Eating chili raises money for wagon train group

The Highway 50 Association Wagon Train is having a Chili Fundraiser at Coyote Grill in Round Hill on May 17 from 5-9pm.

A portion of the proceeds benefit the association.

For more info, call Donna Baxter on (530) 542.0180.

Thunder Valley Casino ready for online gaming

By Mark Anderson, Sacramento Business Journal

The United Auburn Indian Community, owners of Thunder Valley Casino, entered into a 10-year agreement with London-based Bwin.party Digital Entertainment PLC, the world's largest listed online gaming company.

The tribe doesn't feature online gaming of any kind, but it took the step to forge this partnership should California law be changed to allow online gaming, said Doug Elmets, spokesman for the tribe.

"Our belief is it that it is a matter of 'when' not 'if' online gaming becomes legal, and the UAIC wants to have a premiere partner when it comes to pass," Elmets said.

Read the whole story

LTN tidbit 13: LTN starting to collect awards for its work



May is 31 tidbits about Lake Tahoe News month.

LTN tidbit No. 13:

Awards are never the reason one should do anything. But we will admit we like the kudos.

Earlier this year *Lake Tahoe News* won four travel writing awards from the North American Travel Journalists Association. This was our first – and only so far – competition to enter.

Not all entities allow online publications to compete. For example, the California Newspaper Publishers Association is still only for print.

While it's nice to have our peers recognize our work, ultimately we believe the readers are the best judges of the work we are doing.

Here is information about becoming a paid subscriber.

An outsider’s look at what students in Seoul think of North Korea

By Shawn Swinger

SEOUL – During the past few weeks North Korea has issued some grave statements. In line with the 100th birthday of its founder, Kim Il-Sung, the “Democratic People’s Republic of Korea” (DPRK) announced that it would launch a rocket into space under the pretext of putting a satellite into orbit. A multitude of nations condemned the launch saying that the North was trying to test its ability to fire ballistic missiles, armed with nuclear warheads, which could in theory reach the United States. The proposed launch also threatened to sever a recently agreed upon food aid package which the U.S. was to give to the DPRK in order to assist their malnourished population in return for a moratorium on nuclear advancements.

The missile launch went ahead on April 13 and in moments exploded (literally) in failure. It remains to be seen what steps the international community will take in response to the launch.



Students in Seoul are not preoccupied with North Korea's missile launch. Photo/Shawn Swinger

A week later, in an oh so stylish move, the North Korean military interrupted a regularly broadcasted program in Pyongyang (the North's capital) to announce that within a span of four minutes they could reduce the capital of South Korea (Seoul) to ashes in retaliation for the South's president's criticism of their regime. Some believe the threat to be a move of the military to re-establish credibility after the failed missile launch and as such it is no more than mere rhetoric. Others fear an actual military provocation, though one short of reducing the 10 million plus city of Seoul to nothingness.

I was in Seoul during the time of the missile launch and had the opportunity to engage with several young South Koreans in order to see these tensions from their perspectives. In a roadside "restaurant", in actuality just a few chairs under a plastic tarp, serviced from an inside kitchen, I sat down with my friend Minju Kang to enjoy some cold noodles with a hard boiled egg, apparently a "North Korean specialty".

Minju grew up in a small town near the border with the DPRK but now lives in Seoul working on her master's degree in comparative literature. Despite the proximity to the border,

Minju detailed that she never gave her neighbors across the mine field border much thought. Growing up she was taught to say that the reunification of North and South was her greatest wish along with the desire to see economic aid given to the impoverished nation. Nevertheless, any and all danger that North Korea posed was never taken seriously.

“They threaten us every year so we just got used to it,” Minju explained.

However, when the South Korean Cheonan warship was torpedoed by North Korea in 2010, some of Minju’s childhood friends were in the military and faced the very real possibility of going to war. She came to the realization that “once my friends were potentially going to war, then the danger became real.” Yet, even given the recent tensions on the Korean peninsula, any and all threats are still taken by Minju as mere talk.

When things got personal and people whom she knew got involved then the North became more real. When tensions remain only as a paragraph in a newspaper, all verbal assaults become mere background noise to the busy lives of young Koreans.

I dove into several other conversations with college aged Koreans over barbecue, in a Taco Bell, and elsewhere. One thing that stood out was that no one breached the topic of the DPRK’s missile launch. In fact, North Korea was never brought up until I steered the conversation that way. It was after said steering that I discovered their opinions, which did exist and were strong, but the headlines of the North’s recklessness were not in the forefront of their minds.

Most of these Koreans had full time jobs, were in school, or were otherwise caught in the frenetic flow of Seoul’s metropolitan chaos. Being obsessed with the moves of the DPRK’s dictatorship, I assumed that all South Koreans were in a constant state of awareness toward their wayward brother. It shouldn’t come as too surprising a truth, though, to realize

that most people just never think about it. After all, the same is true in our societies as well.

Amidst the day-to-day fray of bills, work, kids, and so forth, one simply does have the mental space to contemplate the meaning of these things. However, considering the possibility of nuclear armament, events such as the rashness of North Korea hold consequences not only for those living in Seoul but for us here on the other side of the Pacific. In light of all this, perhaps we can afford to give these realities a little more thought.

Shawn Swinger is a native of South Lake Tahoe who just spent two weeks in Seoul.

Opinion: Life for a mom is about 15-minute segments

By Eileen Wacker

I am the mother of four kids, aged 8- to 14-years-old, and trying to launch a business. I live life in 15-minute increments.

Our house wakes up at 6am during the week. Getting everyone to eat something is a challenge so I let them eat whatever they want – leftover pasta, soup, mac and cheese, cereal, bagels, whatever. Then I either drive them to school, leaving at 6:45 or go to my office and start to work. I usually have appointments racked and stacked as I work with a team located across Korea, India, Vancouver, San Francisco, Mexico City and

Honolulu.

Today, I'm also trying to keep fish from dying. My son went to a birthday party and the party favor was a beta fish. I groaned when I saw it and secretly vowed to get even with the mom. Then my son named the fish Medallion because it was like gold to him. So, yesterday I went to the pet store to get some accommodations for Medallion and we left with six mollies and an aquarium. Anyway, the six mollies are named – Blaze, Spike, Buster (girl), Anna, Crusoe, and Razor.

This morning, I came upon our dog, Buster Brown, with the fish food container in his mouth. He had eaten nearly the whole can and I had to wrestle the container from him. Apparently, he had climbed up on the chair and snatched the food. He was utterly remorseless standing there with fish flakes sticking all around his mouth. And he apparently scared a fish to death. Poor Spike met an untimely death.

Buster Brown is also going to the vet today as his ears are infected and he has been chewing his paws. So now I add allergy medicine and pet hospital to the bills. Lately we have been cracking down on him running away to visit our neighbor's chihuahua as our other neighbor feels menaced by small dogs and calls security.

My assistant arrives and we crank through as much as humanly possible as we are launching April 1. Then school pick-ups start at 2:45. Someone helps with the driving but we are both in our respective cars from 2:30 until 6pm every day. Each child has school, a sport and an instrument. But we also have doctor and dental appointments, birthdays, school orientations, parent conferences, school fairs, major sports events, dances, play dates in all different venues. And, they keep growing and needing new clothes and shoes.

I arrive home at 6 from the vet, picking up my 13-year-old son from tennis along the way. My 8-year-old daughter runs to the

door to remind me the bake sale is tomorrow and we promised to send in cheesecake brownies, cut into pieces, bagged and labeled. Luckily, I have brownie mix and cheesecake filling. We preheat the oven and start to make them. I am making dinner at the same time, boiling water for pasta. So it appears to be working out. Then I discover we have no canola oil. I rush to the store to get the oil. I am almost home and my oldest texts me – "just ran out of milk." I text her back "drain the pasta and I'll get milk."

As I walk in the door, one of my kids calls me to report an "infestation" in the kitchen. Sure enough there are a thousand little ants just by the door. We run and douse them with enough "raid" to fill a bathtub.

I have three kids to help with homework; one is independent or I should say refuses to let me see his work. I listen to how everyone's day went, then showers, piano practice and a little free time. If I don't tell them to go to bed, they forget (but if I attempt to send them to bed early, it is treated as a crime committed against children everywhere.)

I still lay down for five minutes with my youngest when she goes to bed. She goes down at 8:15 and that 15-minute increment is critical to her. Then, I cut and bag the brownies, make lunches, make sure all laptops are charged-up, and check for correct shoes for in-school and after-school sports. Last, I confiscate all cell phones until morning as they text their friends incessantly.

Just when I feel like my "sportsmomship" might give out, my kids give me a hug and tell me I'm the best mom ever. I get re-energized and work a little longer as India and Korea are up and working. I have a glass of wine with my husband and ask him about his day. I usually don't remember his response as I am so exhausted. At ten, I go to sleep dreaming about ski vacations and sleeping in.

Every Sunday, we look at the calendar and figure out what items we have in addition to the regular routine. I slot them all into the schedule in 15-minute increments. My youngest son likes to play flag football and says he is great at “juking.” This is modern-day parent “juking.” And tomorrow I start booking the summer camps, trips and schedule. But at least I’ve made enough pasta tonight to eat for breakfast tomorrow.

Eileen Wacker, a Harvard Business School graduate, lived and worked in seven different countries, including the United States. Wacker now resides in Honolulu with her husband and four children.

Blood drive at Tahoe Douglas fire station

Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District is having a blood Drive May 30 from noon-6pm at station No. 3 at 193 Elks Point Road.

To schedule an appointment, go online and use the Sponsor Code: TahoeFire, or contact Kate or Carrie at (775) 588.3591.

Placer County’s Tahoe area supe faces four challengers

By Ed Fletcher, Sacramento Bee

In Placer County’s reshaped 5th District, conventional wisdom

says Supervisor Jennifer Montgomery will eventually go up against either Mark Wright or a guy named Johnson in a November runoff.



The question, under that scenario, is whether the runoff will feature engineer Mark Wright, businessman/investigator Jerry Johnson, county Planning Commissioner Richard Johnson or retired peace officer Gary Johnson.

To avoid a November runoff, one candidate would need to get 50 percent plus one vote in the June 5 election.

“With five candidates it (will be) very hard for anybody to get over 50 percent,” said Bill Halldin, a member of Placer County’s Republican Central Committee.

While the race is officially nonpartisan, GOP activists said they sought out someone to run against Montgomery, a Democrat. Officials said Wright was the first candidate to emerge and won the endorsement before any of the three Johnsons became candidates.

Halldin said any of the candidates – Montgomery included – would be hard-pressed to get more than 35 percent to 40 percent of the vote.

Montgomery has the power of incumbency, but since District 5 boundaries were expanded to include Auburn, her advantage is not as strong as it would have been had the district borders remained unchanged.

The sprawling district now runs from Auburn along Interstate 80 all the way to north Lake Tahoe.

Read the whole story

Tahoe mom-child celebrate Mother's Day every day

By Michele Lynn

When Bonnie Clarke needs some motherly advice, she doesn't have to travel far. That's because she and her mom enjoy the unusual perk of having retired to the same community.

The two women are neighbors at ABHOW's Tahoe Senior Plaza in South Lake Tahoe. Mom has lived in the community for three years, while her daughter, also named Bonnie Clarke, became a resident in January with her husband, Paul Devers.

"It was a big decision to move here because I had a very busy life in New Hampshire, with 50 years of friends and 50 years of being in the same church," says the elder Bonnie, who was widowed in 2000. She put her name on the Plaza's waiting list in 2005 so that she could be closer to her three children, who live in California and Nevada, and moved into the community in 2009.



Two generations living retirement days at Tahoe

Senior Plaza. Photo/Provided

Seeing how much her mother enjoyed life at the Plaza, the younger Bonnie – who goes by Bonnie Del to avoid confusion – put her name on the waiting list for the community when she turned 62 last year. She and her husband received the news that they were in just a few months later.

It's unusual for a mother and daughter to live in the same retirement community, says Lauren Shaham, vice president of communications at LeadingAge, ABHOW's national professional association. She says that she hasn't heard of another family pair like the Clarke women.

Mother and daughter see each other daily, going on group outings together or checking in for a chat.

"If my husband is asleep or out of town, I might wake up in the morning and give her a quick call, or walk down the hallway and up the stairs to see her," says Bonnie Del. "We'll sit there and start to talk and then, all of a sudden, it's two hours later."

They have always been close.

"Throughout my life, most of my friends were surprised at the relationship that my mother and I had," says Bonnie Del. "We would do hikes together, go on shopping excursions, and bake together every Christmas."

When they lived in New Hampshire, a favorite tradition was their annual "Miss America trip." They would drive to Maine and spend the weekend "shopping, eating out, and then watching the Miss America pageant on a good television in a nice hotel," says the daughter.

They still enjoy many of the same activities.

"Just last night," says the mother, "I was in the living room

area working on a puzzle when (Bonnie Del) came in. I asked her if she was going for a walk, and we went out and did at least four miles together."

Those regular walks are especially meaningful.

"It gives us the opportunity to do enough talking to solve problems," Bonnie says. "I can talk to her and help her with the things that are troubling her."

Bonnie is extremely active and youthful. In fact, says her daughter, "I'm only in my 60s and I'm trying to get in shape so I can keep up with my mother who will be 90 this summer. I had to start dyeing my hair so people would stop thinking that I was the mother and she was the daughter."

Bonnie says that she is always excited when she's out in the hall and her daughter appears.

"Just having her close has made me feel more secure," she says. "As I'm getting older, it's a comfort knowing that if anything happens to me, she's there."

Bonnie Del shares those feelings.

"In these years, it's just nice to be able to spend time with her," she says.

Both women share a strong faith and worship together every Sunday at Sierra Community Church in South Lake Tahoe.

"God opened the door for us to be together," says Bonnie Del. "This is where we're supposed to be at this time of our lives."

Michele Lynn works for ABHOW, the company that runs the senior center.

Special Olympics benefit at AAA in Carson City

AAA is hosting an open house May 18 at its Carson City office to benefit Special Olympics.

The 9am-3pm event includes a silent auction, special insurance counseling, travel advice as well as ample refreshments. Proceeds from the silent auction will go to Special Olympics of Nevada.

Food vendor Schwan’s will donate 20 percent of its proceeds on orders to Special Olympics.

Special Olympics is the world’s largest sports organization for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, providing year-round training and competitions to more than 3.7 million athletes in 170-plus countries.

The office is at 2901 South Carson St., Carson City.

USFS offering class for chain saw certification

Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit is offering a chain saw sawyer course June 16-17.

The course provides introduction to the function, maintenance and safe use of chain saws. The classroom session on Saturday will cover safety standards, appropriate use and function of personal protective equipment, saw maintenance, sharpening, and troubleshooting.

The Sunday field session will be entirely hands-on. Class attendees should be comfortable using power equipment, be physically capable of operating the saws, and be committed to active participation.

Contact Jacob Quinn to sign up or for more information – jmquinn@fs.fed.us or (530) 543.2609.

Current first aid and CPR are required for this certification, or participants must be able to document enrollment in an upcoming first aid/CPR course.