USFS to embark on 3,000+ acre N. Shore fuels project

The U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit will begin the Carnelian Hazardous Fuels Reduction and Healthy Forest Restoration Project next week.

The project will thin trees and brush on National Forest lands on the North Shore to reduce the risk of severe wildfire, improve forest health, and provide defensible space to neighboring communities.

The project area includes approximately 3,297 acres adjacent to Kings Beach, Tahoe Vista, Carnelian Bay, Cedar Flat, Lake Forest and Tahoe City.

Thinning methods include hand thinning, which is done by crews with chain saws and involves piling the material for burning at a later time; cut-to-length thinning, which cuts the tree down, cuts the tree into sections in the cutting area and then removes the tree and as much material as possible; and whole tree removal, in which the whole tree is cut and moved to the landing for processing.

The first units scheduled for treatment are located on the east side of Brockway Summit near Kings Beach, north of Speckled Avenue. Approximately 310 acres will be thinned in these areas using CTL equipment.

Work may take approximately three months to complete. Work will not occur on Memorial Day Weekend.

Ski resort CEOs wage war of words as lawsuit lingers

By Mike Gorrell, Salt Lake Tribune

The CEOs of Park City Mountain Resort and Vail Resorts are engaging in a public war of words that parallels the high-profile lawsuit between the Park City-area ski giants.

John Cumming from Powdr Corp., PCMR's parent company, fired the latest shot Friday in response to two letters sent in the past three weeks by Vail Chief Executive Rob Katz. Like Katz's letters, Cumming's answer was shared with the news media.

"Your letters," Cumming wrote Katz, "are part of a transparent plan to pressure me and my company into agreeing to a Vail takeover" of PCMR. It will never happen, he added. "We won't cave in, and we won't agree to a Vail takeover that would deprive our guests and our community of all the benefits offered by three resorts that compete with each other."

Cumming was referring to Park City's three ski areas: Deer Valley Resort, along with PCMR and Canyons Resort, which Vail operates on a long-term contract for Talisker Corp.

In California, Powder owns Boreal; Vail owns Heavenly, Northstar and Kirkwood.

Read the whole story

Ex-NASA official to talk astronomy in SLT

Former consultant to NASA, Kevin Manning, will talk about astronomy May 6 at 6pm in South Lake Tahoe.

This is part of the Star Tour USA 2014: Promoting Scientific Literacy from Coast to Coast features Astronomy for Everyone: Size & Scale of the Universe.

This program is for all ages. It’s about the universe, from the very small to the very large.

The slide presentation and question and answer session will be followed by going outdoors to view celestial objects in the night sky through a powerful custom-designed telescope; such as the rings of Saturn and craters on the moon.

The free event is at the South Lake Tahoe Library on Rufus Allen Boulevard.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Harrison Avenue businesses are open even though the traffic flow is a bit chaotic right now.

• Mike Makley will speak about his book “Saving Lake Tahoe” at the May 8 Sierra Club meeting. The 7pm meeting is at Unity at the Lake on Rufus Allen Boulevard in South Lake Tahoe.

• Tioga Pass will open for the season at noon today.

• Certified diabetes educator Jaime Pekari is the May 6 guest speaker at the Type I Diabetes Support Group. The group meets at 5:30pm at Barton Memorial Hospital’s board room, 2170 South Ave., South Lake Tahoe.

• El Dorado County residents may log their bike miles online during May for bike month.

Lower Corral Trail improvements start this month

Tahoe Area Mountain Biking Association members will begin construction on the Lower Corral Trail Enhancement Project on May 5.

This project will implement the design package put together by the Hilride Progression Development group under contract with the U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit.

This South Lake Tahoe trail will be reworked to include built features for mountain bikes including high wall berms, rock jumps, tabletop jumps and log rides. All features are designed to be enjoyable and challenging for all abilities, with the intent of developing user skill and progression.

Once completed, Corral Trail will be a model project for

purpose built mountain bike features on legal trails in a National Forest. Corral Trail will remain open to all current users, including motorcycles, mountain bikers and hikers.

TAMBA has raised more than $25,000 in the last year to put in the features along more than 1 mile of trail.

Sierra Buttes Trail Stewardship, nonprofit trail organization like TAMBA, has the personnel, equipment and experience to do the bulk of the work. Oversight will be provided by the USFS staff. Construction is expected to take up to four weeks, working Monday-Thursday. It is advised that users take alternate routes around Lower Corral.

TAMBA and SBTS will have a a volunteer workday from 9am to 4pm on May 17, followed by a get together that evening at Divided Sky in Meyers and a guided mountain bike ride the following day.

For more information about the Corral Trail project or the upcoming volunteer opportunities, go online.

Scooterists to test endurance throughout Tahoe



Alan Spears, above, during the Hell's Loop T.T. 375-Mile Extreme Endurance Race; Linda Hurley, top right; Raven Fischer, right, on her 1981 Vespa PX200e.

Photos/Provided

By Jessie Marchesseau

Extreme is not necessarily the first thing that comes to mind when one thinks of motor scooters. However, this weekend's 320-mile Lake Tahoe T.T. Motor-Scooter Endurance Race may just change your opinion of scooting.

Riders will set out from Motel 6 in South Lake Tahoe at 7:30am May 4 traveling east to Carson City, then through Reno, Truckee, Auburn, Placerville, back to South Lake, then around the lake through Tahoe City and Incline Village, ending once again at the Motel 6. According to Mapquest.com, the entire route should take more than seven hours in a car.

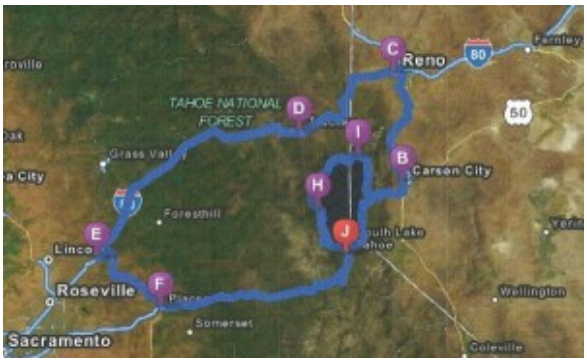
But these are not cars, they are scooters. They range from 49cc to 650cc. These machines won't be doing 75 up a mountain pass. Alan Spears, president-CEO of Motor-Scooter International Land-Speed Federation, said most of them will only do 60 to 65 mph on a good day.

Participant Raven Fischer rides a 1981 Vespa that she said is

“comfortable going 45 miles per hour.” Fischer is expecting to ride her scooter for at least nine hours straight on race day.

The term “race” is somewhat of a misnomer for an event that is really more of a rally. Riders will have designated checkpoints along the route, and breaking the law in any way, including speeding, is grounds for instant disqualification.

Participant Linda Hurley considers herself a very conservative rider; she does not break any traffic laws and hardly ever splits lanes. She also has one of the smallest engines in her class. However, she has won three MSILSF scooter endurance races and placed second in another. Her advantage, she said, comes from planning and sheer endurance.



The course.

“I definitely like the preparation and studying the route and trying to figure out what my competitive edge would be,” she said.

Hurley has added an auxiliary fuel tank to her scooter for this race. She estimates the entire route will take around 8.5 gallons of gas. The extra 5-gallon tank means she will likely not have to make any fuel stops all day. This four to six minute time saver could mean the difference between first and second place.

Fischer, on the other hand, is not concerned about what place she finishes. As the rider of one of very few vintage scooters in the field, she expects to be in the back of the pack, and

is just fine with that. Fischer is a newcomer to the MSILSF circuit looking for a fun ride and the opportunity to connect with other riders who share her love of scooters.

“You make your own fun in this world,” she told *Lake Tahoe News*. “That’s why I like scooterists; they make their own fun.”

Having recently completely rebuilt her Vespa by herself, Fischer, who is not a mechanic and did the work entirely from a handbook and YouTube videos, is hoping her handiwork holds up to the stress of an endurance race. She acknowledges that she may have to make adjustments during the race and could even encounter mechanical problems. But for her, that is part of the excitement.

All competitors will race at the same time, but the field is divided into four classes based on engine size, plus a sidecar division. Spears, who raced sidecar motorcycles professionally for Harley-Davidson in the late 1970s, will be participating in the sidecar class.

After taking a break from motorcycle racing, Spears switched to scooters for medical reasons. He wanted to give scooterists an opportunity to race, too, and founded MSILSF in 2010. The organization had its first land-speed trials in late 2010 and its first endurance race in 2011. The Lake Tahoe T.T. will be the sixth event hosted by MSILSF and one of the most challenging.

There will be a $500 purse for the first place rider, but for most it’s not about the money. They are in it for fun, for a challenge, to enjoy the open road and to meet other riders. And for Spears, to bring a little recognition to scooting.

“Because someday we’ll all be riding them because of gas,” he told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Letter: City uses misleading words about parking

To the community,

Words, they bring people together, they drive people apart. We use words to inform. We use words to misinform. My friend says, “Information is a lot like water; it’s hard to hold on to, and hard to keep form leaking away.” Often language is misused to create complexities, to mislead, to hide the truth or facts. Michael Lewis calls it the art of torturing data.



Bill Crawford

Too often in politics there is disinformation, which is the deliberate use of incorrect and misleading information. Disinformation can become an art form by creating propaganda to control pubic opinion and behavior, telling a lie time and time again. Sometimes it’s called advertising. Sometimes it’s called public relations.

In local politics it’s called the financial need for city parking meters. City government has built an argument for parking meters using numbers that are hypothetical and projecting assumptions and suppositions as facts. Justice Oliver W. Holmes said, “You can build a syllogism for any conclusion.” And that’s what the City Council and city manager

have done to sell parking meters. The argument is suspicious. The numbers are deceptively attractive, but have been shown by Tahoe-4-Tahoe to be fallacious. Mistrust is the result. And trust, like water, is hard to hold and hard to keep because false in one, false in all.

Language is the heart of the matter. And when abused there's a price to pay. Always.

Bill Crawford, South Lake Tahoe

Nutting's wife says he didn't pursue illegal loans

By Peter Hecht, Sacramento Bee

Taking the witness stand in defense of her husband, the wife of El Dorado County Supervisor Ray Nutting testified Thursday that the embattled supervisor didn't solicit county employees to bail himself out of jail.

Jennifer Nutting's testimony in the politically charged case challenged the prosecution's assertion that her husband violated state laws by borrowing money from people working for his office or government agency.

The El Dorado supervisor faces felony and misdemeanor political malfeasance charges related to state grant money he took for clearing brush on his family ranch. Prosecutors allege that he failed to properly disclose more than $70,000 in state income, and that he committed further offenses by asking county government workers to help bail him out of jail last year.

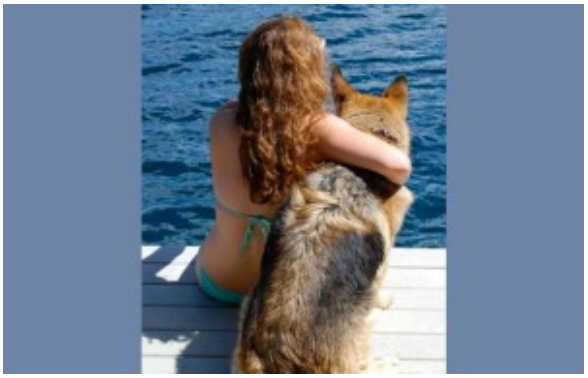
Read the whole story

Lasting memories of Fallen Leaf Lake’s magic

By Blair Scott

The two-mile, dirt road leading to the cabin transports me back to my carefree childhood. Every summer, for a long weekend, my family has driven up to Tahoe to relive the sweet, savory memories of past years. Winding through patches of dense pine trees and passing intermittent, bright green meadows, the familiar drive leads us to the cabin we outgrew many years ago, but continue to come back to each summer.

Our two German shepherds, Heidi and Chloe, squeezed into the back of our 1998 Ford Expedition next to a stack of four duffel bags and colorful beach towels, start to whine as we get closer to the cabin. As we pull up to the house, my eyes soak in the warm, brown, gingerbread color of its exterior and the sweetness of the delicately shingled roof. Its petite chimney peaks out the top – void of smoke since it is mid-July – and the graham cracker colored shutters frame the dusty windows on the front of the house.



Blair Scott and her dog
Chloe at Fallen Leaf Lake.
Photo/Provided

Opening the car doors, the warm summer air floods in, and my nose breathes the fresh, familiar fragrance. Stepping out onto the pine-needle-covered dirt driveway, I open the trunk to release the impatient pups. Finally free, after five long hours of sitting in the car, they leap out of the back, rushing to sniff the familiar bushes, scattered with red berries that line the perimeter of the driveway.

The cabin sits atop wooden stilts, tucked into the dry, fire-hungry, California forest at the bottom of a steep hill. Inside, there is one king bed, a small kitchen with a wood burning stove and a closet-sized bathroom. In the middle of the room, a wooden ladder ascends to the attic, where my brother and I sleep. As a kid, I dreaded sleeping up there; it was filled with spider webs, dead bugs, dusty surfaces and old mattresses. But we had no choice. By the time we were nearing our 20s, we were simply too big for the attic; we had to duck when we walked, so our heads wouldn’t hit the ceiling, and our feet dangled off the end of the mattresses. We had definitely outgrown the cabin, but we ignored the inevitable size problem so that we could spend one final, jobless, commitment-free, summer there as a family.

Taking our bags up with us into the attic, we crack the windows to release the trapped summer air, while trying to dodge the sheets of spider webs. I look out the window, past all of the trees, to see Fallen Leaf Lake for the first time. Peaking through the sea of intoxicatingly green treetops, I am beckoned by the water’s enticing cobalt color.

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The sparkling blue light blinds me as I run toward the end of the dock. Leaping off the edge, I feel myself suspended in the
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air, vulnerable and helpless. Below me, the clear glassy water awaits my splash. Thoughts of my childhood rush through my head, of all 19, consecutive, summers we have come to the lake, of all the memories that have occurred in this exact spot. I prepare for the bone-numbing, heart-stopping chill of the water that I am about to plunge into. I gasp. The sparkling elixir reviving my sunburned body as I enter the lake. Coming up for air as soon as I can, I struggle to catch my breath, looking back up at the dock, where the unofficial lifeguards, my dogs, peer over the edge to make sure I am OK.

The 60-degree water permeates my skin; I can actually feel my legs starting to go numb. The freezing lake is shocking, yet soothing. The first swim is always the best, but the temperature makes it impossible to stay in any longer so I rush toward the ladder to get out. My dogs greet me, wagging their tails in excited relief that I am finally out of the water.

Wrapping myself up in my favorite, faded, blue and green towel, I lie on the warm dock as my body thaws. Heidi and Chloe lie next to me, their eyes watching the bees that hover around us. If a bee flies too close to Heidi, she will swat at it with her paw and try to capture it in her mouth. An hour passes; I hear the distant sounds of motorboats swirling around the lake. Above me, the calm, blue canvas is streaked with delicate wisps of white clouds. There is a certain stillness that exists on the dock, and I cherish the peaceful surroundings.

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Beep beep, beep beep, beep beep. I can hear my dad’s alarm going off from the attic. I roll over in bed to look out of the window toward the lake. Glass. No wind. The lake is still. Which means it’s time to go. Every morning, my dad and I wake up hoping to go out in the boat to water ski, but only if the conditions are nearly perfect. This morning they are.
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I get up and put on sweat pants and a sweat shirt over my bathing suit. I descend down the ladder, and my dad is waiting, ready to go. Much to their disappointment, the dogs have to stay at the cabin with my mom and brother while they continue sleeping. The dogs will bark and whine the entire time we're gone. With me leading the way, my dad and I head down the steep hillside to the dock to meet Uncle Tom who brings his boat over from the other end of the lake. He's waiting for us when we get there; ready to take us out on the lake to claim the untouched water as our own. Leaving our flip-flops on the dock, we climb onto the boat.

The sun peaks over the snow-topped mountains that surround the lake as we zoom to the far end where the water is always the calmest. Leaving a thick white stream of boat wake behind us, the steady rumble of the boat's engine allows us to enjoy a conversation-less, calm morning boat ride. The cool wind whips through my hair, and my dad firmly holds his San Francisco Giants baseball hat onto his head.

I cherish this moment, knowing it will probably be one of the last morning boat rides we have, and one of the last summers we go up to the lake as a family before my brother and I enter adulthood. We may be growing up, but the memories I have from the lake will stay with me forever.

Sex offenders in S. Lake accused of other crimes

A check of sex offenders to make sure they were complying with the law led to four arrests in South Lake Tahoe on April 29.

Officers went to six residences and made contact with four

people. All four were arrested.

Gary Meyer, 68, on charges of not living at his registered address. This is a felony. Charles Langley, 47, faces felony charges of possessing prescription pills and methamphetamine, as well as a misdemeanor charge of possessing a meth pipe. Merlin Griffiths, 28, was taken into custody on a misdemeanor charge of unlawful possession of weapons and a misdemeanor violation of probation.

During the search of another sex registrant's residence, who was not violating any laws, 31-year-old Jose Mariscal allegedly attempted to obstruct officers from completing the search. Mariscal was arrested on charges of misdemeanor resisting, delaying or obstructing officers.

Officers said the compliance checks prompted two additional sex offenders to report to the SLTPD to update their information.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report