Truckee to clean up town, then party

The 11th annual Truckee Day townwide street clean up and community block party is June 7.

Check in stations will open at 8am. Get there early to get materials, volunteer T-shirt, and free lunch ticket. Preregistration is not required.

After the street clean up, volunteers will head to Truckee Regional Park for a townwide block party and Community Expo with music and a free barbecue lunch for every volunteer from noon-2pm.

For more info, contact Steve Randall at steve@tdrpd.org.

K’s Kitchen: Winning Kahlua brownies

By Kathryn Reed

Eating well and eating healthfully are two completely different things.

My tennis team eats well. We bring an array of edibles to each home match to share with our opponents.

On Sunday I chose to bring the sweet treat. I had made the

brownies the night before, but had not sampled them until the morning of the match. A brownie is probably not the usual breakfast of champions, but it worked on this particular day. I'm thinking I might have to make this a ritual since I won and this was the team's first win of the season.

And these are no ordinary brownies. They don't come from a box and they involve liquor. I tend to put more Kahlua in than what is called for.

They take longer to bake at higher elevations.



Kahlua Brownies

8 ounces semi-sweet chocolate

½ C, plus 2 T butter

1 pound cream cheese, softened

½ C sifted powdered sugar

6 eggs

1 C, plus 2 T all-purpose flour

1 tsp vanilla extract

1 C granulated sugar

½ C brown sugar

1 tsp baking powder

½ tsp salt

3 T Kahlua (give or take, mostly give)

Heat oven to 325 degrees. Grease a 9 x 13 baking pan.

Melt chocolate and 6 T butter over low heat, stirring constantly. Set aside.

Cream remaining butter and cream cheese in a medium bow. Gradually add powdered sugar and mix until light and fluffy. Stir in 2 eggs, 2 T flour and vanilla. Set aside.

Beat 4 eggs until light. Gradually add sugars, beating until well combined and thickened. Combine 1 C flour, baking powder and salt. Add to egg mixture, beating well. Stir in cooled chocolate mixture and Kahlua.

In prepared pan, spread two-thirds of the chocolate batter. Spoon cream cheese over chocolate, then top with remaining chocolate batter.

Swirl batter with a knife to marble.

Bake 30 minutes or until tester comes out clean.

3-day book sale at Douglas County library

The Douglas County Public Library’s spring book sale is May 16 from 3-8pm, May 17 from 9am-5pm and May 18 from 9am-2pm.

The sale will be at the C.V.I.C. Hall, 1602 Esmeralda Ave. in Minden.

Thousands of used books and audio books will be for sale; DVDs and music CDs will also be available. Friends of the Douglas County Public Library and anyone who joins during the sale will receive a 15 percent discount.

Support the Douglas County Public Library by attending the sale and joining the Friends or call the library at 775.782.9841.

El Dorado workers call out bosses in survey

Enough El Dorado County employees are so unhappy with their work environment it prompted the Board of Supervisors to launch an investigation.

Non-equal employment opportunity violations will be looked into.

Sixty-three percent of the staff participated in the cultural assessment survey conducted by Van Dermyden Maddux Law Corporation. Out of the 1,228 current and former employees who participated, 474 provided information beyond what was asked. A substantial number of comments raised concerns of “bullying, harassment, and retaliation” as well as concerns of nepotism, referring to the “good ol’ boy network.”

Only one-third believes the harassment policy is understood and adhered to.

Supervisors had a special meeting this week to go over the results from the survey that was taken this year.

The glimmer of good in the survey is 60 percent of respondents

are generally satisfied with their job. The following departments had satisfaction rates higher than average: Air Quality Management District (100 percent); Risk Management (100 percent); Clerk of the Board (100 percent); Elections (100 percent); Library (92 percent); Auditor Controller's Office (92 percent); Assessor's Office (78 percent); Veteran Affairs (75 percent); and County Counsel (86 percent).

On the flip side, 17.5 percent of county employees were "dissatisfied" with their employment. The following departments each had dissatisfaction rates higher than average: Information Technology (41 percent); Probation Field (32 percent); Public Defender (26.5 percent); Sheriff's Office (23.5 percent); Community Development Agency (22 percent).

Managers are a problem for 378 of the survey takers – the highest complaint. Employees believe retaliation would occur if they filed a complaint.

One person wrote, "Depending on who the complaint is against is a factor whether action will be taken or not." Another said, "Things often do not stay confidential."

More than one-quarter of the workforce is actively planning to leave.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Golf tourney benefits Barton Foundation

Barton Foundation's annual Tiki Tee Off Golf Tournament and Lei Up Luau is June 26.

All proceeds benefit the Barton Foundation’s Community Health Endowment. Prices vary.

The event is at Lake Tahoe Golf Course in Meyers.

The tournament includes course contests and on-hole libations, with a pig roast, Hawaiian buffet, tiki drinks, and raffle prizes at the end.

To reserve a spot, call 530.543.5614 or find more info online.

Detour for Hwy. 50 on West Slope for part of Sunday

Highway 50 on May 4 will be closed in both directions from El Dorado Hills Boulevard/Latrobe Road to Bass Lake Road for blasting work.

The closure is scheduled from 6-8am. During this time traffic will be routed through Serrano Parkway. Motorists traveling east from El Dorado Hills will detour on El Dorado Hills Boulevard to Serrano Parkway to Bass Lake Road. Motorists traveling west from Cameron Park will take Bass Lake Road to Serrano Parkway to El Dorado Hills Boulevard.

The work is part of a $57 million El Dorado County multi-phase project to build a new Highway 50 interchange at Silva Valley Parkway.

Opinion: Will a free press survive?

By Kathryn Reed

Does news matter? *Yes.*

Do the media matter? *Depends who you ask.*

Does where you get your news from matter? *Depends who you ask.*

Do people still care about unbiased news? *Not as much as they once did.*

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Today is World Press Freedom Day. The UN General Assembly designated May 3 as such in 1993. Freedom of expression is a fundamental human right as stated in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”

In the United States we have had such freedoms since 1787 when the Constitution was signed. The First Amendment says, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.”

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Not a week goes by that someone tells me I should take down the comments section on *Lake Tahoe News*. It’s because they don’t like the tone of the comments, they don’t like the

meanness, they disagree with what is being said, and they don't like the anonymity.

Too bad, they are staying.

I agree, though, the anger, the meanness, the name-calling, the childish behavior – it's all horrible.

But I tell people a few things. First, stop reading the comments if they are so offended by them. Second, there is no way to know someone is really Jane Doe. People contend Facebook is a way of getting people to use their real name, but people use fake names there, too. And using a third party like FB is a bad way of doing business. Third, my guess is 98 percent of the people believe what they are writing, while the other 2 percent just want to stir the pot. Read the message and not the tone. I believe people are angry, they are disgruntled and they want to be heard. Maybe we should be exploring why there is such venom out there instead of trying to quash it. Real name or not, this is still their belief. Fourth, some people because of their job need to use a different name.

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I think some people in the Lake Tahoe Basin are afraid of the truth. They don't want it in a news story, an opinion piece or a comment. Most of all, they don't want it in black and white for the entire world to see. (*LTN* is read in more than 100 countries, and more than 3,000 cities.)

Lake Tahoe News is here to publish the truth. We don't believe there is good or bad news, positive or

2013 in figures

- 71 journalists killed
- 826 journalists arrested
- 2,160 journalists threatened or physically attacked
- 87 journalists kidnapped
- 77 journalists who fled their country
- 6 media assistants killed
- 39 netizens and citizen-journalists

negative news – there is just news.

News is like people. It comes in different shapes, sizes, colors, warts and all. It can be elegant, ugly, hard to look at and pleasing. It can be fun, entertaining, enlightening and educational. It can be mundane and boring. It can change your life – just like people can.

killed
• 127 bloggers and netizens arrested
Source: *Reporters Without Borders*

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People have more choices of where they get their news today. They can get it from nearly every spectrum of the political wheel. They can get just headlines. Internet sites will filter news based on a person's interests.

I worry that the plethora of news/information that is available today is actually making us a society that is less informed. We can't take everything in.

We used to rely on newspaper and broadcast editors to filter out the unimportant from the important. Now there is so much information available every day it would be impossible to read or listen to all of it in a 24-hour period.

We know a lot more, at least superficially, while at the same time we know a lot less on a deeper level.

It's hard to absorb things when we are on constant overload.

And then I wonder if some people even pay attention to what is going on.

The individual has always been responsible for needing to gather her own information. We in the media cannot spoon-feed you. Ignorance, while it's a choice, is not a viable excuse

for not knowing what is going on.

It is up to you where you get your news.

And people want their news for free. That worries me beyond the fact it can be a struggle to pay my bills. Philosophically it worries me because news organizations are continuing to make cutbacks. People, like in most professions, are the No. 1 expense of media companies. But if reporters and editors are let go, then who will provide the news? Where will our news come from in the next 10 years? Who will you trust to provide it to you? Would you even notice if *Lake Tahoe News* went away?

Whether the news is online or in print, it takes the same amount of resources to create the story. The difference between print vs. online is the printing costs; but rest assured there are expenses related to an online news site.

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Bringing people the news is not an easy job. It can even be a deadly one. In 2013, 71 journalists were killed.

It’s certainly not a way to get rich.

Journalists have always been considered bottom feeders, right up there with lawyers and used car salesman.

We do it because we have a love for the truth. We want to hold people accountable. We want to tell your story, as well as the stories people don’t necessarily want told but the public has a right to know.

It’s a job that never ends. There’s job security in that. But only if people are reading and willing to financially support their news source(s) of choice via cash as well as by supporting the advertisers.

World Press Freedom Day will not matter if the press no longer exists. Our existence, though, in many ways is out of our

hands. It’s up to you – the reader.

Police looking for jewelry store thieves



South Lake Tahoe police officers have released photos from the surveillance video of the four suspects in the April 29 burglary at Simpson’s Jewelers.

The full story is here.

Contractors doing work in Tahoe caught in sting

Nineteen people on the South Shore face charges from an April 30 undercover sting by the the California Contractors State License Board and Nevada State Contractors Board.

Dubbed Border Blitz, it snared 11 people on the California side for illegal contracting charges and eight in Nevada. Three caught in Nevada are licensed contractors in California.

The stings were at a single-family home near the junction of highways 50 and 89 junction and at a condominium in Stateline. Investigators from CSLB's Statewide Investigative Fraud Team and NSCB posed as homeowners seeking bids for various projects that included exterior painting, deck work, landscaping, and other tasks requiring general "B" building contractor skills.

According to investigators, those cited after giving bids in California were issued notices to appear in El Dorado County Superior Court. The eight Nevada suspects are scheduled to answer charges in Lake Tahoe Justice Court.

All 11 suspects cited in California face misdemeanor charges of contracting without a license. Home improvement and construction jobs in California valued at $500 or more (combined labor and material costs) must be conducted by a company or person with a CSLB-issued license. Nine of the 11 were also cited on a misdemeanor charge of illegal advertising. California law requires contractors to place their license number in all print, broadcast, and online

advertisements. Those without a license can advertise for jobs valued at less than $500, but the ad must state that they are not a licensed contractor.

Nevada’s threshold for licensed contracting work is $1,000. All eight suspects caught in Stateline were cited for contracting without a license, and seven of them face an additional charge of advertising without a license. In Nevada, advertising contracting services without a license is illegal.

Here are the names of those cited:

SUSPECT’S NAME CITY OF RESIDENCE	**LICENSE CLASSIFICATION**	**VIOLATIONS**
Todd Raymond Kubicka *Gardnerville*	B – General	Contracting without a license, Illegal advertising
Aston Zane Martin *South Lake Tahoe*	C33 – Painting and Decorating	Contracting without a license, Illegal advertising
Robert Martin Avila *South Lake Tahoe*	C33 – Painting and Decorating	Contracting without a license, Illegal advertising
Roy Franklin Johnson *Zephyr Cove*	B – General	Contracting without a license, Illegal advertising

Gary Phillips Thomas Sr. *South Lake Tahoe*	C33 – Painting and Decorating	Contracting without a license, Illegal advertising
Juvenal Loayza-Baca *Carson City*	B – General	Contracting without a license
Charles Wayne Smith *Tahoe City*	C33 – Painting and Decorating	Contracting without a license, Illegal advertising
Prisciliano Perez-Peralta *Carson City*	B – General	Contracting without a license, Illegal advertising
Edward Joseph Jachimiak *Stateline*	C33 – Painting and Decorating	Contracting without a license, Illegal advertising
Todd Richard Hall *South Lake Tahoe*	C33 – Painting and Decorating	Contracting without a license
Thomas Howard Cook *Meyers*	B – General	Contracting without a license, Illegal advertising

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Delayed access to court records raises First Amendment concerns

By Tony Biasotti, Columbia Journalism Review

It's been a routine for generations of legal beat reporters: Every weekday afternoon, at courthouses across the United States, a reporter steps behind the records counter and thumbs through the lawsuits filed that day, looking for news.

This custom is endangered, though, and not just because files have moved online, or because there aren't as many legal beat reporters as there used to be. Many state courts now keep new civil cases out of sight of the press and public for days, and sometimes even weeks, after they're filed.

"It's a nationwide plague," said Bill Girdner, the founder and editor of Courthouse News Service.

But now, a federal trial court in California will have to determine whether the standard delays at a local courthouse are permissible—after a higher court ruled that Girdner's complaints raise First Amendment concerns.

Based in Pasadena, Courthouse News is a wire service that specializes in civil litigation and covers the courts for both its own website and around 3,000 subscribers, including the *Los Angeles Times, Boston Globe*, and other major news organizations.

In 2011, Courthouse News sued the Superior Court of Ventura Count after the court stopped letting the newswire's local correspondent see every new civil suit on the day it was filed. A federal judge dismissed the case. But Courthouse News appealed, and on April 7 a panel of three Ninth Circuit judges

ruled that the trial court had to hear the case.

Circuit Judge Kim McLane Wardlaw’s opinion said the case “presents an important First Amendment question” and thus should be heard in federal court.

Read the whole story