

Burning Man – now a 30-year tradition

By Jenny Kane, Reno Gazette-Journal

Burning Man was born 30 years ago as a bonfire beach party in San Francisco.

An 8-foot-tall wooden stick figure planted in the sand of Baker Beach, and the Golden Gate Bridge loomed in the background. Three dozen avant-garde souls surrounded the recycled lumber effigy as it burned, the attendees summoned by two vagabond comrades, Jerry James and Larry Harvey.

“It was like a second sun brought down to this earth, it was just ... it transfixed us, but ... that’s where the story begins, in fact. Because at the moment it was lit, everybody on that beach, north and south, came running,” Harvey would later say in a 1997 speech.

The burning of “the man” stuck, became an annual tradition and, after a few years, the free spirits traded sand for dust. They migrated to an ancient lake bed outside of the gun-toting, leave-me-alone, 200-person town of Gerlach in Northern Nevada. Over a bizarre three-decade evolution, the getaway would turn into Burning Man, a weeklong capital of nowhere inhabited by 70,000 fancy desert rats driven by mischief and mindfulness.

Read the whole story

Truckee, Placer County grapple with housing



Kings Beach opened an affordable housing complex in 2014. Photo/LTN

By Mayumi Elegado and Dave Zook, Moonshine Ink

Agreements and execution are different beasts, and sizable differences exist between the two. It could be said that nowhere is that distance greater than in the creation of affordable housing.

As home prices soared in the late 1990s and families found themselves priced out of the market, local agencies were pressured to find solutions. Prompted by government regulations, developers now are commonly required to incorporate affordable or employee housing as part of a project's overall scope, and specifics hinge on the individual requirements of the jurisdiction or county.

Within the last decade or so, the Truckee has established affordable housing regulations for development mitigation, and Placer County has had a workforce housing policy for more than 20 years, but for projects in Tahoe, it would be fair to say that implementation is still in the pilot phase.

While affordable housing has been built into the conditions of approval for more than a handful of development projects, the completion record for the affordable projects is mixed. Successful projects in the past 15 years have put at least 200 new affordable housing units on the ground, but many developers have fallen short of their finalized plans, and some have built nothing at all.

Meanwhile the resulting lack of beds affects the community daily: Waitlists for the few rent-controlled apartment complexes in the area sit hundreds deep.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Phyllis Shafer, chair of the art department at Lake Tahoe Community College, is having a solo exhibition at Stremmel Gallery in Reno from Nov. 3-Dec. 3. There will be an opening reception on Nov. 3, 5:30-7:30pm.

• The Carson Valley Inn is celebrating its 32nd birthday on Aug. 27 with a free performance by the Davisson Brothers Band at 7pm.

• Albert Rosa, a Holocaust survivor who received the Purple Heart, will speak Aug. 20 at Lake Tahoe Resort Hotel in South Lake Tahoe at 7pm. For more info, email info@jewishtahoe.com.

• On Oct. 1 at 11am, South Lake Tahoe Friends of the Library welcome Tahoe historian Mark McLaughlin as he talks

about his latest book, “Snowbound! Legendary Winters of the Tahoe Sierra”. It profiles the Top 10 snowiest winters since 1879, based on snowfall measured at Donner Pass. The talk is free at the library, 1000 Rufus Allen Blvd.

• On Oct. 15 at 10am, Peter Mires, historical geographer and Carson City resident, will present an illustrated lecture on the rustic architecture of the Lake Tahoe region. Material for the talk comes from his recently published book “Lake Tahoe’s Rustic Architecture” (Arcadia Publishing, 2016). The talk will be free at the library, 1000 Rufus Allen Blvd.

K’s Kitchen: Corn cakes with homemade salsa

By Kathryn Reed

Summer vegetables never tasted so good – especially from a farmers market.

These corn cakes can be a meal unto themselves or a side. It’s the fresh corn and tomatoes that makes all the difference. Any other time of year and the sweetness just would not be the same.

I used Panko breadcrumbs because that’s what’s in the cupboard. Plain yellow cornmeal would be a good substitute.

While they tasted fine as leftovers, they were best that first night.



Corn Cakes with Salsa

$\frac{3}{4}$ C whole wheat flour

$\frac{1}{2}$ C Panko

2 tsp baking powder

$\frac{3}{4}$ tsp kosher salt, divided

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, divided

1 C light sour cream

2 large eggs

2 T olive oil, divided

$1\frac{1}{2}$ C fresh corn kernels (about 2 ears)

2 T jalapeño, minced

$\frac{1}{2}$ C yellow squash, diced

$\frac{1}{4}$ C green onions, chopped

$\frac{1}{4}$ C fresh basil, chopped

$1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp white wine vinegar

1 medium tomato, chopped

Combine flour, Panko, baking powder, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt, and $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon pepper in a large bowl.

Combine sour cream, eggs, jalapeño, corn and 1 tablespoon oil in a bowl, stirring until smooth. Add this mixture to the flour and stir well.

Heat a large nonstick griddle to medium-high. Divide corn mixture into 8 patties. Cook 6 minutes on each side.

Combine squash, green onions, basil, vinegar, tomato, remaining 1 tablespoon oil, and remaining salt and pepper.

Serve salsa over corn cakes.

Food safety in the edible garden

By Ashley Andrews, Reno Gazette-Journal

As a child, I squirreled away unpopped kernels from the bottom of a bag of microwave popcorn. I hid them in the pockets of my summer dress until I could plant them under the swing set. I hoped they would grow into a fairytale secret garden. They did not.

As an avid green thumb, I have continued my tradition of small gardening mistakes. Mini mess-ups are good to make. Hands-on experiences in seed-starting and pollination make me a better grower.

However, I put a lot of focus on avoiding big gardening mistakes, like E. coli.

Read the whole story

Expect ad blitz in Nev. for recreational pot

By Colton Lochhead, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Don't be surprised to see a slew of television ads touting a measure to legalize recreational marijuana use during the weeks leading up to the general election in November.

A political action committee, the Coalition to Regulate Marijuana Like Alcohol, reserved more than \$800,000 worth of advertising time slots across the major news stations, according to recent Federal Communications Commission filings.

The ads are scheduled to start in early October and run until Election Day on Nov. 8 when Nevadans will vote on Question 2, which will decide whether to legalize the recreational use of marijuana for adults in the state.

[Read the whole story](#)

History Club created for Tahoe youth

The Lake Tahoe Historical Society had created the History Club.

It is designed for children to experience activities from the past, learn a new skill, play a game, and use their

imagination.

The first event is Aug. 17 from 9am-noon at the South Lake Tahoe museum.

Due to limited class size, reservations are required. The cost is \$20 per child. Call 530.541.5458 to make reservation.

Nev. among states with lowest student-loan debt

By Ian Whitaker, Las Vegas Sun

The western United States has lower levels of student debt than the rest of the country, and Nevada is no exception.

A report released Friday by LendEDU placed the Silver State 45th in the nation for student loan debt. (The lower the ranking, the better states did.)

About 48 percent of the state's four-year graduates hold student debt, according to the study. Approximately 47 percent of UNLV graduates held student debt, slightly less than that of the 48 percent of graduates from the UNR, although UNLV graduates tended to have slightly more debt per person than their UNR counterparts.

Read the whole story

4 people rescued from middle of Lake Tahoe

Four people were rescued from Lake Tahoe early this morning after their boat sank off the South Shore.

Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District crews said the men were pulled from the middle of the lake at 12:06am today.

The four could be heard shouting for help. They were found hanging onto debris from the wrecked boat.

“It was a good outcome and very lucky for the men who did not have life jackets on during the incident,” Fire Marshal Eric Guevin said in a statement.

Details of what led to the sinking of the boat on Aug. 13 have not been released. It is also not known if they are locals or were in a rental boat.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

State money issues stall future EDC Courthouse

By Joann Eisenbrandt

The New Placerville Courthouse Project has traveled a rocky and contentious road since a new court facility on the West Slope was first envisioned several decades ago. It just hit another bump. The approximately \$1.4 billion reduction in state funding originally allocated in the budget for new

courthouse construction in California has put the brakes on the project, at least temporarily.

Since 2002, California courts have been under the jurisdiction of the Judicial Council. This state agency created a list of “immediate and critical need” courthouse projects. These were to be the first projects implemented once funding became available. The New Placerville Courthouse Project is on this list.

In 2008, Senate Bill 1407 authorized up to \$5 billion in bonds to build or renovate courthouses in the state. Funding for these projects comes from increased court user fees. State budget problems since have caused funds to be diverted from the funding accounts for these projects, causing a number of delays. Finally, a site was selected for the Placerville project and the Judicial Council prepared and certified an environmental impact report under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in June 2015. This paved the way for the next steps: the transfer of land from the county to the state and the putting out of construction bids. Completion was projected to be in the second quarter of 2021.



An alternative to a new courthouse is an annex. The two-colored building in the front to the left of the existing Main Street Courthouse are what used to be the Placerville City Hall. An additional

building and a covered parking garage would be in back of that.
Rendering/Placerville
Historic Preservation
League

The Placerville project will replace current court facilities on the West Slope with one new 88,000-square-foot courthouse facility next to the existing county jail just off Forni Road in Placerville. Superior Court services are now divided between Building C at the County Government Center on Fair Lane, a civil court facility in Cameron Park and the historic courthouse on Main Street in downtown Placerville.

State budget problems have once again affected the project. Redirection of \$1.4 billion from the critical needs account and \$250 million of annual funds from the construction account, and a dramatic decrease in court filing fees has now drastically reduced the amount of money available for the bonds to finance the 23 current courthouse projects.

On Aug. 11, the Court Facilities Advisory Committee met in San Francisco to consider recommendations to the Judicial Council on how to proceed given current financial circumstances.

Committee Chairman Presiding Justice Brad Hill told those assembled that, "We understand how concerned you all are and what all of you in this room have gone through to get to this point. After years of planning, we are here to transmit some bad news in terms of current financing."

Judges, members of boards of supervisors and staff from 16 counties with current courthouse projects gave presentations, all advocating strongly that their particular project be allowed to continue. Hill acknowledged at the beginning of the five-hour session that, "These facilities are the worst of the

worst ... everyone in this room is desperately in need of a new courthouse.” The extent of their need, he noted, is why these projects remain on the list while others have been cut along the way.

Presentations were in alphabetical order by county, so El Dorado County presented first. Presiding El Dorado County Superior Court Judge Suzanne Kingsbury gave a PowerPoint presentation outlining the problems with the county’s current court system. The fact that court services are divided among a number of different facilities makes them “operationally inefficient.” Kingsbury went through a laundry list of structural, environmental and safety deficiencies, especially highlighting those at the 100-plus year-old Main Street courthouse in downtown Placerville. These ranged from lack of ADA compliance, to an old and often non-operational elevator, lead in the water system, asbestos, lack of holding cells for in-custody defendants and lack of on-site parking. Security for judges, jurors, witnesses and court staff is lacking. The abundance of windows gives direct line-of-sight to potential snipers from the nearby Highway 50 overpass and adjacent buildings. Security and space problems also exist at the facility in Building C at the county government center on Fair Lane.

All of the presenters from subsequent counties had very similar stories. The current Shasta County courthouse had experienced 108 elevator malfunctions; the courthouse in Siskiyou County can be so easily broken into that thieves got in and stole gold bars from a courthouse display. Many courthouses have serious seismic issues, with some rated so low, at Level 5, that the state declined to have them transferred to state ownership.

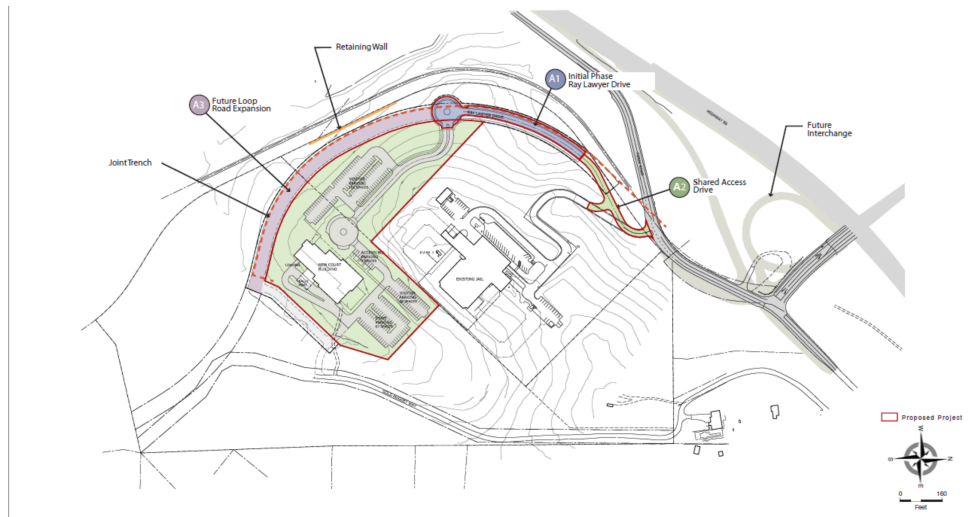
Kirk Smith of the Placerville Historic Preservation League spoke during the public comment session that followed the presentations. In July 2015, the organization challenged the Judicial Council’s certification of the EIR for the

Placerville Courthouse Project in San Francisco Superior Court. The EIR failed, the writ stated, to adequately address or provide mitigations for the impacts on downtown Placerville that removal of court services from the Main Street courthouse would cause. The Main Street economy would be seriously affected, leading to “urban blight and decay.” The writ was denied by the court **last month**.

Smith told advisory committee members that given the current financial shortfall for critical needs projects, the construction of a courthouse annex and covered parking structure next to the existing Main Street courthouse would be a much more cost-efficient option. Smith had made similar presentations to the Placerville City Council and the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors, but noted, “They weren’t interested.”

The annex concept would provide for approximately 140,000 square feet of space as compared to the 88,000 square feet of the project as currently approved. It would not require the construction of roads, sewer lines and other supporting infrastructure and would preserve the historic Main Street courthouse. Smith presented the committee with architectural renderings of the concept.

Smith later confirmed to *Lake Tahoe News* that the Placerville Historic Preservation Society still intends to appeal the denial of the writ. Such an appeal would be to the First Appellate District Court of Appeals in San Francisco. The last day to file the appeal is Aug. 30.



Architect's rendering of how the future El Dorado County Courthouse could look.

The Court Facilities Advisory Committee then received a report from Capital Program Director Mike Courtney outlining recommendations on how to proceed. The courthouse projects were grouped into four categories based on their current status: currently under construction, acquisitions, ongoing design work, and 2016-17 construction awards. The New Placerville Courthouse Project is in the "acquisitions" category. The recommendation for projects in this category is to, "complete site due diligence then hold." Due diligence means that site analysis, environmental review and associated studies have all been completed. The Placerville project has completed its due diligence and would, under Courtney's recommendations, be placed on hold until needed funding became available.

The six projects currently under construction would complete construction, but projects in the other two categories would continue until they reached the end of their existing phase and then be put on hold.

Hill emphasized that this was just "day one" of effort to secure the needed funding. Now that the state is back on firmer financial footing, he noted, "We'd like our money back." Members of the committee and representatives from the

affected counties will be going to Sacramento soon to lobby the governor and legislators for that very purpose.

“We need to demonstrate to the Legislature that we will be good stewards of the money they give us now and will be in the future ... we’re building courthouses that are safe and secure but are economical and cost-effective,” Hill said.

The committee approved Courtney’s recommendations. A report will be compiled and presented to the Judicial Council for their Aug. 25-26meeting. The Judicial Council can then adopt the recommendations, modify them or propose new ones.