

How to get out of paying hotel resort fees

By Juliana Shallcross, Frommers

Resort fees can be the ultimate buzzkill during your hard-earned vacation.

Spending an additional \$20 to \$30 per night, plus tax, can cancel out whatever good vibes you picked up while relaxing at the pool, especially if the charge covers amenities and services that were once included in the room rate, such as newspapers, in-room coffee, and use of the fitness center.

But it's even more irksome to pay for amenities you'll likely never need, like fax copies or a notary service.

While many hotels claim their resort fees are mandatory, that's not true. Guests can take a stand against paying resort surcharges.

Read the whole story

Swaps help the West manage water

By Zack Colman, Christian Science Monitor

When a market for trading water rights opened in central Nebraska last year, one of the initial bidders wasn't a corn farmer, or even a water user at all in the traditional sense. It was the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program, a

conservation group investing to replenish the region's major river, the Platte.

By buying some water and then not using it, the group is allowing more to stay in the river.

The move bucked tradition, for sure. Typically, water rights aren't traded at all or they are swapped among farmers. But the West may be at the dawn of a new era in water management.

Markets for water trading are on the rise, backed by many conservationists and farmers alike. They say there's a major opportunity here if done right – the chance to make the most of a precious resource.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- The South Lake Tahoe swimming pool will be closed March 15 from 11:30am-4:30pm for a high school meet.
- The Loft in South Lake Tahoe is hosing the Darcie Kent five-course wine pairing dinner on April 5. The \$79 tickets are available **online**.
- The inaugural Tahoe Truckee Unified School District state of the district address will be March 30 at 5:30pm in the Palisades Ballroom at the Village at Squaw Valley.
- It's suggested that people with snow on their roofs should remove it. A snow rake can help.

State of Jefferson proponents to meet in EDC

The El Dorado County State of Jefferson is having an informational town hall on March 25 at 4pm at the Pollock Pines-Camino Community Hall, 2675 Sanders Drive, Pollock Pines.

Mike Thomas of Placerville will be the guest speaker

El Dorado County is one of 21 rural counties seeking fair/equal representation in the Legislature. Los Angeles County has 15 state senators representing its citizens, while El Dorado County and 10 other counties located in the northern region of the state only have one senator.

The Jefferson formation movement is not looking to secede from the United States, and totally opposes the effort by Calexit to do just that.

SLT Knights Inn-Whole Foods project resurrected

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe officials are expected to sign a deal Tuesday that would raze the dilapidated Knights Inn motel that fronts Highway 50, and replace it with a Whole Foods 365 and other retail establishments.

On Monday morning, Pradip Patel, who owns the Knights Inn, signed an agreement to sell his property to the city of South Lake Tahoe for \$5.935 million. The appraisal came in on March 10 for that amount.

The City Council will have a special meeting March 14 at 4pm to accept the deal.

The goal is to dramatically enhance this highly visible area of the city. By June the 110-room motel and other associated structures are expected to be demolished. Construction could begin in late summer on the new buildings, with people potentially able to shop at the grocery store by spring 2019.

The store will be at least 25,000-square-feet. The Austin, Texas-based chain has been gradually opening more of these smaller concept stores. "The stores will feature a simple, affordable and convenient shopping experience that offers the high quality standards that Whole Foods Market pioneered," Whole Foods said in a press release.

The company entered into a lease agreement in November for the South Lake Tahoe store. Details have not been disclosed.



This is an example of the architecture Whole Foods uses. Rendering/Provided Funding details:

- *\$4 million from Halferty to the city for the*

developable portions of the Knights Inn property

- \$1.1 million from Halferty to the city for the southwest corner*
- \$800,000 from Placer County to the city for TAUs*
- \$800,000 from CTC to the city to study the upper watershed for restoration*
- \$3 million from CTC money is possible on March 16.*
- \$750,000 for demolition to be paid from the city's reserves. This could be recovered by selling the remaining 42 TAUs and the residential unit which together should net \$650,000.*

Environmentally, it's possible thousands of pounds of sediment will no longer reach Lake Tahoe each year. The entire 850-acre Bijou Park Creek Watershed will be studied for potential restoration.

The California Environmental Quality Act document regarding the project should be released in a matter of weeks, with completion in the next few months.

Analysis of the upper watershed area will be phase 2 of the project. That should be completed in 18 to 24 months. Improvement projects will be phase 3.

The city will sell the developable rights from Knights Inn to Halferty Development of Southern California. This is the company that is in escrow to buy the southwest corner at Highway 50 and Ski Run Boulevard that is adjacent to the

Knights Inn property.

The two properties will be linked by a bridge. They will share parking. Parking is also available at the garage on Ski Run.

The structure on the corner will be single-story with various storefronts-restaurants of about 5,000-square-feet in size.

The city will retain what is described as a mote-like section where the environmental improvements are planned. A creek used to run in this area, but was paved over years ago. The plan is to bring it to the surface again.

All of this water that runs through the property is why the motel would flood each year. About 20 percent of the rooms have been damaged this winter.

This project has been on the books for years. It had fallen off the tracks for various reasons, but now all the parties are on board. Besides Patel and the city, this includes the California Tahoe Conservancy and Placer County.

Patel did not return a phone call.



The area in green represents the property the city is buying from Pradip Patel, while the gold is the “southwest corner” at Ski Run and Highway 50. Map/South Lake Tahoe

CTC is involved because it could be a major funding partner, plus it has neighboring properties that would be impacted by the environmental improvements. That state agency’s board meets Thursday. Money could be allocated then; which city officials will be advocating for. If funding is not forthcoming, some of these environmental improvements may not be realized.

Patrick Wright, CTC executive director, told *Lake Tahoe News* he would have answers to questions at the March 16 meeting.

Placer County at a meeting in April is expected to OK the purchase the 64 tourist accommodation units for \$800,000. Placer needs these TAUs for a lodging property in its jurisdiction.

“This project should demonstrate why it is so difficult to redevelop projects that both benefit the environment and the economy,” City Manager Nancy Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News*. “Regulations are so complex that it has taken government four years to solve its own issues.”

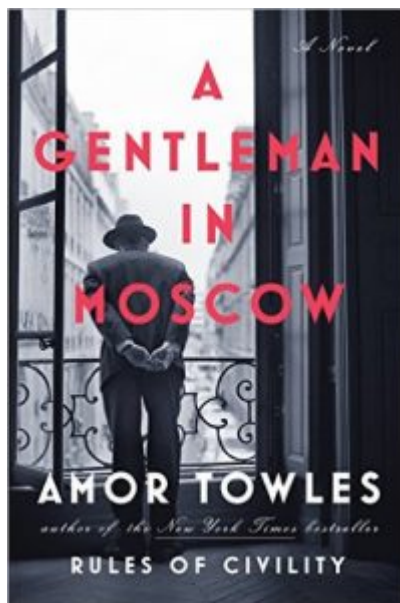
She said it is near impossible for developers to navigate their way through the maze of regulations in the Lake Tahoe Basin. This is why few choose to do business here. Kerry praised Halferty for staying in the game this long.

The roller coaster ride this project has been on clearly proves the system is broken even though in the end the paperwork will be signed for the project to be developed.

One-line book reviews: Immigrants find their way in 3 novels

By Kim Wyatt

What makes one leave his or her home? What makes one stay? Three novels convey powerfully the effects in our lives of borders created by political forces and those we create in our own minds.



"A Gentleman in Moscow"

By Amor Towles

480 pages, Viking

An enchanting spell about Mother Russia cast in tumultuous times.

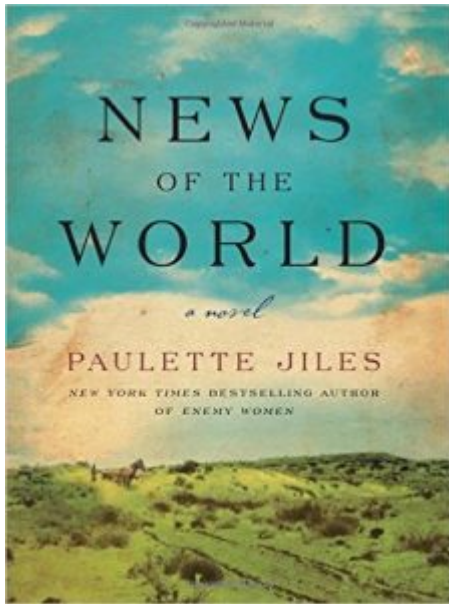
In 1922, Count Alexander Ilyich Rostov received a life sentence for writing a poem. An aristocrat, Rostov was sentenced by a Bolshevik tribunal to house arrest at the elegant Metropol Hotel near Red Square. A man of charm, wealth and wit, he accepts his fate and makes the best of it, while the Soviet machine presses on outside the gilded doors.

"A Gentleman in Moscow" is a sophisticated romp for those who like their entertainment full-bodied. History, love affairs and letters are steeped in humor, and word play, imagery, allusion, metaphor and simile are tropes on full display. I imagine a mustache-twirling narrator who, although melodramatic, is never condescending to a captivating cast of characters: a smart seamstress, temperamental chef, seductive actress and earnest writers, naturally, add dimension and verve to this charming novel. Punctuation, at this time in Russia, matters: Union meetings turn into melees over word choice, exclamation points issue from cannons, and treatise hang on a comma—this is a world I understand and adore, and made me laugh out loud.

The count's friendship with a little girl, Nina, an occasional prisoner in the hotel due to her father's travel, is the spark that fires up the story and leads to its somewhat satisfying resolution. Occasionally, I wondered why the count never left the hotel; but the world within was so elegantly rendered, I might just stay myself to enjoy a 1912 San Lorenzo Barolo rather than battle Siberian snow.

The winter equivalent of a beach book, "A Gentleman in Moscow" is best read by the fire, wrapped in a blanket, where you can effortlessly slip into the count's world, a magnificent hotel protected as if inside a perfectly lovely snow globe while

Russia revolts just outside the glass.



“News of the World”

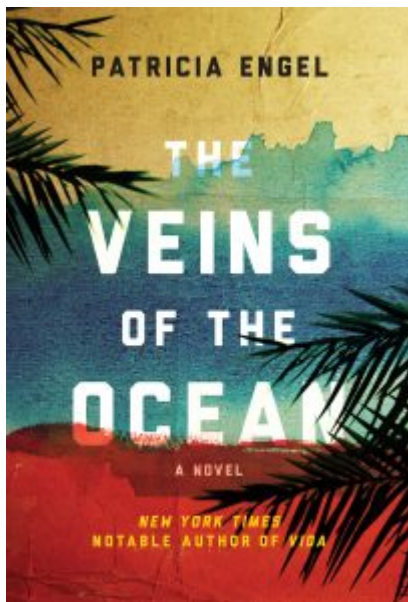
Paulette Jiles

224 pages; William Morrow

A fast-moving feminist Western that literally turns on a dime.

About one third of the way through “News of the World” by Paulette Jiles I said to my husband, “I’m reading a western!” This National Book Award finalist is the story of Capt. Jefferson Kyle Kidd, a Civil War veteran who travels through northern Texas in 1870, giving live readings from newspapers to audiences hungry for news of the world. Many people are illiterate, or don’t have access to newspapers and are eager to hear what is transpiring in New York, Europe or on the roads leading into town, where ambushes are common. On one

stop, Kidd is offered a \$50 gold piece to return a young girl whose parents had been killed by Kiowa Indians to her family home in south Texas. Johanna, now 10 years old, had been raised by the Kiowa until her rescue by the Army. With reluctance on both parts, their treacherous journey begins. The return of the girl to her family is heart-wrenching, illuminating the life of female children on the plains and also the difficulty of assimilation after living with Native Americans. If you think you wouldn't like a story about a gun-toting curmudgeon and the return of an orphan to her blood family—not necessarily her best family—this book will put that to the test, showcasing the aftereffects of war, and what happens when we care for one another. I couldn't put it down.



"The Veins of the Ocean"

Patricia Engle

320 pages, Grove Press

A modern-day immigration story set in Florida and the Bermuda Triangle of family, hope and home.

What if you had the chance to start over? To break free from the shackles of family and place? Would you begin again, or remain in the past? After the death of her brother, Carlito, in Miami's South Glade Penitentiary, Columbian immigrant Reina Castillo finds herself in the Florida Keys. Reina has no hope for a better life; without her weekly visits to her brother and the grisly crimes that tether them, she is adrift. So it's fitting that she meets Nesto, a Cuban exile who is comfortable with the ocean—it is his lifeline to the wife and children who wait on the other side of the sea. Together, these two navigate the rocky shore toward redemption.

If you like complicated novels about the bonds of family, are beguiled by the strange beauty of Florida or intrigued by modern immigrant stories, consider "The Veins of the Ocean" by Patricia Engle. I was drawn in by the cadence of Reina's voice, her lens on the world, and her lack of pretense. There is a subplot involving the release of dolphins from a rickety theme park, a nod to Florida's complicated relationship with the environment, but the story is really about deliverance. When Reina meets Nesto, you have more hope for her than she has for herself. I wanted Reina to find happiness, but she has a lot to resolve, and her personal exploration, it turns out, is as deep as the sea.

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

March Madness raises sports

betting issues

By Richard N. Velotta, Las Vegas Review-Journal

March Madness is upon us, another time of the year when people who almost never set foot inside a race and sports book become sports experts and serious gamblers.

It was only a month ago that twice-a-year bettors showed their expertise on Super Bowl Sunday.

How significant is March Madness? It's big enough that both proponents and opponents of gambling point to it as an important symbol of their respective causes.

Read the whole story

Letter: Filipino community assists at B&B

To the community,

"The Filipino community would like to extend our sincerest gratitude to Bread & Broth for once again giving us the opportunity to be a part of their very important and heart-warming Adopt A Day program," commented Mila Seals.

Seals has been coordinating the AAD meals that the Filipino community has been sponsoring for the last four years.

With the help of 11 members of the Filipino community, a wonderful Filipino themed dinner was served to B&B's dinner guests at the March 6 Monday meal.

The evening's guests enjoyed sweet and sour pork ribs, honey mustard chicken, chow mien noodles, rice and broccoli with cheese, all prepared and cooked by the Filipino sponsor crew. This generous and hardworking sponsor crew out did themselves hosting the meal. In addition to cooking the tasty meal, they helped with the setup, serving and cleanup and were a joy to all who attended the dinner.

B&B would like to take this opportunity to thank Mila Seal, Myra Fajilan, Cecilia de Leon, Ador Manalili, Julie Fajayan, Nora Cabanero, Bogey Boyes, Sally Dasalla and Belma, Rudy, Mila, and Mercy Penollar. These wonderful members of the Filipino community donated their time and effort to helping others in need by serving a delicious and nutritious meal prepared from the heart.

To partner with B&B as a donor or sponsor, contact me at 530.542.2876 or carolsgerard@aol.com.

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth

Paul Simon to play at Harveys in June

Paul Simon is coming to Lake Tahoe this summer.

He will be performing as part of the Harveys Outdoor Concert Series on June 25.

Also coming to the South Shore this summer are: Rebelution (June 30), Sammy Hagar (July 2), Train (July 9), Third Eye Blind (July 16), Jack Johnson (July 28) and Slightly Stoopid (Aug. 4) .

Why everyone should take an avalanche course

By Abbie Barronian, Powder

I recently spent a weekend with 20 strangers in a classroom and on a couple slow, icy tours, clocking about five minutes of cruddy downhill skiing in the back country around Stevens Pass, Wash.

The AIARE Level One course is a pretty incredible way to spend a weekend.

Deciding to take an avalanche course can be tough for a lot of reasons. It's a sacrifice of precious free time, and it can be tough for folks working typical ski town jobs—waiting tables, bumping lifts, bartending—to get two and a half days off, period. It's a big expense, as much as some season passes.

For skiers new to the back country, it can be intimidating.

The thing is, anyone traveling in the backcountry should take an Avy 1. No matter your experience level, everyone—from avalanche safety professionals to casual snowshoers—can learn life-saving skills and science from the weekend-long intensive course.

Read the whole story