Full moon snowshoe near Ehrman Mansion

California State Park rangers will be leading a full moon snowshoe hike along the West Shore at Ed Z'berg Sugar Pine Point State Park on Feb. 4.

The tour begins on the day use (lake side) of the park and explores the natural and cultural history around the Hellman-Ehrman estate.

For those new to snowshoeing, there will be a beginner's clinic at 6:30pm sponsored by West Shore Sports. The full moon hike starts promptly at 7pm in the day use side of the park.

The programs last approximately 1½ hours and costs $20 for adults and $5 for children under 12. The cost includes event parking and snowshoe rentals, if needed. All proceeds from the tours support the Sierra State Parks Foundation.

Wear warm, layered clothing, waterproof shoes and bring a flashlight.

Space is limited and reservations are required through West Shore Sports at (530) 525.9920.

Bulbs shine a light on

changing industry

By Susan Skorupa, Reno Gazette-Journal

The biggest changes on home improvement and hardware store shelves for consumers in the past couple of years probably have shown up on the light bulb aisles.



And there's more change to come as the industry strives to improve energy-use standards and pricing on new light-bulb technology. There also are federal standards pending that – if enacted – will affect the sale of traditional incandescent bulbs.

Standard incandescent bulbs, the mainstay of the lighting industry for 100 years or so, are fading in popular usage and being replaced by more energy-efficient models. Some people bemoan the loss of the traditional bulb with its bright, golden light and cheap replacement costs. Proponents of new technology cite improvements to newer light sources – such as compact fluorescent lamps, or CFLs – with greater energy efficiency, longer usage lifetimes and falling prices.

"People are aware of them, and they are taking off," John Lazarus of Bulbman in Reno said of energy-efficient light bulb choices. "Incandescent is 100-year-old technology. I tell people, would you want to go back to the old cars? … I kind of miss my old '48 Buick, but I like my new one with all the new technology."

Incandescents aren't going away entirely, lighting experts said. Some are being bolstered with high-energy efficiency. Some – such as appliance light bulbs – are not yet included in federal standards, but consumers should be aware that the lighting scene is changing continually with new models of light bulbs and new technology adding to the choices.

“For us, it’s all about education and helping consumers find the right lighting options,” Alyssa Steele, a light bulb associate at the Home Depot, said of the wide array of light choices now available.

Read the whole story

Zephyr Cove firm expanding into commercial sector

By Northern Nevada Business Weekly

A Zephyr Cove company that’s making the transition from grant-funded research and development to commercial contracts said last week it nailed down its first major partnership.

And the contract may lead to more jobs at Zephyr Photonics, the company formerly known as OptiComp.

“We think it will substantially affect our growth prospects positively, and therefore lead to increased hiring to support the growth,” said Tom Steding, the company’s chief executive officer.

Read the whole story

Most schools in Lake Tahoe

closed because of snow

If you see more young people than usual out and about today in the Lake Tahoe Basin, they are not skipping school. Many schools are closed because of the heavy, wet snow that has fallen and is creating hazardous driving conditions.

Lake Tahoe Unified is closed; Lake Tahoe Community College will have classes starting after noon, however, the Child Development Center is open; Douglas County schools already had the day off; Tahoe Truckee Unified is closed; Incline Schools are closed, however, all other Washoe County schools are on a two-hour delay; Sierra Nevada College is closed; and Truckee Meadows Community College in Reno is on a two-hour delay.



Snow too heavy for the blower Jan. 23. Photo/Kathryn Reed

A winter storm warning remains in effect until 4 this afternoon. The heaviest snow is expected to last until 10 Monday morning. However, in South Lake Tahoe at 6:30am the white stuff had become a slight rain. About 4 inches of snow accumulated overnight in South Tahoe.

The sun is expected to return Tuesday, with a high of 55 forecast for Thursday on the South Shore.

Ski resorts are able to open more terrain with this gift from

Mother Nature. Despite a weekend worth of snow, tree skiing is still not advised until another layer covers all those rocks.

The Sierra Avalanche Center says the danger in the backcountry is at high.

Roads are slick and mucky, with chain requirements on most highways in and out of the Tahoe basin. For all the road conditions, click on the state icons at the top of *Lake Tahoe News'* home page.

– Kathryn Reed

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe

Shelby is a special kitty – only 6 months old, she came to the shelter as a stray with a damaged eye.



When she was spayed, her eye was removed and she's much happier, purring all the time. Shelby gets along with just about everyone, and she gets around just fine despite her missing eye.

Shelby is spayed, microchipped, and vaccinated.

She 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.

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

K’s Kitchen: Ringing in the Chinese New Year

By Kathryn Reed

The Chinese New Year, or Lunar New Year as it’s now called in some circles, begins today. In anticipation of the commencement of the Year of the Dragon, I thought it appropriate to try a new recipe this past weekend.



Oh my, it’s a definite keeper. The flavors and textures are outstanding and complementary.

Ironically, I have given up my subscription to *Sunset* magazine and the recipe is from the January issue. Good thing my sister, Pam, still gets it because I was able to make a copy of the recipe when I was at her house earlier this month.

In the past I would have skipped it because it calls for Brussels sprouts, but now those mini-cabbage looking morsels are a new favorite veggie.

The Chinese New Year is huge, though not so much in Tahoe. The start is on the second new moon after the winter solstice – so it's never on the same date like the Gregorian calendar we use that starts on Jan. 1 year in and year out.

The recipe calls for mung bean sprouts. I bought what Safeway had. Mung wasn't in the name. Drizzling soy sauce is recommended.

I recently discovered there is an Asian grocery store in the Town and Country Center (where Whiskey Dicks is) in South Lake Tahoe. It's been there nearly a year. While small, it does have items the major grocery stores don't have and the prices are great.

The recipe says it serves six. I disagree. When it's just the two of us, we often have an Asian dish standalone. With this recipe, Sue and I each had two helpings. We were left with one serving to fight over. So, had we invited people over, we either would have needed other dishes or been hungry.

Brussels Spouts and Shiitake Lo Mein

1 oz. dried shiitake mushrooms

4 oz. dried thin egg noodles

¼ C vegetable oil, divided

1 pound Brussels sprouts, trimmed and halved

½ small yellow onion, sliced

1 T minced garlic

½ tsp each white pepper, sugar, and kosher salt

½ C vegetable broth

2 C mung bean sprouts, rinsed

2 green onions, sliced diagonally

Soy sauce

Put mushrooms in a heat-proof bowl. Bring a medium saucepan filled with water to a boil. Ladle 2 cups water over mushrooms and let sit until very soft, 15 to 20 minutes.

Add noodles to pan and cook until tender, about 6 minutes. Drain and set aside.

Heat 2 T oil in a wok or large frying pan over high heat. Add Brussels sprouts and onion and cook 3 minutes. Drain mushrooms and squeeze out any excess liquid, then add to wok. Cook, stirring occasionally, until onion starts to soften and Brussels sprouts are bright green, about 3 minutes. Add garlic and cook until fragrant, about 2 minutes. Stir in seasonings and broth and cook until most of liquid is gone, about 3 minutes.

Add reaming 2 T oil and the noodles, tossing to coat, and cook until hot, about 2 minutes. Add bean sprouts and cook until warm.

Transfer to a serving dish and sprinkle with green onions.

Serve with soy sauce.

Meeting will focus on new

Douglas County senior center

Douglas County Parks & Recreation Commission and Senior Services Advisory Council is having a public forum on Jan. 26 at 6pm at the Douglas County Senior Center at 2300 Meadow Lane in Gardnerville to discuss the new senior center in the Carson Valley.

A significant amount of work has been done by various community groups and advisory boards leading up to this meeting to determine the various needs and uses of the facility. Now that the project is moving forward to construction, a final process has been initiated to ensure the community has an opportunity to weigh in on the design prior to the development of specifications. Construction of the facility is anticipated to begin by early 2013.

The facility will be located at Herbig Park next to Lampe Park in Gardnerville.

For more information, call (775) 782.9828.

Opinion: Boosting U.S. tourism a good idea

Publisher's note: ***This editorial is from the Jan. 20, 2012, Reno Gazette-Journal.***

President Barack Obama got off to a bad start with Nevadans when, early in his administration, he told federal government agencies to avoid Las Vegas when scheduling meetings.

The president undoubtedly meant no slur on the Silver State. It was, rather, a ham-handed attempt to rein in spending by government bureaucrats – an idea that normally would be likely to find favor in Nevada – by warning members of his administration that meetings should be for work, not for playing golf or going to see Celine Dion.

But, by singling out one convention and meeting destination out of the many, the president was taking direct aim at a large segment of the Nevada economy based on an unfortunate stereotype – that the delights of Sin City would take the convention-going bureaucrats away from their business, all on the taxpayers' tab. And Nevadans didn't appreciate it.

On Thursday, President Obama began to make amends, not, regrettably by apologizing to Nevadans and urging government workers to return to Las Vegas – or, better yet, Reno – but by announcing a handful of much-needed initiatives to boost travel and tourism in the United States, and not incidentally to Nevada.

That we can appreciate.

Read the whole story

Embracing the Year of the Dragon

By Eileen Wacker

Many predict 2012 to be a dynamic, innovative year. Individuals are encouraged to make bold moves and leave humble behind. Across Asia, artificial insemination has been on the

rise since May. In Taiwan, a 20 percent increase in births is expected this year. In Korea and China, people are planning weddings and having babies. Supposedly dragons are the luckiest and wealthiest people and everyone wants in on the dragon's legendary rewards.

Many millions of households are busily preparing for the New Year. In Japan, China, Korea and other Asian countries, houses are being swept clean. Windows are opened to let in good luck and flush out stuck energy. Special flowers are placed carefully to invite and impress good luck and opportunity. This happens every year to get ready for Lunar or Chinese New Year. But this year is very special. Today, half the globe will celebrate and welcome the Year of the Dragon. The dragon is the luckiest and most powerful sign.

The dragon is the only sign in the Asian zodiac that is mystical; the others are all real animals – the rat, dog, pig, horse, tiger, snake, monkey, rabbit, ox, chicken and sheep. Asian dragons are benevolent, charismatic and powerful. They are known for their sincerity and trusting natures. They are often free spirits who are passionate, creative and self-centered. In China, Japan and Korea, throughout time many believed the emperors had descended from dragons.

The power of the dragon is undisputed in Asia and its image is pervasive. Bruce Lee's stage name was Li Xiaolong or little dragon. In Japan, one often sees the seahorse, which is a baby dragon, as well as dragon emblems everywhere. And the dragon is the symbol of the emperor in China and Korea. Dragons are beloved and admired across Asia and this year there will be massive celebrations.

If nearly half of the globe's population believes in and will celebrate this phenomenon, should the average person try to win the attention and empathy of the Black Water Dragon?

Five ways to embrace the energy of the dragon, just in case…

1) Seriously de-clutter your home or a part of your home like your office. You need to make room for good fortune to settle. The extra space will become filled with new, exciting things. If you can find a sweet pea plant, put it out prominently or by a door or window. This is the favorite flower of the dragon.

2) No matter how cold, open your windows for a period of time each day throughout this year. The stale air of the past will exit and new opportunities will be swept in. On New Year's night, if you are awake at midnight, open every door and window briefly.

3) Black is back as "the new black." The Dragon loves black this year and feel free to accessorize with bright colors. The dragon loves extravagance. Take a walk today in your black outfit, accessorized with bold colors and breath fresh air.

4) Today, share a meal with someone and talk only about the future and its possibilities. This is a year for innovation and big projects. Do not talk about the past at all. For your meal today, eat at a table adorned with lit candles. The food should be well spiced and if possible include seafood and pumpkin.

5) Give a gift. The dragon can be self-centered and impetuous but it is also very generous and benevolent. Give small gifts to people (love is a gift) and it will be returned in some form with greater richness. Since it is a water dragon, some gift ideas are – a dragon pen, dragon cup, game or anything to do with water. Little pouches with small money are also lucky for children. These gifts bring luck to the recipient as well as the giver. Donate items as you de-clutter; these are gifts to others as well.

Do not confuse the dinosaur with the dragon. Dinosaurs are negative, where dragons are wealthy, lucky and smart.

Eileen Wacker lives in Honolulu with her husband and four

children. She is the author of the new children's book "Black Tortoise Samurai and the Dynasty Dragon" (February 2012), the fifth installment of the award winning Fujimini Adventure Series.

Misuse of snowblower could mean fewer fingers to operate it

By Jana Mortellaro

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, it's estimated that more than 5,700 emergency department visits stem from snowblower accidents each year. More than 550 of those cases have required finger amputations. Some accidents have resulted in death.

Most snowblower accident cases sustain deep cuts, crushed and broken bones, joint, tendon and soft tissue injuries. And 90 percent of the time, the injury is to the dominant hand, according to the American Society for Surgery of the Hand. This typically involves loss of fingertips, most commonly the middle finger.



Jana

Mortellaro

Domestic danger

We may have a healthy respect for our lawn mowers and weed-whackers and their ability to cause harm, but we have to remember a snowblower is not any less dangerous just because it throws the ¬white stuff around instead of slicing plants away from the earth. So, before you put your snowblower into action, make sure you take the time to use it properly and safely. Most snowblower injuries are preventable if you concentrate on the task at hand and use common sense.

“A severe hand-finger injury can be excruciatingly painful and affects all aspects of daily life – bathing, dressing, cooking, eating, writing, using the computer, driving, riding a bike, etc. Having access to hand therapy after my traumatic injury [from a snowblower] was critical. Therapy was my barometer during the healing process, and helped me to adjust, so I could attempt these daily tasks successfully,” said J. G., snowblower accident survivor and Barton Rehabilitation patient.

Here are tips to keep you safe while clearing snow:

• Read the instruction manual prior to using the snowblower.

• Never use your hands to unclog a snowblower.

• Wear protective clothing.

• Do not drink alcohol or use prescription narcotics before using your snowblower.

• Be sure the kids and animals are safely in the house.

• Add fuel to the tank outdoors before starting the machine.

• Watch where you’re aiming the snow.

• Don’t add gasoline to a running or hot engine.

• If you have an electric powered snowblower, be aware of where the power cord is at all times.

• Don’t remove safety devices.

• Keep hands and feet away from all moving parts.

• Don’t leave a snowblower unattended when it is running.

• Turn the engine off if you need to walk away.

• Never leave the machine running in an enclosed area.

In case of clogs:

• Never put your hands down the chute or near the blades.

• Turn it o¬ff.

• Disengage the clutch.

• Delay/wait after turning off the engine to allow impeller blades time to stop rotating.

For more information about South Lake Tahoe’s only certified hand therapy program, located at Barton Rehabilitation, call (530) 543.5896.

Jana Mortellaro is a licensed occupational therapist and certified hand therapist for Barton Health.