

Placer County to remove dead trees

Placer County plans to remove about 1,800 hazardous trees that could damage or destroy county infrastructure.

Supervisors approved the \$3.1 million project. The plan is to seek reimbursement through the California Disaster Assistance Act. This would be for 75 percent of the total expenditure.

The state has identified 10 counties that have been hard hit by tree mortality, with Placer being one of them.

The focus will be on trees that threaten roads, evacuation corridors, and other county infrastructure.

Nev. gaming officials among few to have seen Trump's tax returns



Donald Trump, sitting in the rear, on his way to a fund-raising dinner at Harrah's Lake Tahoe in August. Photo Copyright 2016 Carolyn E. Wright

By Chad Day and Jeff Horwitz, AP

While Donald Trump won't publicly release his income tax returns, the New York businessman has turned them over when it suited his needs – if he stood to make a profit, needed a loan or when a judge forced him.

Pennsylvania gaming regulators were given at least five years' worth and eight boxes full of Trump's tax documents. Nevada, Michigan, Missouri, Indiana and other state gaming officials also had access to multiple years of his returns. Large banks that lent Trump money over the years have also obtained Trump's returns.

One common thread ties all those who have seen the documents: They can't talk about them.

Such legal restrictions leave the public with only small glimpses into what Trump's taxes might hold.

In Monday night's debate, Democrat Hillary Clinton cited documents unearthed by reporters to question whether Trump doesn't want to release his tax returns because he has paid little or no federal income taxes.

Trump's response? "That makes me smart," a comment he disavowed just minutes after the debate. Asked by reporters if he had admitted to not paying federal income taxes, Trump said, "I didn't say that at all."

Clinton cited documents unearthed by Politico showing Trump didn't pay any federal income tax during at least two years in the early 1990s because he lost more money than he earned. Other documents show he also didn't pay any federal income taxes in 1978, 1979 and 1984.

Voters know little about Trump's more recent finances beyond his own self-reported estimations of his wealth and listings of his business interests.

In all cases reviewed by The Associated Press, each person, organization, company or government office that has seen Trump's tax returns is barred from discussing their full contents by professional or legal restrictions.

For example, employees of the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board could face criminal penalties if they leaked information from Trump's tax returns maintained in the board's electronic files, said board spokesman Doug Harbach.

When asked whether Trump had turned over any returns to the Missouri Gaming Commission, officials said they were barred by state law from saying what Trump turned over.

"I could not tell you whether we had them," said Edward Grewach, the commission's general counsel.

Responses like these leave the decision to publicly release the taxes solely with Trump, who has repeatedly refused. Trump has cited an IRS audit as his reason for withholding the information, but the IRS and tax experts have said an audit doesn't bar Trump from releasing his taxes. At the debate, Trump said he would release his returns – over what he described as his attorney's objections – only after Clinton

released roughly 30,000 emails she had deleted from her private server that she had deemed personal.

Earlier this month, Donald Trump Jr. gave a different reason why his father wouldn't release the returns: The American people would ask too many questions.

"He's got a 12,000-page tax return that would create . financial auditors out of every person in the country asking questions that would detract from (his father's) main message," the younger Trump told the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review.

Since 1976, every major party nominee has released the returns and Clinton has publicly released nearly 40 years' worth. Even Trump's running mate, Indiana Gov. Mike Pence, released 10 years of his tax returns.

Tax returns don't measure net worth, so they wouldn't verify whether Trump is worth the \$10 billion he says he is. But the returns would reveal how much Trump earned from his assets, helping someone work back to an approximation of his net worth.

Trump's own estimates of his income and net worth have previously been scrutinized by those who had access to his tax returns.

For a decade, Trump tangled with New York City authorities over his city tax bill, a battle first reported in June by journalist David Cay Johnson in The Daily Beast.

In Trump's 1984 tax filings, he said he had lost money during a time in which he had just completed Trump Tower and regularly boasted about the success of his business deals. Trump also declared that he was primarily a consultant that year, and that his consulting business had \$684,000 in business expenses and no income. He provided no receipts to justify the claimed expenses.

City tax authorities didn't buy it – and after Trump appealed his tax bill, they fought with him for the next 10 years. Trump lost and was ordered to pay the taxes on more than \$1 million in income.

Trump's multibillion-dollar fortune has been questioned by banks that demanded his tax returns before lending him money. Commercial lenders generally require both personal and business tax returns as part of a loan application, and Trump provided such information to North Fork Bank in 2004 and 2005.

Though the bank's evaluations aren't public, discussion of them in a later deposition of Trump revealed they were unflattering. The deposition was taken in a defamation lawsuit Trump filed against journalist Tim O'Brien, who wrote a book that questioned Trump's net worth. Trump lost the suit.

“(North Fork) concluded in their estimation that your net worth was actually \$1.2 billion instead of \$3.5 billion as you claimed. Are you aware of that?” asked O'Brien's attorney, Andrew Ceresney.

Trump said he had not known that, but dismissed the quality of the bank's opinion.

“The numbers are wrong,” he said.

North Fork wasn't alone in marking down Trump's net worth. Deutsche Bank also reviewed Trump's finances as of 2004, deeming him to be worth “give or take \$788 million,” Ceresney said in the deposition. The attorney did not say whether Deutsche Bank relied on Trump's tax return in its calculation.

Deutsche Bank declined to comment about its evaluation of Trump's worth, but the bank is required to keep customer information confidential by law. Capital One Bank – it bought North Fork in 2006 – did not respond to requests for comment by phone and email.

O'Brien did not respond to requests for comment, but in a story he wrote for Bloomberg, O'Brien said he was barred from discussing the contents of Trump's tax returns because they were produced under seal in the court case.

In addition to a suggestion of his worth, Trump's tax returns would reveal his charitable contributions. Despite boasting of sweeping generosity, the AP reported more than a year ago that there is little record of substantial personal philanthropy from Trump.

Trump has been dogged by questions about his personal giving and how his namesake foundation operates. The Washington Post has reported that Trump used donations given by others to pay for legal settlements, political contributions and even purchase portraits of himself.

Public disclosure would resolve many of these questions for voters.

A new Associated Press-GfK poll found that just under half of registered voters— 46 percent — say it is very important for candidates to release their tax returns, though Democrats were far more likely say it was very or extremely important than Republicans.

A recent Monmouth University poll also found that most Americans are aware that Trump has not released his tax returns, and just over half think it's because he is hiding something he does not want the public to know.

Mutt Strut benefits South Tahoe animal group

Animal Coalition of Tahoe's 12th annual Mutt Strut Poker Run will be Oct. 9.

The family-friendly event involves a little exercise with your pooch, poker, and an opportunity to win prizes.

The Mutt Strut will begin at the corner of Lake Tahoe Boulevard and Lakeview Avenue in South Lake Tahoe, with registration from 11-11:30am. Participants will pick playing cards at stops along a 1-mile route, hoping for the best poker hands.

The fun continues after the walk with a party at Timber Cove Beach featuring music, raffle drawings, and contests such as best trick, hot dog eating, and musical sit.

Poker hands may be purchased on site for \$10 each, or three hands for \$25. Those who purchase hands before Oct. 9 receive a free Mutt Strut T-shirt. Purchases may be made in advance at Pet Station (2205 Lake Tahoe Blvd.) or Bonanza Boot and Leather store located at the Chateau Shopping Center.

Multi-tasking machine keeps slots players in their seats

By Nicole Raz, Las Vegas Review-Journal

A one-stop gambling slot machine that allows players to book a sports bet or print a tax form was unveiled Monday at the

Global Gaming Expo.

JCM Global debuted the multi-tasking machine on the first day of G2E at the Sands Expo and Convention Center, showcasing a new technology that also has the capability to buy and redeem lottery tickets or enable real-time currency exchange, among other versatile uses – all without having players leave their seat.

“Why do we make people stand up and go across the room and find another room to go make a sports wager? Why do we send them off to go to the bingo hall? We make people do all these different things that people who like to play slot machines would like to do when they could do it from the same device,” said Tom Nieman, vice president of worldwide marketing at JCM global.

Read the whole story

Caesars strikes deal to end main unit's bankruptcy

By Tracy Rucinski, Reuters

Caesars Entertainment Corp said on Tuesday it has struck a crucial \$5 billion deal with most of its casino operating unit's creditors, resolving billions of dollars in legal claims and paving the subsidiary's way out of a costly bankruptcy.

The Las Vegas-based company's main operating unit, Caesars Entertainment Operating Co Inc, filed in January 2015 one of the most complex U.S. bankruptcies with \$18 billion of debt.

The restructuring has been embroiled in a sprawling web of litigation between some of Wall Street's most aggressive investors.

Caesars is the parent company of Harrah's Lake Tahoe and Harveys in Stateline.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- The 2017 Tahoe Tennis Classic at Zephyr Cove Tennis Club will be July 27-30.
- Sierra-at-Tahoe is installing four Vapur hydration stations on the mountain.
- There will be a town hall meeting Sept. 29 headed by the Keep Squaw True group regarding the proposed development of Squaw Valley. It will be from 6-8pm at Fairway Community Center, 330 Fairway Drive, Tahoe City.
- Sierra Nevada Alliance is leading a hike Oct. 15 at 10am along Sagehen Creek Trail in Tahoe City to see the fall colors and learn about local ecology. Cost is \$20 in advance and \$25 that day. For more info, email info@sierranevadaalliance.org.
- The California avalanche workshop is a preseason gathering to share knowledge, learn from the pros, and network. It's Oct. 15 at 9am in the theater at Lake Tahoe Community College. For more info or to buy the \$20 tickets, email reichel@ltcc.edu.

Undeveloped Chateau property in SLT sold

By Kathryn Reed

The remaining rebar and concrete at the Chateau site near the state line in South Lake Tahoe is going to be developed by a new owner in the near future.

Owens Financial out of Walnut Creek is selling about 8 acres of the undeveloped site, plus the parking structure to Kawana Holdings for \$42.5 million. Kawana is a Malaysia-based firm with offices in Corte Madera.

“Their plan was for immediate development of the property rather than hold it or try to do something else,” Bill Owens told *Lake Tahoe News*. That is why his company chose to go with Kawana. “Their intention is to build what has been approved.”

No one from Kawana could immediately be reached.

It is possible for Kawana to ask for revisions to the approved permit, but substantial changes would likely trigger environmental documents to be recirculated. That would cost hundreds of thousands of dollars and delay the project for years.

While a convention center, two hotels, retail and spa were planned for the 11-plus acre site, no one expects a convention center to see the light of day. When the now defunct Lake Tahoe Development Company first broke ground it was going to be a \$410 million project, with the city having control of the convention center.

Now the city has zero involvement at the site other than

permitting.

The sale is expected to go through no later than the end of March. This is contingent upon a tentative map being approved by South Lake Tahoe.

City officials have been in on some of the talks with Kawana, letting them know what is approved for the site, what could occur and the intricacies of commodities – the development rights policy the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency created that has backfired to make it even more difficult to get anything built in the basin.

For now, Owens Financial plans to remain the owner of the developed retail and the Zalanta condominiums that are under construction.

“We have a list of people who want to buy these units. We expect to get a number of contracts signed in the next month,” Owens said.

They should be finished in early 2017.

K's Kitchen: Summer squash on the barbecue

By Kathryn Reed

Even though the calendar says fall, there is still plenty of squash to be found.

Using different colors and varieties will make this dish look even better.

This recipe is an ideal side dish. It's light and flavorful. While I cooked it outside on the barbecue, it could easily be made in the oven. The broiler would probably work the best.

Definitely would chop the nuts – something I didn't do.



Summer Squash with Blue Cheese and Walnuts

$\frac{1}{2}$ C walnut halves

Kosher salt

Pepper

2 lbs mixed zucchini

$\frac{1}{4}$ C olive oil

1 tsp lemon zest

3 T fresh lemon juice

1 T honey

1 tsp thyme leaves

2 ounces blue cheese, crumbled

Toast walnuts on the grill or in the oven or in a pan on the stove. Then chop them.

Quarter the summer squash lengthwise. Ideally all of the

pieces will be about the same size.

In a large bowl, toss squash with 2 tablespoons olive oil and season with salt and pepper.

Grill all of the squash over moderately high heat, turning once until lightly seared.

In a small bowl whisk the lemon zest and juice with the honey, thyme and the remaining 2 tablespoons of olive oil; season with salt and pepper. Add the grilled squash and toss.

Serve squash with the crumbled blue cheese and toasted walnuts on top.

Palliative care a bridge to end of life care

By Susan Wood

Ask anyone who's been diagnosed with a terminal illness and they'll tell you in some ways their life stopped then.

There are things to deal with that become a full-time job for most people. This means arranging doctors' visits, dealing with insurance companies, receiving social assistance, learning the keys to transportation, getting referrals, conducting pain management and even tapping into mental health services.

All these duties and tactics require professional help because a clear head and undaunted resolve may not be the immediate reaction from a vulnerable person hearing the "c" word for the first time.

Palliative care, as it is called, is a fairly new discipline that demonstrates the evolution of health care. It's a full service realm that provides a little TLC and empowerment at the same time. The terminally ill don't have to feel like their life is over.

Instead, there's often a new character-building beginning that serves to inform the patient in ways that never before existed. And without the fear of the unknown and having an army of support, the patients' confidence is enhanced.

"It's very much a team approach to medicine," said Sherellen Gerhart, who returned to the Barton Health System to serve as the lead palliative care physician after working in the Bay Area. She had worked for Barton between 2007 and 2010 as a hospitalist.

"It's been my favorite place to work. I should have never left. I really missed being here," Gerhart told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Working at John Muir Medical Center in Walnut Creek comes with prestige, but job satisfaction and practicing your passion mean something to this practitioner. Gerhart may be characterized as an up-close-and-personal doctor who has leaned in her career toward wanting to work in geriatric care – not exactly the sexiest discipline of health, but rewarding nonetheless.

"The trend for medicine has focused on improving the quality of care, particularly in oncology, because it's so complicated," she said. "People find that when things are complicated, they don't get their needs met."

When palliative care does transform into hospice – which emphasizes comfort as one nears death, Barton has a long history of operating a department with that prognosis and mission in mind.

“End of life issues are difficult to talk about anyway,” Gerhart said. “And it’s time we recognize that patient suffering is not acceptable. We have to find processes to deal with that.”

Few locals may know this like Barton’s director of Home Health, Hospice and Palliative Care Barbara Kaufman.

Through the years, Kaufman has seen changes in health care moving toward more of a holistic approach in which care coordination is the general rule.

“With palliative care, we talk to the patient to find out what their goals of treatment are. This empowers the patient and family to understand the disease more,” she said. “And regardless of the need, we help guide and navigate them through the complex health care system.

“This is the most rewarding thing I’ve ever done in life – my true passion,” Kaufman said. “It’s quite humbling to be part of the process. For me personally, every patient has touched my life.”

So there’s something to be said for gaining wisdom from the terminally ill. They know how to cherish life when they feel theirs is getting away from them.

The difference is palliative care still provides hope. Hospice, to be summoned in the last months of one’s life, provides comfort in the surrender.

Palliative care and hospice are similar in philosophy.

“What separates the two is that palliative care can be delivered concurrently with other disease-modifying treatments and interventions in what some refer to as ‘curative’ care,” said Jon Radulovic, spokesman for the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization in Alexandria, Va. “In fact, anyone with a serious illness, regardless of life expectancy,

can receive palliative care.”

It often transitions into the need for hospice.

“There has been a growth in hospital-based palliative care programs over the past decade, which represents important progress made in caring for the whole person,” Radulovic told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Both disciplines have become extremely necessary in today’s world in which the call for a more seamless continuum of care from diagnosis of death is overwhelming.

Death and the threat thereof is such a major part of life with an aging population that a movement is now in place in which seriously ill patients are using a template to write a last letter while they’re healthy.

It’s called the Stanford Friends and Family Letter Project. The idea is for letter writers to complete seven life review tasks – acknowledging important people in their lives, remembering treasured moments, apologizing to those they may have hurt, forgiving those who have hurt them and saying thank you, I love you and goodbye.

The project featured this month in the New York Times highlighted many examples of people overcoming regret and professing true love.

Some are complex. Others are simple – including one from a man who wrote to his daughter: “I’m sorry that I wasn’t there when you were growing up.”

The project is catching on fast, according to the founder VJ Periyakoil.

“There are millions of Americans living with serious illness, and this number is expected to more than double over the next 25 years with the aging of the baby boomers. Most seriously ill people will spend some time in the hospital over the

course of their illness, and a majority of their time will be spent in their communities,” Director of the Center to Advance Palliative Care Diane Meier told *Lake Tahoe News* from her New York City office.

Meier has been on the forefront of the new discipline as the founder and director of the Hertzberg Palliative Care Institute from 1997-2011. She was named one of 20 people who make health care better in the United States by HealthLeaders Media 2010. Two years later, she was awarded the American Cancer Society’s medal of honor in recognition of her pioneering spirit.

The center where Meier works is devoted to increasing the number and quality of palliative care programs in the nation.

Barton Memorial Hospital in South Lake Tahoe opened its department a few months ago and has already started to accept patients. All patients seeking palliative care require a referral from a physician. They can be seen at the care center on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9am to 1pm. Hospital consultations will be provided by Gerhart and Allison Steinmetz, a doctor with Barton Family Medicine.

For more information, Gerhart will make a presentation on Oct. 31 called What is Palliative Care? The classes are slated from 1-3pm at Lake Tahoe Resort Hotel.

Letter: Elks Lodge takes turn at Bread & Broth

To the community,

Every Monday evening at St. Theresa Grace Hall, Bread & Broth serves hot, full-course, nutritious meals to everyone who stops by between 4-5:30pm. Everyone from the community is invited to join the dinner guests and engage in conversation while enjoying the wonderful meals prepared by the talented B&B cooks and served by the dedicated B&B setup-serving crews.

All of this is made possible by the generous donations of each Monday evening's Adopt A Day of Nourishment sponsor. On Sept. 5, the Tahoe-Douglas Elk Lodge No. 2670 hosted the AAD dinner by donating \$250 to cover the meal's costs and sending a sponsor volunteer crew to team to participate in the evening meal's preparation, serving and cleanup from 3-6pm.

Hosting their third Adopt A Day this year, the Tahoe-Douglas Elk Lodge was re-presented by the sponsor volunteer crew consisting of Karen and Jim Plamenig and Jeanne and Roger Barragan. As a regular sponsor volunteer at the Elk Lodge AAD dinners, Roger Barragan always states that "the Elks are always willing to help." Providing dinners to 350 to 400 people a year, is a big help to those dealing with hunger and B&B would like to thank the Tahoe-Douglas Elk Lodge No. 2670 for the many AAD sponsorships hosted by this very generous organization.

For more B&B information, contact me at 530.542.2876 or carolsgerard@aol.com.

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth