Male burlesque show on North Shore

Muscles with Motion, an international group of multi-cultural, multi-talented and multi-lingual male performers from around the world, will be at the Tahoe Biltmore in Crystal Bay on June 3.

The show is filled with singing, dancing and aerial erotica with performances by sculpted male entertainers. It is a fully choreographed audience participation male burlesque show.

The show starts at 9pm. Tickets are $20.

EDC cyclist scores 'incredible' stage win

Evan Huffman won the May 17 stage of the Tour of California. Photo/Susan Wood

By Associated Press

Evan Huffman had spent nearly the entire day Wednesday in a breakaway with four other riders at the Tour of California, his energy drained and his legs pushed to the limit in an effort to stay away.

Yet his mind couldn’t help but wander.

Huffman thought back to last year’s stage into Santa Clarita, when he was part of a breakaway that also stayed clear to the finish. And he couldn’t help but think about Ben King beating him to the line that day, dashing the El Dorado Hills rider’s chances of a career-defining victory.

“I was just thinking about how much it would stink not to win again,” Huffman said.

Read the whole story

S. Lake Tahoe McDonald’s starting from scratch

It won’t exactly be supersized, but the new McDonald’s at the Y in South Lake Tahoe will be modern.

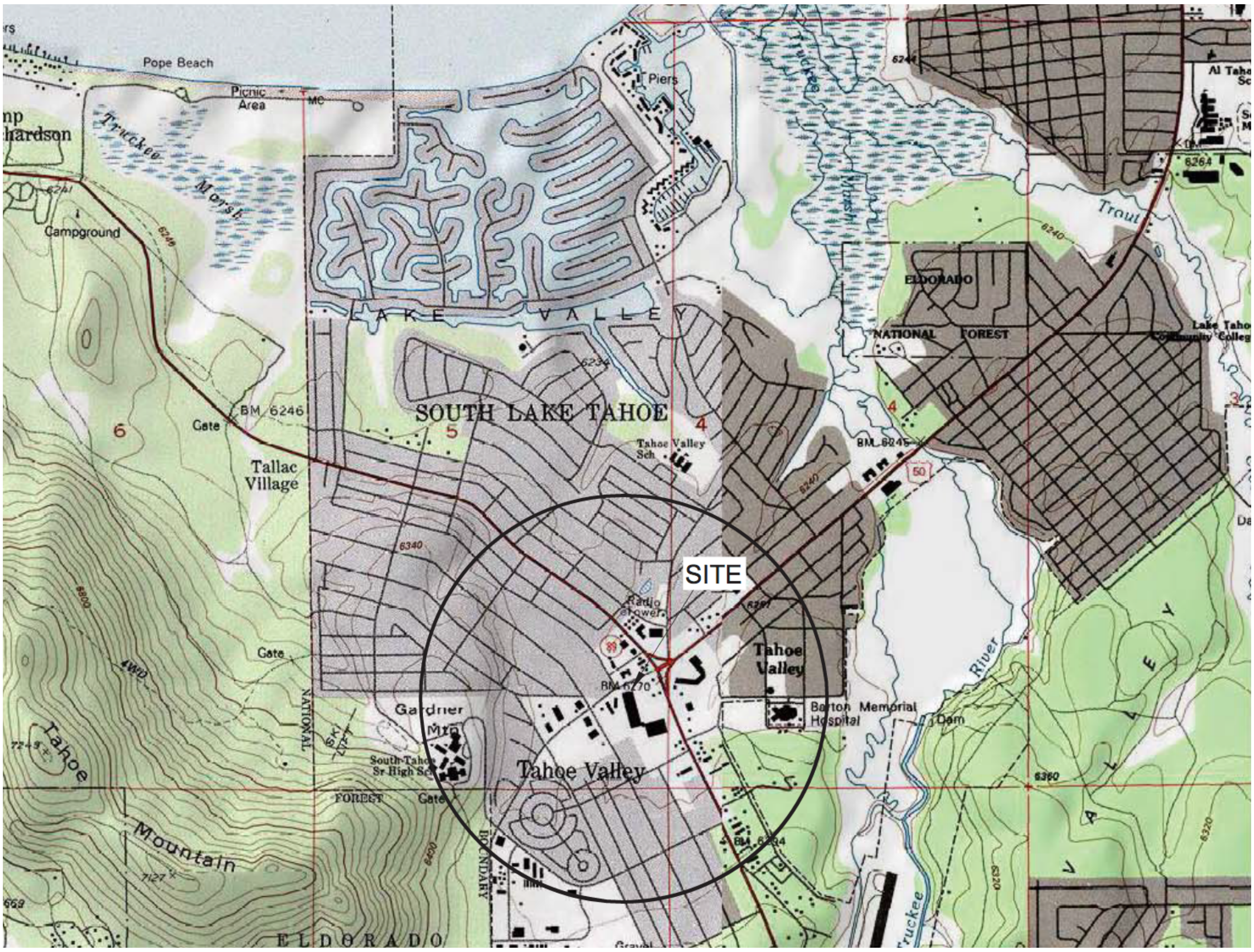
It’s not just a remodel, it’s a whole new building. The 40-year-old structure is being taken down and by September the new restaurant should be open.

From the outside the facade is intended to have a more Tahoe feel. An additional drive-through lane is designed to reduce the back up in the parking area. Emissions from idling vehicles is one reason the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency no longer allows new drive throughs. The two lanes will cut down on that idle time. To accommodate the two lanes the kids' play area will be a things of the past.

Bob Humason, who owns both McDonald's franchises in town, is allowing most of the Y employees to work at the restaurant on the edge of Linear Park for the summer.

— Lake Tahoe News staff report

Lahontan demands solution to toxic plume in SLT



The circle represents the known area of the PCE plume in South Lake Tahoe. Image/LRWQCB

By Kathryn Reed

After decades of a toxic plume percolating underground near the Y in South Lake Tahoe, the state has set hard deadlines for the responsible parties to do something about the situation.

Tetrachloroethylene, or PCE, has adversely affected the drinking water in the area, necessitating that wells belonging to Tahoe Key Water Company and Lukins Brothers Water Company be taken off line. Lukins and the Keys water systems are building filtration units to treat their water so the inactive wells can be put back into service.

Research shows the chemicals were released from the Lake Tahoe Laundry Works, which was located at the Y in the Raley's center. That is a known source for PCE contamination and had originally been thought to be the source of the plumes below TJ Maxx and Classic Cue. PCE at the Y was first detected in 1989. Since then more than one PCE plume has been found.

PCE was a commonly used chemical in dry cleaning and automotive businesses. California in 2008 banned new PCE machines. And all such machines are to be out of commission by 2023. However, PCE will still be able to be used.

A letter dated May 12 was sent by Lahontan to Seven Springs Limited Partnership, Fox Capital Management Corporation, Bobby Pages Inc., and Connolly Development Inc. Each has 75 days from that date to provide a work plan to Lahontan. There may be some back and forth to get to a work plan that is agreed to by the state agency and the four known responsible parties. Those four entities will then have 30 days to implement the plan.

"We are pleased to see that the cleanup and abatement order issued by the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board now recognizes that there is insufficient evidence to attribute the regional PCE plume in the South Lake Tahoe area solely to the former dry cleaner. Fox welcomes the regional board's desire to identify all of the contributing sources to the contamination, and to ask all responsible parties to address the associated environmental concerns," Scott Reisch, attorney representing Fox, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "A Fox predecessor was the general partner of a now-dissolved entity that formerly owned the site in the 1970s and early 1980s, while a dry cleaner operated at the site. Fox never owned or operated the property."

For the past eight years Fox has been working to remediate the PCE issue.

"What is new and different is they have never fully delineated the plume; where it begins and ends, that is their responsibility," Patty Kouyoumdjian, executive director of the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board, told *Lake Tahoe News.*

The depth and length of the plume will be determined in this new work plan that will be developed.

Kouyoumdjian said one outcome is to determine who is responsible for what. It may be that other parties not known today will be uncovered.

There has been disagreement among named parties and Lahontan about who is responsible, especially based on movement of the plume.

In an April 4 letter to Lahontan from PES Environmental, an engineering and environmental services firm representing Seven Springs and Fox, it criticizes the water board for dismissing studies without reason, and questions its findings. The two sides can't even agree on which direction groundwater flows from the old laundry site. PES contends the data show there are multiple sources for PCE, not just the dry cleaners.

Lahontan plans to have a public meeting, possibly in June, to gather more input on the topic.

Getting the work plan in place should also open doors to funding sources, including from the State Water Board.

"This is an important step forward to deal with the regional plume and finding a final cleanup plan for the entire plume and make sure we protect our drinking water resources that are precious," Kouyoumdjian said.

Until further tests are done it's not immediately known how the heavy winter snowfall and subsequent rising of the groundwater table may have impacted the plume.

Opinion: Calif. should pay down its CalPERS obligation

By John Moorlach

Gov. Jerry Brown wants to prepay the California Public Employees Retirement System (CalPERS) with $6 billion beyond what most had expected.

The source of the funds is the Surplus Money Investment Fund. Don't ask me why a state with a $169 billion unrestricted net deficit has some $50 billion in a low interest bearing account with such an odd title. Perhaps the University of California chancellor can explain how her system and the state can better pull these things off?

Also, don't ask me why the timing is so odd. The Legislature just approved an annual $5.2 billion gas and auto tax increase, and now the governor has $6 billion for non-road repair expenditures?

Despite these concerns and anxieties, I like the proposal. It's about time that the governor got serious about the state's spiraling unfunded defined benefit liabilities, but, I would postulate that this proposal needs a little more sizzle to make it an even more interesting opportunity.

Let's address the cash flow components of this idea. The state currently has funds that are earning less than 1 percent per year. Paying down a 7.5 percent loan would provide a bigger bang for the buck. The spread of more than 6.5 percent will provide significant savings to the state's general fund.

It's true that whatever is deposited into a defined benefit pension plan by a plan sponsor is irretrievable. That is, it’s not a loan to CalPERS, it’s a payment. Once it goes in, the state cannot ask for it back. But, this will be a prepayment. Consequently, should the state have a cash flow emergency, it could simply stop making the regularly scheduled payments into CalPERS and slowly accumulate back this advancement.

The upside? The state gets to pay down its liabilities sooner, which will have the potential of reducing the annual required contributions in future years. The state obtains the 6.5 percent spread in savings. CalPERS can allocate the funding to meet its own cash flow needs and reduce transaction costs by doing it in bulk. The state wins. The taxpayers will win. And CalPERS wins.

What could go wrong? For the answer to this question, you should ask former New Jersey Gov. Christine Todd Whitman. In 1997, she issued $3.4 billion in pension obligation bonds. This is a risky technique that converts a soft debt to the pension system into a hard debt to bondholders.

The idea is similar to Brown’s proposal, in that the cost of the money is cheaper than the current 7.5 percent investment assumption rate of the plan. In the late 1990s, this may have been a brilliant move. But, when the dot com boom turned to bust, pension plans lost a significant amount of plan funds invested in the internet-related industries.

The big risk the governor will have to face is the possibility that the investment markets may tank after making the contribution prepayment. Remember, if you lose 50 percent on your investments this year, you have to earn 100 percent next year just to break even on your principal. Will Rogers put it best, “I am not so much concerned with the return on capital as I am with the return of capital.”

It’s not a good idea to time the market. It’s better to dollar-cost average, which means investing the same amount at regular intervals over time.

We cannot see the future. It’s obvious that CalPERS cannot, based on their recent repositioning out of certain equity markets last September, which has cost it more than $900 million in lost appreciation. It makes one wonder if they were concerned about Hillary Clinton winning the November election. Had they assumed that Donald Trump was going to win, and held firm, they would have earned nearly 17 percent on equities since the presidential election.

Had Brown recommended this prepayment move last year, he would be a hero right now. So, he has to determine how serious he is about claiming a recession is around the corner.

To make the proposal more interesting, Brown should ask the board of CalPERS what type of incentive they will give the state for the prepayment. CalPERS will benefit from the large influx and should provide at least a 3.75 percent reduction on the actuarially calculated required contribution. This would provide a $225 million savings to the state, using the $6 billion figure, thus providing some sizzle.

Investing is not difficult, but it is also not for the faint of heart. You have to live with your decisions. Trust me, I managed a $7 billion portfolio and sat on the board of one of the nation’s largest public employee pension systems.

While serving as the treasurer of Orange County, I assisted in constructing a prepayment vehicle for the pension system. Instead of 26 regular payments during the year on biweekly pay days, the county paid the full amount up front, less the negotiated incentive. The county borrowed the funds, at an interest rate lower than the investment assumption rate of the retirement system and has realized about $100 million in net present value savings over the last 11 years.

How did the county do with its investments over this time period, with the change in the regular payment intervals? It actually outperformed what would have occurred under the normal protocol.

We should always remember that past performance is not an assurance that future performance will be the same or better. But, prepaying CalPERS's massive obligations is something that should be strongly encouraged. Pension plan debt is an expensive liability in the current low-interest rate environment. Consequently, public employee retirement stakeholders should enter into a good debate on this proposal.

I see nearly $400 million in opportunity savings by taking low to no earning funds and paying down a 7.5 percent loan. I see the plan more efficiently investing the $6 billion. And I see lower plan contributions as the unfunded actuarial accrued liability is reduced. Those are strong arguments.

I would encourage the governor to move forward with his proposal. But, I would also tell him to get more sizzle to the deal by negotiating with the CalPERS board before writing the check. And, if he is concerned about market volatility, he may want to encourage the board to consider allocating the funds toward fixed income investments that provide income commensurate with the investment assumption rate.

If the governor is really serious about the state's pension plan liabilities, he would figure out how to increase the annual contributions to CalPERS by $6 billion every year, even if it has to come out of the general fund. Doing anything else is only deluding everyone about the seriousness of this rapidly growing and all-consuming obligation.

Thanks for thinking outside the box, governor. Now, take it to the next level.

State Sen. John Moorlach, R-Costa Mesa, represents the 37th Senate District.

Why potlucks are starting to get political

By Kristin Donnelly, Taste

A new generation of chefs and activists are using dinner parties to help refugees and immigrants affected by the election.
It’s dark when we arrive outside the Hopewell Presbyterian Church in Hopewell, N.J., so I follow the burly guy carrying a foil pan of fried turkey. In front of us is a parade of other guests—each carting a covered platter, a vintage Pyrex casserole dish, a slow cooker, or more foil trays. As I enter, the unmistakable odor of church basement hits me along with the Thanksgiving-like smell of the crisped turkey skin.

My husband and I know none of the people around us, but we are here to support Interfaith-RISE, a 1-year-old New Jersey–based organization devoted to helping settle newly arrived refugees. Like many businesses and organizations operating in the aftermath of the election, this one had decided to use communal dining to support the people most affected by tenuous immigration policies.

The event’s focus is more humanitarian than political, but of course my tablemates and I can’t avoid discussing the election that rocked all of our world views. The conversations are similar to those I have with friends daily: We discuss the fears we have and what new policies might mean for immigrants, the environment, racial justice, public education, and the growing wealth gap.

Read the whole story

Poet to give talk, workshop at LTCC

The Writers' Series at Lake Tahoe Community College will host poet and writer Camille T. Dungy on June 15 at 7pm in the board room.
Dungy will sign copies of her books, which will be for sale at the event, along with answering questions.

Dungy is the author of four collections of poetry: "Trophic Cascade" (Wesleyan UP, 2017), "Smith Blue" (Southern Illinois UP, 2011), "Suck on the Marrow" (Red Hen Press, 2010), and "What to Eat, What to Drink, What to Leave for Poison "(Red Hen Press, 2006).

Dungy's honors include an American Book Award, two Northern California Book Awards, two NAACP Image Award nominations, and a California Book Award silver medal. She is currently a professor in the English Department at Colorado State University.

Dungy will also lead a writing workshop June 16 from 9am-noon in the Aspen Room. This workshop is free to LTCC students, and to students enrolled at South Tahoe High School and Sierra Nevada College. Students must show a valid school ID on the day of the workshop. For all others, the fee is $50 with proceeds going to the LTCC Foundation.

A massive die-off coming for California fish?

By Ryan Sabalow, Sacramento Bee

Researchers have issued a dire warning for California's native trout and salmon: Three-quarters of them will be extinct in the next 100 years unless urgent action is taken.

This bleak assessment came Tuesday from biologists at the UC Davis Center for Watershed Sciences and from California Trout, a nonprofit advocacy group. In a new report, the groups said nearly 75 percent of California's 31 salmon, trout and steelhead will be extinct by 2117 unless critical habitat is protected and restored.

The report follows up on the groups' 2008 assessment that established a baseline level of health for each type of native fish. The researchers said that almost all of the fish are worse off than they were a decade ago. California's record-breaking drought that officially ended this winter wreaked havoc on many of the already-struggling fish, which depend on cold water.

Read the whole story

TAMBA launching season with all-ages party

TAMBA's spring party is May 19 at Heavenly Mountain Resort's California Lodge.

It is free and family friendly.

All the trail projects for the season will be talked about.happening this year. There will be info on upcoming projects including Corral, Valley View, Angora and Fallen Leaf Lake, Bijou Bike Park, Belli, Tamarak, Burton Creek SP and more.

Plus, there will be a bike film, raffle, membership drive, and Heavenly will be putting on a full spread pasta dinner. It all starts at 6pm.

Snapshot Day to monitor Lake Tahoe area water

Approximately a hundred community members will collect water quality samples from dozens of South Shore tributaries on May 20 as part of Snapshot Day, an annual citizen science monitoring event now in its 17th year.

Community members will gather at Lake Tahoe Community College at 9am to receive training before dispersing to assigned monitoring sites at South Tahoe locations at the lake, rivers and streams. Breakfast will be provided by Grass Roots and Starbucks, and a free lunch will be provided to all volunteers.

No prior experience is needed.

Learn more and RSVP **online.**

For information on Snapshot Day activities on the North Shore or in the Truckee or Reno areas, go **online**.