

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Coco

Under all that (dirty?) white fur, is Coco, a 10-month-old poodle who has not been treated like the sweet lap dog he should be.

He has never been inside or on a leash. He probably needs help with house training, and it appears that he has never been groomed. So, he needs a patient owner to work with him to help him achieve his potential. But he is a sweet dog who deserves lots of special treatment to make up for the lack of attention he's experienced as a puppy.

Coco is neutered, microchipped, tested for heart worm, and vaccinated. He is at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many other dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes. Go to the Tahoe animal shelter's Facebook page to see photos and descriptions of all pets at the shelter.

Call 530.573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet. For spay-neuter assistance for South Tahoe residents, go **online**.

– Karen Kuentz

4 concerts left in Kings Beach series

Music on the Beach, the free concert series at Kings Beach State Recreation Area, has four more concerts this season, Aug. 5-Sept. 2. (There is no concert Aug. 12).

Bands in August are Paul David and the Drivers, Miss Lonely Hearts and Forget the Roses and will wrap up with Achilles Wheel. Music is from 6-8:30pm.

North Tahoe Business Association is selling Limited Edition High Notes posters signed and numbered by local artist Mereith Solin featuring Kings Beach. They are available at all Music on the Beach concerts for \$20. Proceeds benefit Music on the Beach.

Food vendors include As You Wish Catering, Full Belly Deli, A Pop Above and Cheri's Hand Dipped Ice Cream, and will be available from 5:30-9pm. The North Tahoe Business Association will be serving beer, wine, and soda from 5:30-9pm. Outside alcohol and pets are prohibited. Attendees may bring low-back beach chairs and blankets.

Workshop to highlight benefits of dandelions

No matter how much time and effort is spent in the removal of

dandelions, they persist and always return in seemingly larger numbers.

Dandelions, weed or feed? is the subject of an Aug. 13 talk at UC Davis Tahoe City Field Station.

Learn how to use all parts of the dandelion for foods, drinks, and medicinal purposes. Discover the dandelion's benefits and uses as well as how to harvest them. Bring small containers or bags to take home dandelions and all their edible parts.

Registration for this workshop is requested but not required. This program will begin at 10am at 2400 Lake Forest Road in Tahoe City. It is free, although any type of donation is appreciated.

For more information or directions call 775.881.7566.

Conner, South Lake Tahoe reach settlement

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe City Councilwoman JoAnn Conner has agreed to drop her lawsuit against the city.

In December, Conner filed the lawsuit seeking to have the censure imposed on her in October by her four council colleagues be overturned. The censure came about because the council believed Conner's behavior toward staff was unprofessional and that she was a bully who needed to be controlled.



JoAnn Conner

Also named in the lawsuit was City Manager Nancy Kerry. She is one of two employees who the council actually directly oversees. A councilmember suing her employee in California was unprecedented.

The two sides met in June to mediate the dispute after a couple hearings in El Dorado County Superior Court.

"It's not signed yet, so whomever is discussing it, is in a violation of what is intended to the agreement and could cause the deal to fail," Jacqueline Mittelstadt, Conner's attorney, told *Lake Tahoe News* on Aug. 2.

Conner was also asking to have the judge rule that the ban on her speaking to city staff be illegal. Protocols since Conner has been on the council always said the elected officials were not to go to staff they don't actually manage. This is to avoid political favor and not have employees be micromanaged. After all, the council's job is to set policy, not manage people other than the city manager and city attorney.

Other items in the suit pertained to Conner wanting to email any staff member. This was after Kerry mandated all of Conner's emails go through her or the city attorney. Kerry set this policy based on what she determined to be inappropriate correspondence.

Kerry also took away Conner's key card allowing her access to city offices. Council mailboxes were moved so the need for councilmembers to go into a key card area was eliminated.

Conner also wanted the court to weigh in on when a policy about parades should be heard (Conner in the past has put on a parade in the city limits) and wanted the judge to make her colleagues assign her to committees.

The council at its meeting Aug. 2 met in closed session. Afterward it was reported that a settlement had been reached. Specifics have not been released. When the deal is signed, the details will be made public.

One detail is that no money will be exchanged.

Kronick, Moskovitz, Tiedemann & Girard was hired by the city to handle the case. The council allocated \$100,000 and to date has spent \$87,450.

It isn't known how much Conner has spent on this case. Mittelstadt has to charge her \$400 an hour because that is what was billed to the city for the censure hearing that legally had to be reimbursed to the plaintiffs. Government Codes 87460 and 87461 regulate monetary gifts/loans for political officials. Legally Mittelstadt cannot reduce her fee to Conner or waive any of costs. Previously, Mittelstadt told *Lake Tahoe News* that Conner was on a payment plan. Conner has posted on social media a desire to establish a legal defense fund of sorts.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- Expect delays on Highway 89 between Squaw Valley Road and Cabin Creek Road in Truckee through Thursday. Pavement grinding work will take place from 7am-5pm Aug. 2-4. Approximately one-half mile of one-way traffic controls or narrowed lanes will occur as work progresses along the five-

mile work zone.

- Burlap & Denim is Bread & Broth 4 Kids fundraiser on Sept.10 from noon-4pm at the Celio Ranch in Meyers. The barbecue is from 1-3pm, with ranch tours at 12:30pm and 3pm. Event tickets are \$35, tour tickets are \$10. They may be purchased **online**.

- An exhibit at UNR's Mathewson-IGT Knowledge Center offers a snapshot of Nevada's political past and explores the men and women who campaigned for offices in Nevada. On the Road to Office: Campaigns, Elections and Governance runs through Nov. 18. For more info, call 775.682.5665.

- There will be a conflict management workshop on Aug. 18 from 2-5pm at Tahoe Mountain Lab in South Lake Tahoe. Alexis Robin, co-founder of p.Link Coaching, specializes in working with leaders in areas of self-awareness, behavioral style and communication. Cost is \$10 of Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce members, \$20 for others. Go **online** to register.

Tahoe City getting seasonal ice rink

A portable ice rink is expected to open in the winter on the sixth hole of the Tahoe City Golf Course.

Tahoe City Public Utility District's board last month approved the \$843,000 project that will be operated by Tahoe Cross Country. It will be open from about Thanksgiving through mid-March.

The initial outlay of money will include a Zamboni machine, skates and refrigeration. The bulk of the money is coming from hotel taxes, an anonymous donor gave \$100,000 and other donations are being sought.

The rink will be 50-feet by 80-feet, but can be expanded.

Tahoe woman headed to 6th Olympic Games



Louise Feller, red hat, trades pins at the London Olympics in 2012. Photo/Provided

By Susan Wood

STATELINE – Louise Feller is all too familiar with overcoming adversity.

That's why when she decided to attend her sixth Olympic Games

as a volunteer, the notion of particular challenges associated with Rio in 2016 left her unfazed.

After all, she worked the Games in Athens with a broken leg – the result of a bicycle accident near Lake Tahoe two months before. She was forced to do her volunteer job with a full walking cast. But there was no way the diligent 67-year-old who takes volunteering to a level unknown to many would change her plans.

The biggest obstacle was on a very personal level.

“All the bathrooms in Greece were downstairs,” she said.

The perpetual optimist took the challenge in stride, making the Olympic adventure her vacation of the year.

Sure, she knows Rio is plagued with issues. There’s the mosquito-borne Zika virus that has prompted some athletes, mainly golfers, to decline the invitation. Feller shrugged off the danger.

The threat isn’t enough to keep her away.

In addition, political strife resulting from a money-laundering scheme as well as rising crime has cast a shadow over the city. And Guanabarra Bay providing a water supply to residents remains polluted. Plus, the Tim Maia bike path collapsed killing two people and injuring three after a giant wave hit it.



Olympic memorabilia covers the wall above Louise Feller's couch. Photo/Susan Wood

Still, when the lights come up, the athletes take their marks and the stories unfold – it will be all about the greatest event to display the best in humanity.

And Feller will be there to help like she has since going to the 1996 Summer Olympiad in Atlanta as a spectator. It was like a light bulb came on.

"I said: 'I'd really like to see the other side of the Games'," she told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Adorning the walls of her Stateline home are posters from the various Olympic Games. In the kitchen, she created Olympic-themed collages with pictures and other take-aways from the various host cities. Feller has worked as a volunteer for the Games in Salt Lake City, London, Torino, Italy, Beijing and Athens – the birthplace of the Olympiad.

When she applied for her first gig in Salt Lake City, Feller was asked to secure her own lodging before even applying.

"I lived in a motor home for three weeks," she said. It also helped that she ran an educational touring company.

She is often asked to be the "go-to" girl, running errands for coaches, directors and athletes. She tends to help out most in

the sport of taekwondo. At a mere 5-feet tall, she performed security functions. It seems spectators and others would try to trespass or linger too long in the athletes' dining room.

For South America, she has landed the dream assignment of working an information kiosk.

Volunteers are fed one meal per day on their shifts, but being a diabetic Feller brings her own food. Good ole peanut butter hits the spot for nutrition and diversity when eaten with other things.

The workers also get a thank you dinner, watch, credentials and uniform.

What is her favorite Olympic Games thus far?

Torino (or Turin depending on where you're from) had her staged in a nice little apartment, with an Italian restaurant on the corner. She built her own community at the eatery.

"I went to dinner there every night. They started making it for me (before I arrived)," she said.

On top of that, the Games sent her to the speed skating arena where she met Apolo Ohno, the U.S. short-track gold medalist.

Her stint in Beijing turned out quite interesting in terms of allowing the other volunteers to take the pins she brings to give away from her collection. When she laid them out on a table and asked her comrades to choose which ones they wanted "they'd have a hard time because in China they're not used to choosing."

And there lie cultural differences among the 50,000-plus volunteers who form a diverse army for the Olympics. There's also a gap in the hierarchy between languages.

"English is an important language in the Olympics," she said, adding that all referees are expected to speak it.



Memorabilia from past Olympic Games where Louise Feller has been a volunteer. Photo/Susan Wood

Feller doesn't tune in the Olympics while she's working at the Games. If anything, when they're in another country, the coverage is dominated by that nation's homeland athletes much like in the U.S.

She comes home to watch online.

Still, the experience overall is an incredible one – an event that allows a person to be a part of something larger than themselves.

"I like the camaraderie during the Olympics, and I wanted to give back," said Feller, who splits her time between Lake Tahoe and Florida.

"America is a great country. I love to share it," she said. "We're very fortunate."

The Rio 2016 Volunteer Programme is billed as “the place for all those who are passionate about sports and volunteering.”

“The volunteers are indispensable for the success of the Games. They are the soul of the event,” Flavia Fontes, head of the Rio 2016 Volunteers Programme, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “A person in the city could go through the Games without seeing an athlete with their own eyes, but it would be impossible not to meet a volunteer. They play a part in everything, helping and providing information to spectators, assisting heads of state and providing operational support at the ceremonies.”

The Olympic Games in Rio start Aug. 5 with the opening ceremonies in Maracana Stadium and end Aug. 21 with the closing celebration. A total of 7.5 million tickets are expected to be sold – 200,000 less than London’s 2012 Summer Olympics because the venues are smaller. NBC Sports will televise the Games for its duration.

More than 200 nations are expected to participate in 306 events at 33 venues in the host city and at five venues in Sao Paulo.

Opinion: Calif. pension fund being squeezed

By Dan Walters, Sacramento Bee

Ron Seeling, the California Public Employees Retirement System’s chief actuary, believed he was speaking to a closed-door seminar in 2009 when he warned that public employee pension costs were becoming “unsustainable.”



Dan Walters

However, Ed Mendel, a veteran reporter who writes a blog on pensions, was there, and later published Seeling's dire warning.

"I don't want to sugarcoat anything," Seeling said. "We are facing decades without any significant turnarounds in assets, decades of – what I, in my personal words, nobody else's – unsustainable pension costs of between 25 percent of pay for a miscellaneous plan and 40 to 50 percent of pay for a safety plan (police and firefighters) ... unsustainable pension costs. We've got to find some other solutions."

It was eerily prescient of what was to come within a few years.

Seeling made his remarks a decade after then-Gov. Gray Davis and the Legislature had quietly, virtually without notice, decreed a massive, retroactive increase in state employee pension benefits, which was quickly emulated by hundreds of local governments.

Read the whole story

Hundreds of Calif. recycling

centers shut down

By Darcy Costello, AP

SACRAMENTO — More than a fifth of California's recycling redemption centers have closed in the past year, stripping consumers of easy access to recycling and limiting their ability to collect the deposits they made when purchasing bottles and cans.

More closures may follow, as the state's subsidy payment program, meant to help centers survive market fluctuations, has failed to keep up with rapid decreases in the value of plastic, glass and aluminum. The payment formula, advocates say, is too slow to cover the real costs of recycling.

The Legislature hasn't been able to agree on a solution to prevent further closures or solve the program's problems.

California is one of 10 states to charge residents a refundable fee, or deposit, when they buy bottles and cans. Consumers can then claim those deposits at redemption centers.

The nonprofit Container Recycling Institute fears lower numbers of redemption centers will lead to reduced recycling statewide and an inability for consumers to get their money back. They estimate that closures have inconvenienced roughly 3 million California residents.

"The extent that consumers give up and put containers in trash or recycling bins, those are people who were denied the opportunity to get their refund," said Susan Collins, the group's president. "And we know that is affecting consumers to the tune of tens of millions of dollars."

So far, redemption center closures don't appear to have lowered the number of total recyclables the state collects through buy-back centers and curbside pickup. Beverage

container recycling rates fell by a percentage point in the second half of 2015, the most recent figures available, compared to the same time a year earlier.

Advocates expect the rate to drop further in 2016 and are concerned rural areas that don't operate curbside pickup will start to see the impact of redemption center closures.

Lawmakers say the state's three-decade-old recycling program needs a major redesign. The business model no longer matches the reality of state recycling rates and the fund used to pay out refunds has suffered in recent years.

Historically, the state has operated around 2,100 centers, said Mark Oldfield, a CalRecycle spokesman. More than 450 centers closed in the year that ended in June, eliminating hundreds of state jobs; today there are 1,773 centers and more are expected to close in the coming months.

"If regular California consumers find it too difficult and inconvenient to redeem and recycle their containers, they may begin to view the program as a tax," said Mark Murray, executive director of Californians Against Waste, an advocacy group. "Why am I paying this CRV tax at the grocery store without a path for me to conveniently get my money back?"

Measures intended to protect the centers from market fluctuations are not working, Murray said. The state's formula for allocating subsidies to the centers fails to keep up with real time pricing and includes a minimum three-month lag.

That gap means the centers haven't received sufficient state payments to make up for the income they've lost from the sharp decline in scrap value. Since 2012, the centers have been underpaid by more than \$50 million, Collins said.

Even when prices rebound, recycling centers are unlikely to earn that money back. "Once you come up with a number like that, it's woefully obvious why so many centers couldn't take

it anymore and had to close," she said.

Of the 10 states with mandatory deposits, only California and Hawaii have a responsive payment formula for redemption centers. Others have a set handling fee in state law, which can sometimes mean lower payments for operators, but also offers more stability, as they don't experience the volatility of scrap values that comes from selling recyclables on the open market.

The state Assembly last month approved a quick-fix measure to curb the closures that the Senate didn't take up.

Instead, a deal reached by Senate leaders and Gov. Jerry Brown's administration helps retailers concerned about the closures' impact on their operation – without addressing the problems of struggling recycling centers.

For recycling, there is no state more important than California, the source of two out of every 11 beverage containers recycled in the country, Collins said.

"It would be a blow of enormous proportion to the nation's beverage container recycling rate if (California) were to continue to decline," she said. "It would have a real impact on the industry."

Watching Olympics can be physically inspiring

By Blair Anthony Robertson, Sacramento Bee

With the Rio Olympics only days away, there's always the danger that we will become a bunch of couch potatoes fixated

on our flat screens, what with all the drama to take in and the athletes to follow.

But it doesn't have to be that way. Sure, the Rio Olympics promise to be entertaining, but you can also find inspiration there that can get you moving and plenty of things to learn that can take your health and fitness goals to new heights.

If you're trying to drop a few pounds, one look at all those six-pack abs in the running events or at the Olympic pool might encourage you to bypass dessert, lace up your sneakers and, for starters, go for a a brisk walk.

If you're already active, digging deeper into what the athletes do to prepare and improve will give you all kinds of information about strength and endurance training you can apply to your own workouts.

Read the whole story