

Flood concerns with release of Tahoe water

Release of water from Lake Tahoe at the dam in Tahoe City has led to a flood warning by the National Weather Service in Reno.

The warning is in effect through May 2 for sections of the Truckee River in Placer, Nevada and Washoe counties.

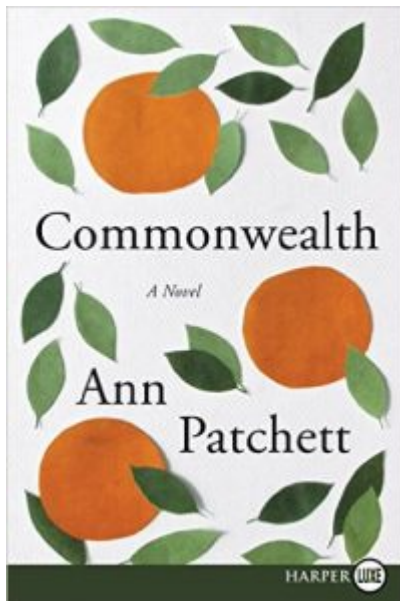
The weather service expects the flow on the Truckee River near the dam to be highest since February 1999.

As the snow melts at the higher elevations and fills Lake Tahoe, more water will be released. The high flows on the river could last well into the summer, according to officials.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Book review: Complicated pull of family delivers

By Kim Wyatt



"Commonwealth"

By Ann Patchett

HarperLuxe, 464 pages

One-line review: Dreamy scenes and strong characters illuminate family, human nature and how we become who we are.

In Ann Patchett's sixth novel "Commonwealth," a blended family struggles to survive marriage and childhood and make sense of it. The commonwealth in the title doesn't refer to a nation or state, but to the family as a political unit with factions and truces and ceasefires and surrender. A skilled storyteller, Patchett lays honest sentences one on top of another making scenes that unfurl like flowers. I would recommend this book for the opening scene alone, in which adult desires shoot through a baby's christening party like a bullet. Children and adults mingle until the ever-present Southern California oranges are juiced for cocktails and poured into small paper cups that kick the story into motion for generations to come.

Patchett is a compassionate author: She understands people and finds them mostly good, sometimes funny and often complicated.

Parenting isn't always easy. On a car trip, one young child's annoying personality "fills the car like mustard gas." Parents neglect to cut down an orange tree that fills with bees each spring, even though the son is allergic. Siblings give Benadryl to the youngest so he will go to sleep and they don't have to watch him; it is these same siblings who later in life provide each other the greatest comfort.

The book begins in the 1960s and spans fifty years. The six step-siblings are shuttled back and forth between California and Virginia, and they display resiliency in varying degrees. The greatest pleasure in its pages comes through the interactions of the children—how they withhold, forgive and surprise each other over time. A nonlinear structure enhances the complicated pull of family, mimicking the film that nostalgia lays over memories—we don't always remember things in order, nor do we recall events the same way. We do, however, remember the sting of emotions, and that is what drives this family to resolution.

The oranges resurface with a tragedy befalling the oldest child. Although this was handled in another one of Patchett's dreamy extended scenes, one false note got me wondering about the efficacy and half life of a certain drug, but wasn't enough to keep me from finishing. (And what would Chekov say of the gun that may or may not go off?)

"Commonwealth" will make you think of your childhood—the wondrous and the horrifying, the generosity and the missteps. After reading, I wanted to see my flawed but loving family and give each of them a hug. A neat trick from a seasoned author, and a satisfying read.

Kim Wyatt is the owner of the independent press Bona Fide Books in Meyers.

Art exhibit embraces Mental Health Awareness Month

Participants in El Dorado County wellness center programs will have a chance to show off their artistic skills in the Each Mind Matters art exhibit hosted by the Tahoe Art League.

The exhibit will take place at Lake Tahoe Community College May 1-5, in recognition of Mental Health Awareness Month.

The art that will be on display has been created through Art Angels, a program of the Tahoe Art League. Each Friday Charisse Sotto, a volunteer with TAL, teaches wellness center participants various techniques in artistic expression. Funded by the El Dorado Community Foundation and Barton Foundation, the program not only develops artistic skills, but also allows participants to focus on a positive, creative process that builds confidence and pride in their accomplishments.

The exhibit will be a juried event with renowned local artist and Lake Tahoe Community College art director Phyllis Shafer serving as jurist.

A public artists' reception and awards ceremony will be May 1 starting at 6:30pm in the commons area of the college.

TTD develops road map for

functional transit



Reliable, coordinated transit is not something the Lake Tahoe Basin is known for. Photo/LTN

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – Transit is about getting people where they want to go, providing choices and creating connections.

That is what Tahoe Transportation District is striving for in the basin and beyond.

Carl Hasty, the bi-state agency's leader, on April 26 talked to the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's Governing Board about the Lake Tahoe Basin Transit Master Plan. It is a multi-year plan with short- and long-term goals.

"The vision here really means we are going to see buses everywhere," Hasty said.

Transit operators know that just putting buses into the mix and having them stopped in traffic is not solving the problem. Removing individual vehicles from the roads will lessen congestion. Those people, though, need to be able to rely on transit. Today, that is not possible.

The ultimate goal is bus service every 15 minutes.

Today 1.4 percent of road trips in the basin are via transit. The most aggressive planning scenario has the percentage growing to 20. That is projected to remove more than 7 million auto trips a year. Benefits would include having fewer vehicles on the road, and less emissions – a boon for air and water quality. The net operating cost to do is estimated to be more than \$13.6 million a year.

Before all those new buses are ordered (once the money is in hand to do so) transit officials need to figure out where they will be housed, along with where to set up maintenance and fueling locations. Space is tight for the current operations in the basin.

The board appeared to be in consensus that the tourist should be footing the bulk of the transit bill. How exactly remains to be seen. Toll roads and taxes of some kind are potential outcomes.

Hasty said it's likely federal transit dollars will be dramatically cut in the Trump administration's "skinny" budget.

Layers of service are what's needed to accommodate locals and the influx of tourists. And then it's adapting to the different tourists – their activities and desired destinations. It also means keeping an eye on points west and east in regards to people coming to the basin in hopes that down the road an even broader public transit system could be coordinated with one that is focused on the Tahoe-Truckee areas.

“It needs to be seamless to the public. They don’t care as long as it gets them to where they want to go and it’s safe,” Hasty said.

Hasty didn’t mince words in stating it’s time to realize parking – the lack of it – is one of Tahoe’s major problems. People park on highways, clog trailheads and creates dangerous situations. Much of the parking in the basin is on private property. Public parking is what’s needed.

Mobility hubs is the newest catch phrase. It’s a place to connect people to transit, as well as bike-foot paths. TTD staff has plotted out where they might be located.

Editorial: Don’t mess with national monuments

Publisher’s note: *This editorial is from the April 26, 2017, Sacramento Bee.*

Donald Trump is all about states’ rights – that is until it comes to California and its national monuments.

On Wednesday, the president signed a potentially disastrous executive order, directing Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke to review the status of 24 federally protected swathes of land and water. Although we won’t know much more until this summer, the order could lead to the reduction or even elimination of monuments designated by three previous presidents.

On the potential chopping block is Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument, a spectacular stretch of wilderness about 100 miles north of Sacramento. Monuments on Trump’s list also

include Giant Sequoia, Sand to Snow, Carrizo Plain, World War II Valor in the Pacific and Mojave Trails.

Read the whole story

Trump: National monuments a 'massive federal land grab'

By Darlene Superville and Jill Colvin, AP

WASHINGTON — Slamming what he called “a massive federal land grab,” President Donald Trump signed an executive order Wednesday directing his interior secretary to review the designation of dozens of national monuments on federal lands.

The action could upend protections put in place in Utah and other states under The Antiquities Act of 1906, which authorizes the president to declare federal lands as monuments and restrict how the lands can be used.

The president’s order covered national monuments in California and Nevada.

Read the whole story

Recognition to locals making

Tahoe a better place

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency on April 26 gave Lake Spirit Awards to four people who have shown exceptional commitment to protecting Lake Tahoe by fostering a spirit of collaboration in their work and volunteer time.

This year's winners are:

Exemplary Citizen North Shore: Karen Mullen-Ehly retired from a career with Washoe County Parks to bring her “get-it-done” attitude to numerous projects at Lake Tahoe, according to Tahoe Fund CEO Amy Berry, who nominated Mullen-Ehly.

South Shore: Karen Fink was a founding member of the Lake Tahoe Bicycle Coalition, and continues to work on improving transportation and biking, as well as the amount of affordable housing at Lake Tahoe. She was the inspiration behind parents’ group Small World to engage busy parents to create a more peaceful, sustainable planet for all children, according to Rebecca Bryson, who nominated Fink.

Agency Representative/Environmental Scientist North Shore: Forest Schafer has worked for the North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District since 2003, working his way up from wildland firefighter to the district’s forester. Among his many responsibilities, Schafer serves as the incident commander for the Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team, which coordinates fuel reduction, fire prevention, and community engagement for 18 local, state, and federal entities in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

South Shore: Nicole Cartwright has been a part of Lake Tahoe’s Aquatic Invasive Species Program since it began in 2007 and has helped build it from a volunteer program into the “gold standard for prevention,” according to TRPA Aquatic Resources Program Manager Dennis Zabaglo, who nominated Cartwright.

Stateline casinos down, statewide revenues are up

While overall Nevada casinos posted higher revenues in March compared to 2016, Stateline casinos went in the other direction.

On the South Shore the \$16.7 million win was 2.3 percent less than a year ago.

The Nevada Gaming Control Board released the numbers on April 26.

Statewide, casinos reported taking in \$991 million in March, 7.4 percent year-over-year gain.

For the first quarter of 2017, the numbers are higher for the state and Stateline compared to 2016.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Full cost of Calif. drought still being tallied

By Dale Kasler, Sacramento Bee

Californians paid for the drought in many ways. Homeowners saw their water rates rise. Farmers sacrificed revenue when they

idled fields.

And practically everyone spent more on electricity.

Californians' electricity costs jumped by a combined \$2.45 billion from 2012 to 2016 because of severe shortages of cheap hydroelectricity, according to an estimate released Wednesday by the Pacific Institute, an Oakland water policy think tank. The hydro shortage was one of the little-known effects of the just-concluded drought, said the study's author and institute's president emeritus, Peter Gleick.

Read the whole story

Spooner chase ends in arrest, 3 vehicles damaged

A South Lake Tahoe man on Wednesday morning led Nevada Highway Patrol officers on a high-speed chase over Spooner Summit that ended with the driver crashing and going to jail.

Jesus Herrarea-Casas was arrested on charges of eluding police, reckless driving, disregard for traffic control devices, speeding, and driving without a valid license. He may also be charged with driving under the influence pending test results.

Troopers tried to stop Herrarea-Casas about 7am April 26 west of Spooner Summit. However, he continued east on Highway 50 toward Carson City.

"The speeds reached dangerous levels and the driver's actions were extremely dangerous to the public. Spike strips were deployed half way down Spooner and several of the vehicles

tires were punctured,” troopers said in a statement. “Despite having flat tires, the vehicle continued and headed north down Carson Street. “Nevada Highway Patrol troopers forced the vehicle to crash to end the danger to the public.”

Two NHP vehicles were damaged during the incident.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*