Lake Tahoe campgrounds opening for season

Emerald Bay Boat-in Campground opens May 23 on a first-come, first-served basis.

Reservations will be needed starting June 13 through Labor Day. Call 800.444.7275 to book a site.

D.L. Bliss campground is first-come, first-served until June 11. To book a spot, call 530.525.7232.

U.S. Forest Service campgrounds in the Lake Tahoe Basin are all set to be open by June 1. Kaspian, Meeks Bay, Fallen Leaf, Nevada Beach and Zephyr Cove are already open.

Siding a contentious issue for SLT, developer



Plywood on a back wall of the Chateau project is likely to be temporary.

Photo/LTN

By Kathryn Reed

In a rare moment, the South Lake Tahoe City Council said “no” to a request by attorney Lew Feldman when it came to the Chateau project.

While the discussion May 20 was civil, in the end Feldman did not get everything he requested in the “major design review permit revision.” He wanted part of the siding to be changed from cedar to plywood.

Mayor Hal Cole was the lead advocate to keep the cedar. For the time being the T-1-11 siding can stay.

The compromise is that if the pillars come out or future development is such that the 30-foot high siding would be visible, the cedar siding will have to be put on.

Feldman’s contention was, “If nothing happens and the columns remain, it would seem punitive.” Cedar is much more expensive than plywood.

The retail-nightclub project is costing $11 million.

Other changes allowed include increasing the window sizes along the highway, reducing the width of the Stateline Avenue sidewalk from 8½ feet to 6 feet, and modifying the door and window locations to appease retailers.

What retailers will occupy the more than 18,000-square-feet of space is still being withheld from the public. Stores should open this summer.

McP’s has served its last meal in its current location before it moves to the other side of the Chateau project in the round building at the corner of the highway and Stateline Avenue. Soon the old structure will be demolished.

Also to be taken down this summer is the Holiday Lodge.

Feldman said the entire site would be cleaned up this building season.

All of the parcels being built on now have been consolidated into one map. That is not the case for the properties that Owens Realty Mortgage bought early this year for $6 million from City National Bank. It does, however, make the 11-plus acreage site controlled by one owner for the first time.

Feldman said the owners have no intentions of selling off the parcels piecemeal.

“We now have site control, which is vital to advance future phases,” Feldman told the council.

While he would not promise future phases would be built next year, he said it is likely things will progress sooner rather than later.

When the project was first approved it was to include two hotels, a convention center, retail and open space. The city was going to be the operator of the center and take care of the common areas. Since the original developer filed for bankruptcy the city no longer has a financial stake other than collecting taxes.

Supervisors put Nutting’s

future in judge’s hands

By Peter Hecht, Sacramento Bee

Amid a spectacle raw with anger and emotion, four El Dorado County supervisors voted Tuesday to ask a judge to decide whether their colleague, Ray Nutting, should be removed from office.

It was another searing chapter in the political saga of the embattled supervisor as fellow board members went into closed session without him to discuss whether to kick him out for his conviction on four misdemeanors last week.

But before they convened with the county attorney and outside legal counsel, they got an earful from Nutting’s wife, Jennifer, who took to a lectern to blast authorities who “maliciously prosecuted my husband.”

Nutting, 54, was acquitted of three felony malfeasance charges last week in connection with allegations that he failed to properly disclose more than $70,000 in state grant income for clearing brush on his family’s 340-acre ranch in Somerset.

However, jurors did find the four-term supervisor guilty of six misdemeanor government code violations.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• South Lake Tahoe's Engineering Division received $2.8 million in a Round 2 Proposition 84 grant for the Sierra Tract Erosion Control Project.

• Wilbur D. May Arboretum and Botanical Garden annual plant sale is June 7 from 8am-noon, Rancho San Rafael Regional Park, 1595 N. Sierra St., Reno.

• Gov. Brian Sandoval appointed Douglas County Sheriff Ron Pierini as chairman of the Nevada Commission of Police Officers' Standards and Training. Pierini has been on the commission since 2002.

• The following is the Artist in Residence lineup at the Tallac Site on the South Shore for this summer. Artists will be working from 11am-4pm: June 19-25 Lainie Vreeland, June 26-July 2 Kelly Lynn Smith, July 5-7 John Holland, July 17-23 Millie Meng Beher, and Aug. 6-17 Kit Knight.

• South Lake Tahoe Fire Department Station No. 3 is having an open house May 24 from 1-5pm. The station is at 2101 Lake Tahoe Blvd. For more information, call 530.542.6160.

S. Tahoe loosens sex offender ordinance

By Kathryn Reed

Sex offenders in South Lake Tahoe will get to roam a little freer starting next month – including near parks, schools,

arcades and other places children congregate.

This is all because the California Supreme Court refused to review a case from the Fourth Appellate District Court that ultimately made 40 local sex offender ordinances illegal.

“We as a city cannot regulate sex offenders in our community. That is pathetic,” City Attorney Tom Watson told the City Council on May 20.

The other choice was to be sued. The city had already been put on notice by the California Reform Sex Offender Laws group.

“The sex offender ordinance adopted by the city of South Lake Tahoe violates both the federal and state constitutions,” Janice Bellucci, president of that group, said in a statement last month. “The South Lake Tahoe ordinance is based upon two myths: (1) that registered citizens have a high rate of re-offense and (2) that strangers commit most sexual assaults.”

According to the Megan’s Law website there are 27 registered sex offenders in South Lake Tahoe. For a town that is 16.6 square miles, that equates to more than 1.5 sex offenders per square mile. But not every sex offender has to register.

The council agreed with Watson’s characterization of the need to amend the ordinance. They said it was with reluctance they were removing the part of the city’s ordinance that prohibited registered sex offenders from being within 300 feet of public parks and like areas or living within 2,000 feet of such an area.

Schools, via the state, have separate rules keep to sex offenders off school grounds.

One of the problems with the city’s ordinance is that a sex offender would be violating the law simply by driving past a school or even someplace like McDonald’s that has a play structure.

“We can’t regulate their free movement,” City Manager Nancy Kerry said.

Watson added, “We were in essence criminalizing their right to travel.”

The council and staff talked about the importance of educating parents and children to the threat of predators and that “when you see something, say something” should be the mantra.

El Dorado County in January revised its sex offender ordinance.

The council’s vote was 3-1-1. Councilman Tom Davis voted no and JoAnn Conner abstained. Neither explained their vote. It will come back as a second reading and final vote in June.

Letter: Lions Club helps at Bread & Broth

To the community,

Lions Club members “help wherever, whenever and however they can” and that is exactly what the Lake Tahoe South Shore Lions Club members did at Bread & Broth’s May 12 dinner.

Representing the Lake Tahoe South Shore Lions Club at the meal were Rich Dart, Josh Welch, Tom Deputy and Maureen Kirkland, chapter president. These Lions Club members took the opportunity to help people in need by volunteering alongside the B&B volunteers before, during and after the dinner.

With their $250 donation for B&B's Adopt a Day of Nourishment sponsorship and their volunteer support, the Lake Tahoe South Shore Lions Club hosted a Mexican dinner of beef and bean burritos, Spanish rice, tortillas, fresh guacamole and salsa prepared by B&B's talented and versatile cooks. Nearly 100 diners enjoyed the tasty dinner and took home bags of foods donated by local grocery stores and businesses.

"It's a wonderful and rewarding experience for the community" was Maureen Kirkland's description of the dinner event. Thanks to generous and involved sponsors like the Lake Tahoe South Shore Lions Club, Bread & Broth is able to provide meals every Monday and Friday evenings to all who enter our doors

To help B&B as a donor or sponsor, contact me at 530.542.2876 or carolsgerard@aol.com.

Carol Gerard Bread & Broth

Boat inspections required at Donner Lake

Watercraft inspections have begun at the Donner Lake public boat on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays, with seven-day week inspections starting June 1.

In January, Truckee passed an ordinance requiring mandatory inspections on all motorized and/or trailered watercraft, and other watercraft having water ballast tanks, prior to launching at Donner Lake. Inspections are to prevent the introduction of aquatic invasive species into Donner Lake.

To help pay for the startup costs associated with the program, the town was awarded a $10,000 grant from the Truckee River Fund at the Community Foundation of Western Nevada.

Truckee Donner Recreation and Park District staff will be performing all inspections.

Watercraft identified as high risk will be required to be decontaminated before being able to launch in Donner Lake. Decontaminations will be available for a fee and will take place at Alpine Meadows off Highway 89, and Northstar off Highway 267.

More information on watercraft inspections at Donner Lake is online.

S. Tahoe changing how it handles donations

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe is getting out of the GIFTing business.

GIFT – Great Ideas For Tahoe – was started in 2001 by the city's parks and recreation employees as a means to take donations and then spend them how the donor chose. In 2002, the council, acting as GIFT's board of directors, took over the job of running it so there would be more oversight. Now it is about to be dissolved.

On Tuesday, the council divvied up the remaining $37,282.59.

“The city can always receive donations and we’ll set something up that is organized more appropriately,” City Manager Nancy Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News*. “Funds will be spent according to their original purpose; we expect by years end.”

Reasons to dissolve GIFT include much of the money has been sitting there for years, improvements will be made to city entities and staff time will be reduced by not needing to administer the accounts.

Some of the money is somewhat restricted in how it can be spent based on the giver’s desires. Other dollars were given with broad interpretation – such as youth sports.

One category is for the children’s memorial. The balance is $898.71. There was a time when money was used to place markers on the tree for people who could not afford to memorialize their child.

The staff’s recommendation was to use the fund for a bench at the site. That is going to happen with a twist. Kenny Curtzwiler, who last summer was instrumental in getting the memorial tree refurbished, suggested the council come up with a total of $2,200 for two benches. He told the council that Tahoe Log Works could build two benches that would complement that tree and install them for that amount.

The council agreed this was a good idea. Permits and other things need to be secured before it is a done deal. The money will go directly to the builder.

Other money will go to the senior center, canine agility park, youth programs and equipment, and ice rink.

In other news from the May 20 meeting:

• On a 3-2 vote, the council decided to leave the sandwich board regulations as they are. Councilmembers JoAnn Conner and Tom Davis wanted to expand the allowable timeframe by 24 hours

to start on Fridays at 8am.

• Tahoe Prosperity Center, on which Councilmember Angela Swanson sits, received a $167,000 grant from the California Public Utility Commission for broadband.

• Councilwoman Brooke Laine and fellow Utah-trekkers gave a lengthy overview on their trip to Park City where they learned about how that mountain town went from being reliant on one industry (mining) to being near bankrupt to being highly regarded. Free transit and politicians with backbones were two of the main takeaways.

Rich families face a marriage problem

By Liz Moyer, Wall Street Journal

Being born to the manor is one thing. Marrying one of its occupants is something else altogether.

Just ask Steven Siig, a self-described "ski bum" and extreme-sports documentary filmmaker who was living near Lake Tahoe and scraping by as a landscaper when he met his wife, Melissa, in 2001.

Unbeknown to him, she was the oldest granddaughter of Richard Bloch, the co-founder of the tax-preparation firm H&R Block Inc. Melissa Siig, now 41 years old, didn't tell him this right away. "We're very guarded about it," she said.

"It was kind of intimidating," said Steven Siig, 45, when he learned of her background. "I said, 'Wow, it's someone I use to do my taxes when I do my taxes.' I didn't even know if I

had done taxes the last few years."

The couple was engaged six months after they began dating, and Siig began a rapid-fire process of education and assimilation into the family – a move some financial consultants call "onboarding." Bloch family members gave him personal finance and career advice, and the couple later started meeting with a UBS AG financial adviser. Steven Siig joined the RA Bloch Cancer Foundation board, along with his new wife, and started attending twice-a-year family gatherings in Aspen, Colo., and Puerto Vallarta, Mexico.

The onboarding process is one way wealthy families are trying to smooth intrafamily relations and safeguard their fortunes for future generations. As the scions of the patriarchs grow up and get married, the importance of teaching about wealth and its preservation rises, according to families and their advisers.

Read the whole story

Women guilty of tampering with Incline bear traps

By AP

A mother and her adult daughter have been convicted of tampering with a bear trap at Incline Village in an effort to thwart wildlife officials' efforts to capture the animals.

It's the first such case prosecuted in Nevada, the *Reno Gazette-Journal* reported today.

Cheryl Ann Morrison, 63, of Truckee and Season Morrison, 35,

of Reno each face up to $3,000 in fines – $1,500 for each of two misdemeanors.

Incline Village Justice Court Judge E. Alan Tiras found them guilty of obstructing or interfering with a Nevada Department of Wildlife officer and tampering with a vehicle.

The two women admitted during a daylong trial last month they deliberately tripped a bear trap set to capture a black bear that was becoming a nuisance in October. They said they thought state wildlife officials had set the trap illegally but the judge disagreed.

In his six-page ruling issued Monday, Tiras concluded the law cited by the defense that makes it illegal to set steel traps within 200 feet of a public road was written to target leg traps used to catch small fur-bearing mammals.

Those traps are “very different” than the large culvert-style traps used to capture bears, the judge said.

Prosecutors say state wildlife biologist Carl Lackey placed a motion-activated camera near the trap outside Incline Village that captured the Morrisons and a third unidentified woman tampering with the trap.

Authorities were able to identify by the woman by, among other things, Facebook postings regarding the incident. Their sentencing date has not been set.

The incident occurred during a year of mounting conflicts between people and trash-raiding black bears.

Critics say the Department of Wildlife is killing too many bears. State officials counter they’re having more and more trouble doing their job because people are interfering with efforts to capture problem bears, including tampering with traps.