Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• The Festival of Trees and Lights raised more than $135,000 for the Barton Foundation.

• Kasey La Foon is Washoe County Sheriff’s Office grant-funded victim advocate. La Foon will work directly out of the detective division to assist victims of crimes such as domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking.

• McDonald’s in El Dorado, Placer, Amador, Nevada, Sacramento, Sutter, Yuba, Yolo, Solano (not including restaurants west of Fairfield), San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Calaveras, Tuolumne and Colusa counties will be giving away coffee for two weeks starting Jan. 2. The two McDonald’s in South Lake Tahoe are not participating.

• El Dorado County increased park fees beginning Jan. 1. Here is the park fee resolution that was adopted.

• The Jan. 7 Fallen Leaf Lake board meeting has been canceled.

• Here is the Caltrans’ roadwork schedule for this week for El Dorado-Tahoe and the Sierra.

Protect your toys from the wrath of winter

By Roger Phillips, McClatchy Newspapers

Winter weather is bound to be just around the corner, and many of your favorite toys will be sitting idle for months. You want to protect and repair your gear so it will be ready to go next spring.

Things with wheels and engines typically require the most attention because they can sustain serious and expensive damage during winter. We talked to experts and got some good advice on how to winterize your gear. Water is a major culprit for RV problems, and if you haven't drained and added RV antifreeze already, the damage could already be done.

"It only takes a teaspoon of water to break a water line," said Susan Hammill, service advisor for Dennis Dillon RV and Marine Center in Caldwell, Idaho.

But it may not be too late. The company does a while-you-wait winterizing service that takes about half an hour and starts at $70, depending on what extra services you want. Whether you take it to a dealer or do it yourself, winterizing an RV's water/sewer system is critical to avoid costly water damage, but it's not the only thing you should take care of.

Batteries should be fully charged and removed from the RV, Hammill said. Motorhome owners should add a fuel stabilizer and start up the engine and generator once a month.

Read the whole story

Measure R recreation committees in need of applicants

The South Lake Tahoe Recreation Facilities Joint Powers Authority is seeking applicants to the Bicycle Trail and Fields advisory committees.

The committees, part of Measure R, will each consist of seven members.

The deadline to apply is 5pm Jan. 13. Appointments are likely to be made at the Jan. 20 JPA board meeting at 9am at Lake Tahoe Airport. Applicants are encouraged to attend the meeting. If unable to attend, contact John Upton at (530) 541.0525 or rkupton@aol.com.

Application may be obtained from:

1. South Lake Tahoe city clerk, 1901 Airport Road, (530) 542.6004 or eapalazzo@cityofslt.us.

2. John Upton, (530) 541.0525, or rkupton@aol.com.

3. El Dorado County Board of Supervisors office, (530) 621.6577, or bosfive@edcgov.us.

Owl found near S. Tahoe has new home in Carmichael nature center

By Hudson Sangree, Sacramento Bee

Folks at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center introduced their new great horned owl, Echo, to the public Saturday, in a presentation that delighted adults and children.

The event had a special meaning for the center's staff, who grieved in November 2010 when their beloved great horned owl and star attraction, Virginia, died after an extraordinarily long life of more than 40 years.

That was just months after the nonprofit American River Natural History Association took over the center from fiscally troubled Sacramento County in July 2010. Naturalist Shawna Protze led Saturday's nature camp program. She said introducing Echo, who is about 9 months old, marked a new beginning for the popular nature center in Carmichael.

"Having Echo is kind of like a rebirth," Protze said. "It's a new young energy for our new nonprofit.

"Unlike Virginia, Echo won't be on regular display in the lobby near the center's other raptors – a kestrel and a Northern saw-whet owl. Virginia had only one wing and could stand the confines of her glass enclosure, Protze said. Echo needs more room, but she will be a regular at events like Saturday's program.

The owl was found by a volunteer near South Lake Tahoe after she cried out in the night and took food from the person. It showed she had likely been raised by a human and had been released or escaped. She had imprinted on people as a food

source and didn’t know how to hunt.

Read the whole story

RAOK: From a torn coat to laughter at the Improv

Cathy Martin is *Lake Tahoe News*‘ first Random Acts of Kindness winner. She and a friend will be the guests of Howie Nave at the Improv at Harveys in Stateline.



Random Acts of Kindness is *Lake Tahoe News’* way of getting people to think about how they treat others. Read more about this monthlong promotion as well as the comments at the end of that story to know what Cathy wrote.

Then, at the end of this story, write your comment regarding a Random Act of Kindness to be in the running for the next prize.

TTUSD hires superintendent from Southern California

Rob Leri has been selected as the next superintendent of Tahoe Truckee Unified School District, with the board of trustees

expected to vote on the contract Jan. 4.

Leri is currently deputy superintendent of educational services at Arcadia Unified School District. Prior to that he was director of assessment, technology and information services there, and has also been a principal and classroom teacher.



Rob Leri

Superintendent Steve Jennings announced his retirement last summer. His last day will be March 1.

Leri will begin April 1.

Wednesday's board meeting starts at 5:30pm at the TTUSD boardroom in the district offices, 11603 Donner Pass Road, Truckee.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Opinion: S. Tahoe officials

will do anything to make a buck

To the community,

Recently, our town surrendered to be colonized by SnowGlobe. For miles the heavy bombardment pounded and pounded away. Hearing aids had to be turned off and coyotes howling couldn’t be heard. That’s a shame.

City management gave the keys to the city and was happy to do so because the invaders ironically had promised to pay tribute to the city so that for three days they could raise hell. The site of the battle of the booms and blasts was the local college’s soccer field. The college president was happy to provide the site for the school’s share of tribute.



Bill Crawford

The SnowGlobe drew a big crowd, battles always do. In this case the spectators had to pay through the nose for the privilege of going deaf and to wear weird headgear. Of course, such apparel, a trophy that proves one was there, is costly. But all of the heavy tariff was bearable because it was a no cop free zone. The payees could get stoned without fear of a hassle.

It’s rumored that city management left town for the duration of the booms and blasts so they could escape the cries of the victims, prisoners living within hearing distance of the insane noise.

So the town is a colony of anyone with tribute to pay the city, and can for a time turn the place into a noisy wasteland. So much for law and order that can be suspended to

create, for money, lawless disorder.

Bill Crawford, South Lake Tahoe

PS: I wonder how the hospital ill faired under the circumstances.

Singing therapy helps stroke patients

By Richard Knox, GPB News

Debra Meyerson was hiking near Lake Tahoe 15 months ago when a stroke destroyed part of the left side of her brain, leaving her literally speechless. It happens to more than 150,000 Americans a year.

But now Meyerson is learning to talk again through an approach that trains the undamaged right side of her brain to “speak.” Specifically, it’s a region that controls singing.

For more than 100 years, it’s been known that people who can’t speak after injury to the speech centers on the left side of the brain can sing.

In the 1970s, Boston researchers started to use a sort of “singing therapy” to help stroke survivors speak again.

However, it never caught on much perhaps because a lot of therapists, not to mention patients, weren’t comfortable singing what they wanted to say. And back then, the science wasn’t advanced enough to show the actual changes in the brain

that result from the therapy.

That’s changing fast.

Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, who has had a version of “singing therapy,” astounded everyone by her ability to speak again albeit so far in single words and short phrases. Nearly a year ago, a would-be assassin’s bullet tore through the speech center in Giffords’ left brain.

Read the whole story

Spooner Lake’s beauty captivates on First Day Hike

By Kathryn Reed

LAKE TAHOE NEVADA STATE PARK – Tromping along the dirt under sunny skies, the only indication this is not a fall day in the Sierra is the fact the lake is nearly completely frozen.

What was supposed to be a snowshoe at Spooner Lake turned into a trail walk with a few patches of ice on the north side. The dozen people – a mix of locals and out-of-towners – who showed up at 10am New Year’s Day didn’t seem to mind.

Rocky and Shilpa Shah are on the walk with their son and daughter, and two friends. Lack of snow is keeping them from spending all their time on the slopes. While they’ve been to Tahoe several times to ski, this is their first time to venture to this part of the basin.



Spooner Lake, except for the ice, has the look and feel of fall Jan. 1. Photos/Kathryn Reed

One of the things Rocky Shah likes is learning about the terrain and history from the park supervisors who are leading the hike. For those who don't have a guide, plenty of interpretive signs dot the landscape as well as benches to take a rest to take it all in.

"Native Americans did a lot for us. They discovered medicinal uses in plants and food uses," Bill Champion, supervisor of Spooner-Cave Rock units of the state park, told the group along the 2.1-mile trek.

Stopped at one of the grinding rocks not far from the lake, Champion explains how the Washoe Indians would use the willows that grow along the shore to make baskets and for pain medication, much like people today take aspirin.

Shilpa Shah holds a large pine cone in her hand – though smaller than a sugar pine.

Jay Howard, supervisor of Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park, uses a catchy phrase to distinguish between the cones – "gentle Jeffery, prickly ponderosa".

This is the first year Nevada has taken part in First Day

Hikes and it’s the first year all 50 states have participated. It started 20 years ago in Massachusetts as way to get the year off on a healthy note. More information about First Day Hikes may be found online.

Spooner Lake – off Highway 28 near the junction of Highway 50 – got its name from Michel Spooner, a French-Canadian who with partner Simon Dubois acquired 640 acres for a ranch in the 1860s. During the Comstock the land included a hotel, blacksmith shop and way station.

Facts about U.S. state parks:

Source: America’s State Parks

Total Park Visits:	**More than 740 million per year**
Number of state park units:	**7,810**
Total economic impact on communities:	**More than $20 billion**
Percent of visitors with children:	**64%**
Miles of trails:	**44,219**
Number of campsites:	**220,329**
Number of cabins and lodges:	**7,954**

While the state of Nevada acquired the land in the 1960s, Spooner did not become part of the state park until 1981. About 12,500 acres are in the backcountry, while about 1,500 acres are what most people visit at Spooner, Cave Rock or Sand Harbor. All three of these locations are part of Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park.

Spooner Lake, which is mostly fed by natural springs and snowmelt, is nearly 20 feet at its deepest. With a Nevada fishing license, people try to hook rainbow trout and other fish the lake is stocked with.

Today, it’s mountain bikers who dominate the trails. About 75

percent of trail users are on two-wheels, while hikers and equestrians are the other main users. In the winter, Spooner has cross country trails.

Spooner has a year-round concessionaire that ferries cyclists using the Flume Trail from the end back to the parking lot and cuts the ski trails. Three seasonal concessionaires operate at Sand Harbor – Shakespeare Festival, food, and boat rentals. The latter started this past summer and brought in $30,000 to Nevada State Parks. In all, the four concessionaires added $80,000 to the state coffers for 2011.

Champion said public-private partnerships are the way to go, especially as money becomes scarcer out of Carson City.

Still, more people are visiting the state park at Lake Tahoe – especially as the economy tanked.

“People can’t afford to travel,” Howard said. “Our visitors are up.”

Getting to Spooner Lake:

From South Lake Tahoe, take Highway 50 east. At the summit, turn left onto Highway 28. The entrance to the state park is quickly on the right. Parking is $7 or $8 depending on the season.

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Nevadans wake up to new rules

to live by

By Cy Ryan, Las Vegas Sun

CARSON CITY – The crackdown starts today on motorists who use their cellphones while on the road, and the state starts planning to inspect boats for a fee to keep Nevada waters clear of such invasive species such as quagga mussels and algae known as rock snot.

Law enforcement is developing a system to quickly find people with Alzheimer's disease or dementia who wander away from their residences or rest homes.

The mining industry will lose $48 million over the biennium in tax deductions it enjoyed.

Those are just some of the 32 bills passed by the 2011 Legislature that become law in full or in part on Jan. 1.

The bill to prohibit drivers from using cellphones became effective in Oct. 1, but law enforcement authorities could only issue warnings until today. Now, a motorist caught using a phone will face a $50 fine for the first offense. The second offense carries a $100 fine and the third a $250 penalty.

Read the whole story