Tahoe Douglas fire focusing on composting combustibles

Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District is hosting a Compost Your Combustibles kickoff event May 24 from 9am to 2pm to raise awareness about becoming a fire adaptive community.

Fire district staff and the Zephyr Fire Crew will provide wildfire landscape information, breakfast and barbecue lunch that day.

Compost Your Combustibles will go through Aug. 3 from 9am-5pm at the Boulder Lodge parking off Upper Kingsbury Grade in Stateline.

‘Godzilla’ doesn’t live up to expectations



By Jeremy Miller

I've been dying to see "Godzilla" for the past several months. Having been very well educated by my old man, Godzilla was a household favorite for me. Mothra, Rodan, whoever, I loved it.

So, when I heard that Gareth Edwards was doing the reboot I was pumped. He wrote and directed 2010's underrated "Monsters", which I thought was unique and promising, so when he was named director of "Godzilla", I had high hopes.

It stars Aaron Taylor-Johnson, Elizabeth Olsen, Bryan Cranston and Ken Watanabe. While living in Japan working at a nuclear power plant Joe Brody (Cranston) is alarmed at unusual seismic activity. The further he investigates, the more paranormal it becomes. A freak "earthquake" of perfectly patterned shocks shakes the plant to the point of collapse causing evacuation.

In a pretty epic and suspenseful scene, Brody lost what was most dear to him. Fast forward 15 years or so and we see young Ford Brody (Johnson) all grown up and in the military. He returns home from tour to wife Elle (Olsen) and a kid. Almost immediately upon his return he receives word from Japan that his father had been locked up in jail for trespassing. He decides to go to Japan to bail his old man out and bring him to the States to try and help him out.



Once he reunites with his father he quickly see that his father's obsession with trying to figure out what exactly happened that day at the plant hasn't subsided with time. Ford Sr. goes on and on about how it wasn't a quake, it was something else. What could it have been, I wonder?

We hop over to Dr. Ishiro Serizawa (Watanabe) who is a

scientist experimenting on some sort of unknown creature. Stuff goes bad real quick (as it typically does in this scenario) and a massive winged creature takes flight from the site. It starts destroying everything around it and Ishiro's path ultimately crosses with the Ford fam's and they form an alliance.

Ford's data from way back when proves to be useful in understand this creature in the here and now. Ford Jr. takes action as the military side comes out and starts to help them search and destroy this newly freed monster. They learn that the monster feeds off nuclear energy, so they do have some ideas as to where they can look. Unfortunately for them (so we think) they start to notice some more unusual activity stemming from the depths of the sea. All of a sudden a massive reading pops up … GODZILLA!

From here we have a battle of the monsters, with Dr. Ishiro in one corner saying that there's a natural order to things and we should let them fight, and then there's the guys in cams saying we need to blow them all up. It proved for a pretty entertaining little three-way of who's the antagonist. Cities are leveled, bombs blow up, monsters roar, people run, and the movie ends.

What's my take? Well, to be honest, the trailers made it look absolutely epic and amazing. It wasn't. Epic? Sure, I guess, but nothing like I expected. There wasn't enough battle between Godzilla and the others. I will say that when they did fight, and when we the audience were privy to it; I was blown away by the effects and really into it. It seemed like the action stopped as quickly as it started, leaving me wanting more at every fight scene. Not good considering it's an action/epic.

I did like all the characters and I loved the story. Everyone who showed up brought his or her A-game, especially Cranston. I just love that guy. There was a time about 1:15 in where I

was getting bored and just so badly wanted to see Godzilla tearing it up and didn't. Another huge problem I have is when a key scene of a trailer doesn't make the cut of the final film. One of the coolest scenes I wanted to see wasn't even in the movie. Total bummer. Overall it was fun, and Godzilla is extremely rad, I just didn't get enough of what I wanted.

South Lake Tahoe resident Jeremy Miller has more movie reviews online.

Tahoe Rim Trail a continual work in progress

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – It's never done – the work, the hiking, the enjoyment.

That was the message of Mary Bennington. For the past four years she has been executive director of the Tahoe Rim Trail Association. The motto of the nonprofit is "A Trail Like No Other".

While it is 165 miles around, with the connectors there are more than 180 miles to the trail. It keeps growing to allow better access. And improvements are continually being made to existing sections.

In her talk May 21 to Soroptimist International South Lake Tahoe at Harrah's Lake Tahoe, Bennington explained how last year the 3.4-mile connector trail from Van Sickle Bi-State Park to the Rim Trail was finished.



TRTA Executive Director Mary Bennington talks to volunteers on a National Trails Day. Photo/LTN file

Another South Shore project that enhanced the hiking experience took 10 years to complete. That was the Kingsbury North and Kingsbury South sections. It used to be paved, go through a neighborhood, was steep and windy. There is also a loop for that section that has been rerouted out of Heavenly's Stagecoach Lodge.

Most of the work for the last two years has been focused on the 24½-mile Rim to Reno trail. The last mile to the summit of Mt. Houghton will be built this summer.

Most of the work to build and maintain the trail network has come from volunteers. About 500 volunteers put in nearly 15,000 hours of work each year.

It was Glen Hampton with the U.S. Forest Service who had the vision for a trail along the ridgetops. The TRTA was formed in 1981 and work began three years later. The 165-mile trail was finished in 2001.

"As you hike the whole trail you see different ecology," Bennington said. "Desolation is different than the East Shore. The West Shore is a lot rockier." This is because of the glaciers that formed the area.

Bennington said it's estimated 100,000 people are on the TRTA

a year. A survey will be taken this summer to gather better data about TRT users.

While two weeks is the average time it takes someone to backpack the trail, many people divide it up into sections. The association says it can be hiked in eight sections, but those are often shortened by hikers, bikers and equestrians.

- Tahoe City to Brockway (20.2 miles) is often the best place to start in the spring because it has the lowest elevation. This means the snow is gone faster than at other locations.

- Brockway to Mount Rose (20.2 miles) has the highest point – Relay Peak at 10,338 feet. “On a clear day you can see to Lassen,” Bennington said.

- Tahoe Meadows to Spooner (23.1 miles) has a 1.2 mile interpretive loop at the beginning that is wheelchair accessible. Farther along, this section looks down on Sand Harbor.

- Spooner to Kingsbury Grade (12.2 miles for the north, 18.5 miles for south route) has a wide panoramic view four miles in.

- Kingsbury Grade to Big Meadow (23.4 miles) includes Star Lake. Freel Peak would mean taking a side trip.

- Big Meadow to Echo Lake (17.5 miles) includes Showers Lake.

- Echo Lake to Barker Pass (32.7 miles) can be broken up by popping out at Bayview Campground.

- Barker Pass to Tahoe City (16.7 miles) has few views of Lake Tahoe, but includes Paige Meadow.

The TRTA has various memberships available, guided treks, and volunteer opportunities. More info is available online.

Letter: Kingsbury Crossing helps Boys & Girls Club

To the community,

The Boys and Girls Club of Lake Tahoe is pleased to announce they have received a generous donation from Kingsbury Crossing. Kingsbury Crossing has a history of helping out the Boys and Girls Club when they are able to.

They donated tables, chairs, blinds, vases, mirrors, framed pictures, and coffee tables. Thanks to Kingsbury Crossing the foyer now has a waiting area for parents to sit and socialize.

The new donation completes the teen room and ties everything together. The teens have been working hard on renovating the teen room and are finally done.

Thank you very much Kingsbury Crossing for your generous donation.

Kelly Garrity, Lake Tahoe Boys & Girls Club

California parks director calling it quits

By Chris Megerian, Los Angeles Times

Anthony Jackson, the former Marine major general who took over

California’s parks department with a mandate to reform the troubled agency, is leaving after 18 months on the job.

Jackson became the department’s director in the wake of an accounting scandal, and he is departing in the middle of an ongoing review of park operations. His last day is June 30.

Despite some improvements, a draft report from the Parks Forward commission said more changes are still needed.

“Despite years of well-intentioned external reports and internal strategic plans, the Department has not yet been able to achieve the magnitude or scope of change needed,” the report said.

Read the whole story

Cyrus to play at Incline on Independence weekend

Billy Ray Cyrus will perform at the Red, White and Tahoe Blue Festival in Incline Village on July 4-5.

Performances will take place outside on the Village Green directly across from the beach.

On July 4 Cyrus will join the Reno Philharmonic during their grand concert celebrating the 200th anniversary of the “Star-Spangled Banner”. Cyrus will perform his song “Some Gave All,” which honors fallen heroes and veterans everywhere, alongside the Reno Philharmonic. The concert will conclude with synchronized music to the fireworks display.

On July 5 Cyrus and his band will perform a full concert at

the Village Green.

For a complete schedule of all weekend events and VIP ticket packages, go online.

Judge: Vail Resorts has rights to Park City ski resort

By Jason Blevins, Denver Post

A Utah District Court ruled Wednesday that Park City Mountain Resort officials failed to renew their historic lease for a majority of their ski terrain and the landowner is allowed to lease the ski area's upper terrain to a new operator.

That means Vail Resorts just won the rights to more than two-thirds of the land beneath Utah's most popular ski area. And it means that Park City Mountain Resort owner Powdr Corp. will go down in history as captaining the ski industry's most costly clerical error: a days-late filing to renew their decades-old, sweetheart lease could forever change their flagship ski area, which has seen Powdr invest more than $100 million.

Powdr Corp. argued it was an "honest mistake" when the resort operator was a couple days late filing paperwork to renew its lease for land beneath Park City Mountain Resort. It was paying landowner Talisker Corp. about $150,000 a year for the land, per the series of 20-year leases first forged in the 1970s. For comparison, Vail Resorts is paying Talisker $25 million a year plus a percentage of revenue every year to

lease the adjacent 4,000-acre Canyons ski area.

Talisker refused to sign a new lease with Powdr and went looking for a new tenant. Powdr sued Talisker to force a new deal. Talisker leased Canyons to Vail Resorts on the condition that the continent's largest resort operator takes over the Park City Mountain Resort legal battle, calling Vail Resorts a "dramatically better operator" than Powdr.

Read the whole story

Piper's house ownership in Tahoe questioned

El Dorado County supervisor candidate Teresa Piper is quick to point out she is a dual-resident because she owns homes in Pollock Pines and South Lake Take.



Teresa Piper

And with this assertion, she said it makes her more qualified than the other five candidates because she understands issues in both parts of what is now District 5.

However, Mimi Rich Hennick of Portland wrote a letter to the *Mountain Democrat* that challenges Piper's assertions.

Hennick writes, “The house she is referring to, and claiming ownership of, is currently and jointly owned by me and my ex-husband, Larry Hennick, since we purchased it in 2002. It was recently on the market and will be re-listed in the near future to be sold as part of our court-ordered divorce settlement.”

Piper did not respond to *Lake Tahoe News’* inquiry about the house ownership question.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

NHP going after unbuckled drivers

For the first time in five years fatalities are up nationwide for people not wearing a seatbelt, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

In 2012, 10,335 unbelted vehicle occupants lost their lives. In Nevada, 41 unbelted vehicle occupants died last year.

The Nevada Highway Patrol is trying to reduce those numbers with the Click It or Ticket program that runs through June 1. This means troopers will be paying even more attention to unbelted drivers.

In 2012, 61 percent of passenger vehicle occupants killed between 6pm and 6am were not wearing their seat belts. The NHP also said men are less likely to wear a seatbelt than women, younger people are less likely than older people, and pickup drivers are worse about buckling up than drivers of passenger cars.

AAA forecasts more travelers on Memorial Day weekend

AAA Travel projects 36.1 million Americans will journey 50 miles or more from home during the Memorial Day holiday weekend, a 1.5 percent increase from the 35.5 million people who traveled last year.

More than eight in 10 travelers will be driving to their destinations.

The Memorial Day holiday travel period is defined as May 22-26.

“As we enter into the summer travel season with warmer temperatures and tulips in bloom, thoughts of historic cold are still fresh in the minds of Americans in many parts of the country,” Marshall L. Doney, AAA chief operating officer said in a press release. “The winter blues appear to have given Americans the travel bug and a case of cruise cabin fever as travel for the holiday is expected to hit a new post-recession high.”

In addition to seasonal rising temperatures, improvements in several key economic factors are driving the expectation for more holiday travelers this year. “As the economy continues to improve at a slow and steady pace consumer spending, disposable income, consumer confidence and the employment outlook are trending up which is welcomed news for the travel industry,” continued Doney.

AAA expects most drivers will pay lower gas prices by Memorial Day weekend due to rising supplies. AAA expects holiday gas prices to be relatively similar or even slightly less than

last year’s national Memorial Day average of $3.63 per gallon.

According to AAA’s Leisure Travel Index, hotel rates for AAA three diamond lodgings are expected to increase 2 percent from one year ago with travelers spending an average of $169 per night compared to $166 last year. The average hotel rate for AAA two diamond hotels has risen 3 percent, with an average cost of $124 per night.