

Congress considers lethal methods to manage rangeland

By April Corbin, Las Vegas Sun

In July, the House Appropriations Committee voted to remove language from the Interior Department's budget that prohibits the "destruction of healthy, unadopted wild horses and burros" managed by the Bureau of Land Management in the American West.

Groups like the American Wild Horse Campaign that seek to protect the animals have described the change as "a death sentence" for more than 46,000 wild horses and burros cared for by the BLM and an additional 40,000 loose on the range considered in excess of "appropriate management levels." On the other side, rangeland advocates describe euthanasia as unfortunate but necessary for protecting land they say has been ravaged by overgrazing from animals that lack any natural predators.

Rep. Mark Amodei, R-Nev., sits on the House Appropriations Committee and supported lifting the prohibition, which was pushed forth by Rep. Chris Stewart, R-Utah.

Read the whole story

Prescribed fires planned near Truckee

The Truckee Ranger District is planning a prescribed fire of between 40 and 90 acres near Sagehen Creek on Highway 89 west of the highway starting Oct. 30.

A private contractor will be burning near Independence Lake.

This will only take place as long as weather, fuel conditions, and smoke dispersal remains favorable. Predicted weather forecasts over the week is for a more wet and cold weather pattern.

Winter storm expected to hit Tahoe on weekend

Put away the rakes and get out the snow shovels because measurable white stuff is in forecast starting Nov. 3.

The National Weather Service in Reno says gusty winds, rain and snow will start Friday, with heavy snow arriving Saturday and Sunday.

By Sunday the snow level will reach 5,500 feet. One to 3 feet of snow is possible above 7,500 feet.

For road conditions, click on the state icons on the home page of *Lake Tahoe News*.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- Placer County Board of Supervisors approved \$400,000 in park dedication fees and \$100,000 for improvements to Speedboat Beach, located at the base of Harbor Avenue and Lake Street in Kings Beach. The funding will cover completion of planned restroom, signage, stairway and access improvements.
 - New Mastersounds with Kung Fu, the four-piece jazz fusion funk band from Leeds, England, will be at Hard Rock Lake Tahoe's Vinyl Showroom on Nov. 5 at 9pm. Tickets are \$18 presale or \$25 at the door. Must be 21 or older.
 - Eldorado National Forest will burn 169 acres approximately four miles northwest of Kirkwood next week if weather conditions allow.
 - Community Soup Night is Nov. 9 from 5:30-7:30pm at Alibi Ale Works in Truckee. BYO bowl and spoon. Proceeds go to Tahoe Food Hub and Slow Food Lake Tahoe. Soup and bread are \$5, salad is \$2.
 - On Oct. 31 from 11am-11pm there will be a fundraiser at TahoeAleWorX for the Junior Pee Wee Viking football team that is going to the Best of the West Championship on Nov. 11 in Santa Clara. They are trying to defend their title.
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Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Mr. T

Mr. T is a 3-year-old Boston terrier mix who has huge ears. He is a bit shy in his kennel, but take him for a walk and his true bouncy happy personality comes out.

Since he is a bit shy he would probably be best in an adult-only home, but he would love to have a dog companion to play with.

Mr. T is neutered, microchipped, 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.

– Karen Kuentz

Trumpeter Botti takes audience's breath away



Caroline Campbell's violin complements Chris Botti's trumpet on Oct. 28 at Harrah's Lake Tahoe. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Susan Wood

STATELINE – It was nothing short of phenomenal.

Armed with an all-star ensemble of accomplished musicians who could seize the stage on their own, Chris Botti showed an enthusiastic Harrah's South Shore Room crowd that live jazz is anything but dead.

Botti is a rock star on the trumpet, taking the audience on a journey Saturday night through his compilations including his landmark "Night Sessions" 2001 album, signature jazz collection of 2003's "A Thousand Kisses Deep" and his latest "Impressions" assortment from 2013.

“It’s so nice to be back,” Botti told the crowd Oct. 28, while referring to the trip from New York as a “planes, trains and automobiles” exercise.

“It makes all the long mornings and layovers go away,” he said in appreciation as he launched into an unforgettable evening of music composition.



The intimacy of the South Shore Room is ideal for Chris Botti and his jazz ensemble. Photo/Kathryn Reed

The jazz musician has played at Lake Tahoe before. Once he collaborated with jazz great Diana Krall on the piano in the Harveys Outdoor Concert Series. And years ago, he was one of saxophonist Dave Koz’s friends at the Hyatt in Incline Village.

Hands down, the intimate South Shore Room has turned out to be the best venue.

For it was not only Botti doing his magnificent renditions of jazz classics on the trumpet that made the event, it was what he didn’t do.

He often stepped back and let his stand-alone musicians

demonstrate their undaunted dedication to their craft. To that, the crowd screamed and lunged to its feet on several occasions – a somewhat uncharacteristic reaction to either classical concerts or jazz music performances.

Caroline Campbell's heart-stopping solo evolution from classical violin to country fiddle and onto Led Zeppelin's classic "Kashmir" rock fantasy dropped jaws.

In his introduction, Botti referred to her medley as an "opus jam." Then he stepped aside as Campbell transitioned from a soft sway with her violin to bouncing with an upbeat blue grass number.

Campbell, who's collaborated with the likes of opera great Andrea Bocelli, even interrupted her own performance to address the cheering enthusiasts who rose to their feet. One man in front imitated a cowboy roping when she broke into a fiddle sound. She scurried to the microphone and declared that "classical audiences don't usually whoop," adding: It's nice," she said, smiling.

And with a few flips of her long blonde hair, a steely look came over her face. From there, the predominantly baby boomer crowd instantly identified the legendary tune from one of America's greatest rock bands. It was like she was channeling Jimmy Page and Robert Plant.

"Way to bring it," Botti said, acknowledging Campbell's greatness.

Up to that point, the accomplished violinist had graced the showroom early alongside Botti's trumpet with sentimental jazz classics such as "When I Fall in Love," onto his signature "The Look of Love" and adding on Roberta Flack's well known "For All We Know." The melancholy of the sound based on the band's harmonious beauty was tear-welling. The performance represented dinner party meets sleepy jazz club meets billboard rock stage.

By captivating the stage with Botti, pianist Taylor Eigsti, guitarist Leonardo Amuedo, bassist Richie Goods, keyboardist Rachel Eckroth and drummer Lee Pearson, Campbell was in good company that night.

Pearson also put on a nimble show of his own, tucking a drumstick under his armpit as he played and taking his superior percussion skills to the floor. He even played his drum set with his hands in a performance that could have competed with Iron Butterfly's most famous solo.

Botti had warned the crowd of the risk taking when he described his drummer's skills as capable of taking him "over a cliff" because of the degree of difficulty.

"It depends how he's feeling," Botti said. The audience laughed, and Pearson reaffirmed that attendees should brace themselves.



Sy Smith's vocal range is off the charts. Photo/Kathryn Reed

In what Botti referred to as his “Rubik’s Cube of all-star” band members, guitarist Amuedo competed with Campbell and the quick-fingered Eigsti on the piano for solos that provided an emotional crescendo.

Amuedo accomplished such a task with his stirring rendition of the late Leonard Cohen’s classic “Hallelujah.” The trumpet-guitar-piano combo continued with the jazzy “Venice” off the “Impressions” album, compiled as an international testament to romantic melodies.

And as if all this wasn’t take-your-breath-away enough, the music morphed into vocals when singer Sy Smith walked down the aisle for a few sets. Her vocal range appeared unbelievably

angelic at times.

She had the audience roaring with her singing and dancing to “Let’s Stay Together,” the blockbuster rhythm and blues hit recorded by Al Green and then Tina Turner.

The seemingly quick one and a half hours quieted down with Botti’s encore fave – “My Funny Valentine,” the legendary 1954 jazz classic performed by Frank Sinatra and Ella Fitzgerald that the trumpeter remade famous on his brass instrument almost a half century later.

Opinion: California’s fear of heights

By Joe Mathews

Want to spook your neighbors this Halloween? Don’t bother with ghouls or ghosts. Instead, just decorate your door with a picture of an eight-story apartment building.

Californians are famously fearless. We devote ourselves to extreme outdoor sports, buy homes near earthquake faults, and launch startups against all odds. But in the face of tall buildings, especially multi-family high-rises, we turn into a bunch of scaredy-cats.



Joe Mathews

This statewide acrophobia has created a historic housing shortage that holds back our economy, increases homelessness, and forces us into long, unhealthy commutes.

Taller development creates badly needed housing, and the population density to support robust public transportation and thriving retail corridors. But California is laced with Munsters-era zoning codes that bar tall multi-unit buildings in many neighborhoods. Even where we permit residential towers, our frighteningly complicated regulatory processes produce long delays that make taller buildings expensive.

To their credit, both cities and developers across the state have been advancing plans for taller buildings, often in the dense centers where they're needed. But smart plans are little match for the collective acrophobia of Californians.

If you dare, you can witness the plague of height fears in housing in Oakland, which faces a massive backlog of 18,000 approved but as yet unbuilt units in its pipeline, many of which would be in taller buildings near transit.

In Long Beach, citizens are revolting against a city update of a three-decade-old land use plan to accommodate taller buildings. In Santa Monica, a new Expo Line rail connection should be encouraging taller development, but longtime residents, afflicted with the most haunting case of vertigo since Jimmy Stewart in the Hitchcock film of that name, oppose it.

"Fear is the mind-killer. Fear is the little-death that brings total obliteration. I will face my fear. I will permit it to pass over me and through me," wrote the late Frank Herbert, a Northern California journalist better known for his Dune novels.

When it comes to tall buildings, we should take his advice and

face our fears. Instead, Californians construct self-deceiving justifications for our acrophobic anxieties.

We tell ourselves that earthquakes make taller buildings less safe— even though poorly designed smaller buildings are more likely to collapse and hurt us. We focus too much on the upfront costs of high-rise multi-family buildings—which are more expensive to build than single-family homes because they require stronger materials—and ignore all the hidden costs of single-family housing.

And we are highly selective in our fears. We fear the apartment building downtown and not the elaborate home surrounded by brush on a hill. We block tall buildings in our town centers because we worry about new crowds of new people—claustrophobia and xenophobia are cousins to our fear of heights—and then complain about all the resulting freeway traffic at rush hour. We oppose new housing on the grounds that it will change the character of our neighborhoods, and then lament the appearance of homeless encampments down the street.

Our fears literally distort our vision. Many Californians oppose tall and thin buildings, even though they actually are better for our views.

During a recent interview, a leading Los Angeles architect took out his Smartphone. Holding the thin phone vertically, he explained that he could design a tall and thin building that is easy to see around. But because of fear of heights, he said, turning the phone horizontally, buildings are often made much shorter and squatter, effectively becoming walls that block more views of more people. “We’re building a bunch of fat boys,” he lamented.

Which is too bad, because the few areas of California with high-rise housing are successes. Fear somehow has blinded us to the vibrancy of high-rise-heavy precincts in the downtowns

of L.A. and San Diego. The benefits of pursuing a taller, denser housing future, particularly in coastal urban areas, would be considerable: higher annual economic growth, more tax revenue, and fewer greenhouse gases.

But it's hard to have a conversation about this fear when there is so much else for Californians to be afraid of now, from a spike in property crime in the state to the nuclear-armed madmen who run Pyongyang and Washington.

The current gubernatorial campaign might provide an opportunity for reassessing the altitude of our development. The top two contenders, Gavin Newsom and Antonio Villaraigosa, pushed to make their cities more vertical when they were mayors of San Francisco and Los Angeles, respectively.

But both got hammered for doing so. And now the two former mayors are surrounded by protective political professionals who, when it comes to the highest and hardest issues, are perpetually scared to death.

Joe Mathews writes the Connecting California column for Zócalo Public Square.

FCC ends decades-old rule to keep TV-radio under local control

By Brian Fung, Washington Post

Federal regulators have voted to eliminate a longstanding rule covering radio and television stations, in a move that could ultimately reshape the nation's media landscape.

The regulation, which was first adopted almost 80 years ago, requires broadcasters to have a physical studio in or near the areas where they have a license to transmit TV or radio signals. Known as the “main studio rule,” the regulation ensured that residents of a community could have a say in their local broadcast station’s operations.

This month’s vote by the Federal Communications Commission lifts that requirement. With the rise of social media, the agency said, consumers now have other ways to get in touch with their local broadcasters.

Read the whole story

Tensions rise after wolf kills cow in California

By Ryan Sabalow and Dale Kasler, Sacramento Bee

A wolf has killed a California rancher’s cow for the first time in more than 100 years, raising tensions in the newly reclaimed wolf country in California’s rugged northeastern corner.

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife confirmed that a member of the so-called Lassen Pack killed a heifer Oct. 13 on private property in western Lassen County. Data from a GPS collar worn by the pack’s breeding female showed it had been on-site for at least six hours the night the 600-pound yearling was killed. Wildlife officials said wolves were seen at the carcass the following morning.

When state wildlife officers were investigating the kill, the

wolf hung close, on a forested slope a few hundred yards away.

Read the whole story

Transportation focus of Tahoe history talk

“How Did We Get Here?” is the topic of Dave Borges history talk on Nov. 14.

He will talk about Highway 50 road improvements from Tahoe to Placerville and what is still visible on the road. This program will cover everything from Native American trade routes over the Sierra to the 1859 Bonanza Road, tolls, railways and more.

The talk begins at 7pm at the Camp Richardson Historic Hotel. Cost is \$3, free for Lake Tahoe Historical Society members.