

Day of recreation in South Lake Tahoe

The South Lake Tahoe Recreation Division's annual Spring into Summer Kick-Off Party is June 4 from 10am-2pm.

The event is designed to highlight summer programs, introduce recreation instructors and provide tours of the recreation and swim complex in a fun and festive environment.

South Tahoe Adventure Recreation (STAR) Camp leaders will be on hand to meet prospective campers and parents as well as provide details about the many adventures campers will experience this summer such as hiking, biking, bike park riding, ice skating, archery, arts and crafts, fun with science, field trips and more. STAR camp is for youth ages K-5 grade.

Water safety instructors will be available to provide information on swim classes for all ages and abilities. Tahoe Swim Club coaches will provide information on youth competitive swimming and training programs.

The recreation complex located at 1180 Rufus Allen Blvd. For more information, call 530.542.6056.

Letter: Appreciation for EMS workers

To the community,

South Lake Tahoe is currently in the midst of change, moving

from an ambulance service provided by the fire department to a non-safety program, prompted by a lack of county funding and also anticipated changes in the pre-hospital industry. During this transition, an amazing group of qualified medics have been providing ALS services to South Lake Tahoe under the control of South Lake Tahoe Fire Rescue.

National EMS Week is an opportunity to recognize hard-working EMS providers. These individuals see patients in their most dire moments and make every effort to provide the best-quality care while stabilizing and transporting, appropriately utilizing a variety of standard-of-care methods. This is exceptionally difficult due to having to be prepared for absolutely anything. The training, knowledge and skill required is incredibly vast. And, the memories of tragic injuries or deaths can haunt forever. The rewarding feelings of making a difference or possibly saving a life are eternal as well.

I would like to thank each of these 12 South Lake Tahoe Fire-EMS personnel for committing themselves to providing quality ALS response to the city of South Lake Tahoe and also for adopting the SLTFR mission statement, "Providing our community with professionalism, compassion and honor." Each of these individuals has taken on this role wholeheartedly and has proven to be exceptional ALS care providers. Many in the group are lifelong Tahoe locals.

To each of you, a heartfelt thanks. You are amazing.

Kim George, South Lake Tahoe fire EMS officer

Pinnacles Park – A peak experience

Publisher's note: *This is one in a series of stories about the National Park Service, which is celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2016.*



Pinnacles National Park is a geological wonder. Photo/Susan Wood

By Susan Wood

PINNACLES NATIONAL PARK – Whatever your penchant for an ideal national park, Pinnacles ranks as the most recently inducted. It was established as a national monument by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1908, and 105 years later, President Obama signed it into law as a park.

“Where?” people ask.

What Pinnacles lacks in fame, it makes up for in grand-scale features.



Condors are gradually becoming more prominent in the park.
Photo/National Park Service

A bird's-eye view

First, it might be a blessing it isn't well known considering the endangered California condor calls it home. The nesting grounds represent one of a few release sites in the United States and Mexico. Loss of habitat, shootings and poisoning from lead bullets almost did them in when they made the list in 1967. The population has dwindled down to 435 – make that 436 as No. 828 was born in the last few weeks – with 167 in captivity.

The condor is one of the largest birds in North America, with a wingspan of $9\frac{1}{2}$ feet. It soars on thermal updrafts at 55 mph, at altitudes of 15,000 feet. When you see one, it is a spectacle to behold.

The Park Service has established an aggressive program to monitor their progress.



Winter rains bring spring flowers. Photo/Susan Wood

"We want to get a general sense of where the birds are," program park worker Arianna said, while holding a transmitter at a picnic table stationed at the Bear Gulch day use area. Bear Gulch is ground zero for condors, as the social birds can often be spotted in the afternoon flying over High Peaks and swooping down into the valley. The park workers set up a spyglass station to help spot them between the campground and Bench trailhead.

The birds wear radio transmitters that workers track a few times a day. If a bird doesn't move after eight hours, workers know to go find it because something's wrong.

This is not an easy task. They tend to fly in remote areas and weigh 20 pounds, making it a challenge to carry them out. They nest at night and feed on dead carcasses during the day.

It's a big deal when a new chick enters the flock. Park workers even announced No. 828 on a sandwich board sign at the general store.

That's not all to announce. Pinnacles' terrain, wildlife and lack of light at night make programs unique. There's stargazing, life with bats – which hang out in the Balconies Cave – and in spring, wildflowers that pop out of the ground as far as the eye can see. There are larkspur, mariposa lilies and poppies everywhere.



An array of wildflowers fill the landscape. Photo/Susan Wood

This is especially true this year, as park workers celebrate Mother Nature bestowing a lot of water last winter that fell on the 26,606-acre park that is split between San Benito and Monterey counties.

Sunset magazine rated Pinnacles Campground – which used to be private before it melded into the national park – one of the top 50 in the West. Large meadows give the appearance of a wide-open expanse and plenty of shade from trees form canopies to provide relief from the sun. Many songbirds find refuge in these trees. It's highly recommended to close one's eyes and

allow for a pure sensory experience as the birds compete with the gentle winds. For a more stark auditory experience, wild turkeys that roam the land can be heard at all hours.

It's hard to imagine what would happen if they tangled with the also-roaming javelinas.

Granted, it's easy to just hang out at the campground to see how the day unfolds. But there are rewards for hikers wanting to venture out.

At ground level

The terrain at Pinnacles National Park represents a magnificent landscape of rock formations.

The Earth has moved in this region, creating a moving experience for those who take in its beauty. After all, the park is situated very close to the long San Andreas Fault that slices through 600 miles of California. Millions of years ago fault lines divided volcanic and sedimentary rocks that developed an uplifting of land forming steep cliffs. Signs along the Bench Trail from the campground to Bear Gulch highlight the extraordinary geology.



Spring is an ideal time to visit – before it gets too hot.
Photo/Susan Wood

Erosion from water and wind make the spires and towers seen today. The High Peaks loop from the Bear Gulch area was calculated at only 5 miles, but the spires appear from the parking lot to be a two-day backpack away.

The trek is well worth the effort. Views dominant the hike, with a short scamper on the top of the ridge to the tippy-top of Hawkins Peak at 2,720 feet, providing that top-of-the-world experience.

The return from the Condor Gulch Trail may not be for the faint of heart, but it's definitely suggested for the adventurous spirit. There's a reason this place is a rock climber's paradise. Hiking becomes more like bouldering – with the safety of iron bars and chopped out steps to keep the trekker balanced in some precarious spots.

The scenery is more spectacular at every turn.

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Notes:

- Pinnacles National Park is located in the Central Valley off Highway 25, 35 miles from Hollister.
 - Camping is \$23 for tent sites, \$36 for RV sites with electrical hookups. Reserve **online**.
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Letter: Brooks deserves to be re-elected

To the community,

Please join me in voting to retain Judge Nelson Brooks.

I have lived in El Dorado County since 1963, first serving as a deputy in the District Attorney's Office. I was later elected District Attorney of El Dorado County, and in January 1977 the Governor appointed me Judge of the Superior Court. After retiring in 1997, I sat on the El Dorado County Superior Court on assignment and for several years worked as a private mediator.

Judge Brooks has many years of experience, both as a judge and as an attorney, and attended the University of California's Hastings College of the Law, a top tier nationally recognized law school. Judge Brooks went through the rigorous vetting process before being appointed to the Superior Court by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.

There are 58 counties in California and except for El Dorado it is unheard of for an incumbent judge's challenger to be supported by a fellow colleague.

It is obvious that the sitting judges supporting Judge Brooks' challenger are doing so for their own political agenda and not for the El Dorado County courts that serve our citizens.

Judge Brooks has not asked me to endorse him or write this letter, but I care deeply about the court and believe the right thing to do is retain Judge Brooks.

Terry Finney, El Dorado County Superior Court judge (ret.)

How earthquakes have changed history

By Amanda Foreman, Wall Street Journal

The Big One is looking a little more likely these days. Since the California earthquake of 1857, tectonic plates along the San Andreas Fault are thought to have shifted by as much as 26 feet.

Only last year, scientists raised the chances of a quake in California of magnitude 8.0 or greater in the next 30 years to 7 percent from 4.7 percent. Unfortunately, for all the sophisticated science behind this prediction, nobody knows whether this means devastation tomorrow or many decades from now.

The mystery surrounding earthquakes—the fact that they can strike at any time without warning—has puzzled humans for eons. The ancient Greeks believed that they were signals of

the god Poseidon's displeasure. Judeo-Christian cultures considered them divine punishment for individual or collective sin. Other societies avoided the blame game in favor of supernatural phenomena. One popular explanation involved giant animals moving underneath the Earth: a frog in Chinese stories, a catfish in Japan, a turtle according to some Native American tribes.

Read the whole story

Mt. Tallac instructor honored for her work

Mount Tallac High School teacher Angela Cazares has been singled out by the El Dorado County Office of Education for her hard work that contributes to providing quality support and services to students, schools, families, and the community.

Cazares earned the excellence in education award for 16 years she has supported teen mothers at the South Lake Tahoe continuation high school.

The Child Development management team said it had a hard time choosing one of the many stories where Cazares has shined. The selected story highlighted her work with a 14-year-old mother who gave birth to a child with special needs. Within 48 hours of delivery, the child required transportation from South Lake Tahoe to UC Davis Medical Center in Sacramento. The mother was unable to secure transportation, and the Wrap Team reached out to Cazares for help. Despite inclement weather, Cazares drove the mother, father, and child to the hospital.

She coordinated consistent, reliable transportation to weekly medical visits in Sacramento from South Lake Tahoe.

As a former young parent herself, Cazares volunteers monthly to provide child development classes for inexperienced teen parents. As an Early Head Start home visitor, she also works with younger parents, including teenagers.

Mixed results in Everest ascent without oxygen

Adventure photojournalist Cory Richards on May 24 made his first successful ascent of Mt. Everest without the use of supplemental oxygen.

Everest veteran and founder of Lake Tahoe-based Alpenglow Expeditions, Adrian Ballinger, turned back at 8,480 meters earlier in the day.

Less than 3 percent of climbers make it to the top without oxygen.

The duo's Snapchat account grew a following of several hundred thousand views per day.

"This experience has been extraordinary," Richards, who was National Geographic's 2012 Adventurer of the Year, said. "Emotion overwhelms me as I look at the path the last five years has led me down – or up, rather – and to be able to share that journey with the world, I'm humbled and very grateful. I owe immeasurable gratitude to Adrian without whom this journey would not have been possible."

Ballinger has summited Mount Everest a previous six times, but this particular trek was his first attempt at a summit on the North side, from China.

“There are times on the mountain at this altitude that your body just says, ‘enough’. And you have to listen. I am so grateful I was able to make that call for myself with help from our extraordinary support team, led by Dr. Monica Piris and Palden Namgye Sherpa, and hours later, we were able to celebrate my partner Cory’s summit,” Ballinger said.

National Geographic reported that the death rate for those climbing without oxygen above 26,000 feet is at least five times higher. Four people have died this month on Everest.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

El Dorado County hires CAO from within

By Kathryn Reed

El Dorado County will have a new chief administrative officer beginning at 8am May 25.

At today’s Board of Supervisors meeting Don Ashton was unanimously hired.



Don Ashton

He knows what he is getting into, the systemic dysfunction, the questionable hires from predecessors and a budget process that is a mess.

The 45-year-old is currently the director of the county's largest department, Health and Human Services.

Ashton told *Lake Tahoe News* his top three priorities are:

1. "The budget and the budget process overall, not just the current year, but establishing a more timely budget process moving forward."
2. "Our culture ... (creating) one of collaboration and trust based on following the county's strategic plan."
3. "Looking at the organizational structure of the county, making sure people are in the right spots and moving them to where they would be most effective."

Ashton has been with the county for a little more than five years, including working for the sheriff's department. He moved here from Los Angeles County to be near to his fiancé, who is now his wife.

He knew after about two years of working for El Dorado County that he would like to be CAO. The timing, he said, was right for it to happen now. Ashton will be making nearly \$215,000 year, plus benefits.

"Right now we have an outstanding board that is committed to changing the culture," Ashton said. "No doubt it is going to

be a lot of work.”

The county has gone through a handful of CAOs in the last few years who have had a penchant for hiring their friends and spending money on personnel instead of the basic needs of residents – like roads and other infrastructure.

Larry Combs has been the acting CAO for nearly a year, working part time and living in Auburn.

Ashton has the support of other elected officials in the county – all who wrote a **letter** in April to the board backing him.

He knows the days ahead won’t be easy, especially with budget hearing coming next month. Still, Ashton said he looks forward to the challenge.

“The way I’m going to go about it is to be as transparent and open as possible,” Ashton said. “I’m going to try to get the trust of the community, the board and other department heads.”

TRPA postpones hearing on Meyers hockey academy

The proposed hockey academy at the bottom of Old Meyers Grade will not be on the May 25 Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Governing Board agenda.

A TRPA spokesman said it will be heard at a later date, but at this time that date is unknown.

Lake Tahoe News on May 23 first reported that Tahoe Hockey Academy wanted to develop an academic-athletic facility in

Meyers.

Since area residents were first notified last week of the proposal they have been writing letters to the bi-state regulatory agency about their concerns. The level of interest in the project led the agency to pull the item completely from the agenda. It had been on the consent agenda.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Program provides Nev. vets free legal help

By Melissa Gomez, Las Vegas Review-Journal

On Monday, James Dorsey sat with Nevada's attorney general in a conference room, drafting up his will.

"We had a little bit of military talk 'cause he was Navy also," Dorsey, 74, said. "I enjoyed it."

Attorney General Adam Laxalt was at Texas Station Monday morning with about 10 local attorneys, helping military veterans and active members through civil matters.

Laxalt said the program idea was on his platform when he ran for attorney general. Two weeks after being elected, he said he made calls, creating an advisory committee. In March, the Office of Military Legal Assistance was established.

Read the whole story