

# Staffing shortage plagues Tahoe-Truckee kitchens



Finding restaurant staff in Tahoe-Truckee is getting difficult. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

**By Ally Gravina, Moonshine Ink**

At the bottom of its beer and wine list, Pianeta, a 19-year-old Italian restaurant in downtown Truckee, presents diners with the option to buy a six-pack as a gratuity for the kitchen staff. When customers place the order, a ticket not only prints at the bar for accounting purposes, but also prints in the kitchen; to which the kitchen staff then responds by banging pots and pans so loudly that the purchasing patron (and the entire restaurant) hears the acknowledgement.

Tom Beckering, managing partner and owner, says the celebration creates a snowball effect as more and more customers purchase rounds for the hard-working staff.

Creative incentives like this come from the heart of Truckee/Tahoe restaurant owners, but these sorts of programs are being put into place as solutions to the severe lack of kitchen staff in the area.

Local restaurant owners, managers, and chefs say the dwindling pool of back of the house staff is a crisis. "It's gone from never having been a problem to always being a problem," said Bill Arnoff, who has been a chef at Pianeta for 17 years.

**Read the whole story**

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## **Smoke inundates Tahoe-Carson-Reno areas**



Smoke covers Carson City on July 19 from fires outside the area. Photo/Susan Wood

Air quality in the Tahoe-Carson-Reno areas has deteriorated because of the Detwiler Fire in Mariposa County.

AIRnow said the air quality for Reno is unhealthy for sensitive groups. People should stay indoors and avoid heavy exercise or work outdoors.

Air quality on the South Shore is not great either; the same goes for the Truckee area.

This fire raging in California has consumed nearly 46,000 acres and is 7 percent contained. Gov. Jerry Brown has declared a state of emergency. Eight structures have been destroyed and 1,500 others are threatened.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

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# Borg to give talk at S. Lake Tahoe Library

South Lake Tahoe Friends of the Library is hosting local author Todd Borg on Aug. 15.

Borg will read from his latest book, "Tahoe Payback," at the 6:30pm event at the library on Rufus Allen Boulevard.

Borg will also share his writing techniques, inspirations and story lines. Book sale and signing to follow.

A synopsis of the book: When a man tells Tahoe Detective Owen McKenna that his girlfriend disappeared, McKenna wonders if the woman got cold feet and ran away. But when she turns up murdered on Fannette Island with red roses in her mouth, McKenna discovers that she used a scam charity to steal millions. Meanwhile, Street's ex-con dad has jumped parole in Missouri, and she believes he is coming to punish her for her testimony that put him in prison decades before. Owen and Street are about to confront someone who wants them very dead.

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## K's Kitchen: Quesadillas with more than cheese

By Kathryn Reed

While I like cheese, so often at restaurants it's difficult to taste anything but the cheese in a quesadilla. That is why at home I prefer to be light on the cheese and heavy on the other

stuff.

With that thinking, that is why there is not an exact quantity for the cheese in this recipe. It's really a personal preference on how much you want of the veggie-bean mixture as well as cheese.

I tend to use Monterey jack, but the type of cheese is also a personal preference. I also use flour tortillas, but corn would be just fine.

I used an ear of corn that had already been cooked. It would be possible to use raw corn; it would just need to be cooked a little more as opposed to heated.

It would be better to use fresh tomatoes, but I didn't have any.



**Spinach, Garbanzo Bean Quesadillas**

Couple tablespoons water

10 ounces spinach

3 garlic cloves, minced

1 ear corn, cut from cob

15.5 ounce can garbanzo beans

14.5 ounce diced tomatoes

1 bunch chives, minced

$\frac{1}{2}$  tsp chili powder

$\frac{1}{2}$  tsp cayenne pepper

$\frac{1}{2}$  tsp ground cumin

Tortillas

Cheese, grated

Salsa

Cilantro, optional

Heat water in pan over medium heat, add spinach. Cook until wilted. Add corn, beans and tomatoes. Mash the beans.

Add chives, chili powder, cayenne pepper and cumin.

Cook for about 10 minutes until heated through. Adjust seasonings as so desired.

In skillet on medium heat place one tortilla in pan, add veggie mix and cheese. Place another tortilla on top. Press down. Flip quesadilla when bottom is browned. When other side is brown and cheese is melted, it's done.

Add salsa and fresh cilantro is so desired.

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# CHP shutting down Truckee dispatch center

By Susan Wood

Come next May, the California Highway Patrol will have silenced its voice out of Truckee – moving the communications dispatch center to Chico.

The move is part of a five-year infrastructure plan by former Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger to consolidate dispatch centers labeled PSAPs – Public Safety Answering Points.

CHP manages 25 dispatch centers throughout the state as an essential tool backing up its 109 offices with more than 11,000 employees.

The 40-year-old Truckee dispatch center – which handles South Shore 911 cellular calls – averages about 200 calls a day unless a major snowstorm prompts a surge in call activity. Landline calls are channeled through sheriff's and police departments.

In comparison, a large dispatch center such as Chico or Sacramento takes in about 3,000 calls a day, CHP Truckee Capt. Ryan Stonebraker told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Stonebraker assured the public the shutdown would be fairly seamless and explained how larger dispatch centers could manage the calls more efficiently based on their large staffing levels. If Chico becomes inundated with calls, some will be forwarded to Sacramento. In Northern California, other cities with dispatch centers include Eureka, Redding and Susanville.

"I think we'll have some growing pains. But with resiliency, redundancy and continuity in taking the calls, it will work out. We've had these calls in Sacramento before. There are certain advantages to moving resources around," he said, adding that technical changes will need to be adjusted in the radio frequencies.

The captain, who runs CHP Truckee operations, pledged to have at least a few dispatchers from Chico and Sacramento

familiarize themselves with the unique nature and terrain of the Lake Tahoe region.



CHP Capt. Ryan Stonebraker of the Truckee office is losing his dispatch center in 10 months. Photo/Provided

CHP dispatch took a critical hit a decade ago during the Angora Fire aftermath when South Shore witnesses – one with a distinct view from the Lake Tahoe Golf Course – called in to report the blaze early on and were told it was a prescribed burn that they shouldn't worry about.

At the time, it took South Lake Tahoe police dispatch Supervisor Leona Allen telling CHP Truckee dispatch it was not a controlled burn. The miscommunication led to a subsequent investigation about whether the devastating fire that consumed 254 homes could have been doused sooner. Results of the investigation have never gone public because the state labeled them a "personnel" matter.

Whatever the case, Stonebraker said dispatch is a very tough job and feels sympathy for the staff in Truckee being upended – especially since severe damage to its center and offices this winter sent staff to modular, portable facilities.

“I love my dispatchers. This is hard for me. I care about the center. I care about them,” he said.

Truckee employs one dispatch supervisor and a dozen dispatchers who work varying shifts. They will be offered jobs at other dispatch locations, posts that are often readily available, according to Stonebraker.

Turnover in Truckee is high, with no staffers lasting longer than two years. To no surprise in a tourist town, housing is apparently as tough to deal with as the job, according to city and state officials.

CHP could not provide the amount in cost savings to close the facility, assuming there even is a savings.

Outgoing Truckee Town Manager Tony Lashbrook pointed out how the state is planning on investing about \$20 million in a new CHP building at a different site in town; it just won't have dispatch. Come 2019, the new offices will be built in the old U.S. Forest Service structure on Pioneer Trail.

The public resisted the new towers the CHP intended to erect on Highway 89 because they are in the scenic corridor of Interstate 80; however, towers already exist at that location.

“I wouldn't presume to second guess the CHP. Consolidation is the state of industry today. With technology, I'm not convinced it's super important where the dispatch center is located (in terms of call efficiency). But one factor in the proposed closure is the cost of housing, and the town didn't want the towers,” Lashbrook summed up his assessment. One factor facilitated another.

The whole proposal was met with mixed reaction from external and internal forces.

“We’re sad to see that happen. We like the dispatch here,” CHP Lt. Cmdr. Terry Lowther of the Meyers office said.

CHP Chico also intends to rebuild with about a quarter of its 33,000 square-foot facility dedicated to dispatch.

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# Opinion: Sportswear brands should use athletes

By Sasha DiGiulian, Outside

I recently read an article on Racked titled “Want to Sell Me Sportswear? Show Me an Athlete,” and it resonated with me as a professional athlete who’s never been in a major sportswear ad. It made me ask: Why do big athletic companies, like Nike, Adidas, and Reebok, often choose high-fashion models to pose as female athletes, rather than draw from the ranks of the numerous professional athletes they sponsor?

Here are just a few recent examples of this happening: Bella Hadid is the face of a new Nike campaign for the Cortez sneakers, originally designed for runners in 1972; Karlie Kloss models Adidas’ fashionable performance line, Stella McCartney; and Gigi Hadid plays a boxer for Reebok’s “Perfect Never” campaign. These images of female “athletes” suggest that it is more important that women look stereotypically feminine and lean than be able to perform at an elite level. This doesn’t happen nearly as often with men: sports brands seldom use male models as the faces of their fitness lines, instead opting for professional male athletes.

**Read the whole story**

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# **Burglary at Heller's Vegas office, note left**

**By Ed O'Keefe and Amy B. Wang, Washington Post**

Police said a “threatening note” was found over the weekend after a break-in at the Las Vegas office of Sen. Dean Heller, a Republican who could be a critical swing vote on the GOP health-care bill.

Las Vegas police said officers responded to a call about a burglary alarm Saturday morning at Heller's office in southwest Las Vegas. There, they discovered what they described in a statement as a “threatening note” addressed to Heller, R-Nev., near the door to his office.

Heller has been under pressure from the left and the right over his vote on the health-care bill. Republican lawmakers have been steadfast for years in their promise to “repeal and replace” the Affordable Care Act, President Obama's signature health-care measure – a pledge Donald Trump frequently invoked on the campaign trail.

**Read the whole story**

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# Squaw pulls the plug on skiing for the season

Hot summer weather has forced Squaw Valley to finally end the 2016-17 ski season.

The last day was July 15. This was after 200 days of operation; the average season is 174 days.

This is the latest the resort has ever been open. The 728 inches that fell last season included breaking the record for most snow in one month with 282 inches in January, snowing 23 feet in 23 consecutive days. This was followed by the snowiest February ever with another 196 inches.

Now it's all about summer operations – at least until the snow starts to fly again.

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# Calif. lakes full, but fishing remains in a drought

By Hugo Martin, Los Angeles Times

As he prepared to launch his fishing boat from the dock at Castaic Lake, longtime angler Dan Curtis recalled conditions two years earlier when the state's worst drought shriveled the reservoir to nearly a third of its total capacity.

The lake is now near capacity, but below the surface of the water, not everything has returned to normal.

Five years of drought have stunted the size of the bass that

spawned in the 3 1/2-square-mile reservoir near Santa Clarita, and Curtis has mostly been catching 6-inch-long bass – about half the size before the drought.

**Read the whole story**

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## **Scenic meadows near Lake Tahoe preserved**

**By Paul Rogers, Bay Area News Group**

TRUCKEE – A breathtaking landscape of Sierra Nevada meadows, forests and wetlands larger than San Francisco's Golden Gate Park – located 20 miles north of Lake Tahoe – will be preserved from development under a \$10 million deal that closed Friday.

The Carpenter Valley is 1,317 acres, a hidden valley one ridge over from the Tahoe Donner ski resort that is home to bald eagles, black bears, carpets of wildflowers and an unspoiled stream – all flanked by snow-capped peaks.

A coalition of conservation groups known as the Northern Sierra Partnership, which is based in Palo Alto and funded in large part by donors from Silicon Valley and the rest of the Bay Area, feared that the land would be developed as a golf course or housing subdivision. So the groups stepped in to acquire the property when it was about to hit the market.

**Read the whole story**