rent.

The federal government stopped building public housing two decades ago after years of declining construction. Although it has demolished many of these homes, the government continues to own and rent out about 1.1 million of these units.

Read the whole story