Novelist to give talk at LTCC

Novelist and short story writer Pam Houston will give a talk May 8 at 8pm in the Lake Tahoe Community College library.

Houston will read selections from her works, take questions from the audience, and sign copies of her books, which will be available for sale. Houston's most recent novel, "Contents May Have Shifted", was published in 2012.

The Lake Tahoe Community College Writers' Series event is free.

Summer sports camps for kids on South Shore

Lake Tahoe Community College and Tahoe Center for Orthopedics are putting on weeklong summer sports camps that focus on improving kids' health, wellness, and athletic performance.

Kids ages 7-13 will be taught proper exercise techniques, team-building, sports-specific techniques, and how to make healthy nutritional choices.

Session 1: June 23-27, 9am-4pm

Session 2: July 7-11, 9am-4pm

Session 3: Aug. 11-15, 9am-4pm.

Early bird price is $160 per session ($185 per session after June 2).

To register, go here and click on "Register for Community

Education” or call 530.541.4660, ext. 717.

Dry ground during final Sierra snow survey

By Kathryn Reed

PHILLIPS STATION – Soft, dry soil. It makes measuring snow rather easy. There is none.

The last snow survey of the season by the Department of Water Resources on May 1 turned up no snow at the field next to the entrance of Sierra-at-Tahoe and little snow at the other surveys.

Statewide the water content is at 18 percent of average.

“We need well above average to replace the reservoir storage,” Frank Gehrke with the DWR said of next winter. And predictions of an El Nino are no guarantee it will bring the much-needed moisture.



Frank Gehrke with the Department of Water Resources stands in dirt for

the final snow survey of the season. Photo/Kathryn Reed

The dismal snowpack means the runoff, which is usually robust in May, will be more like a trickle. That in turn means the reservoirs downstream are not going to be replenished.

Those reservoirs are what irrigates much of California's farmland and provide a substantial amount of the drinking water for the state.

Lake Oroville in Butte County is at 53 percent of its 3.5 million acre-foot capacity and is normally at 65 percent this time of year. Shasta Lake north of Redding is at 53 percent of its 4.5 million acre-foot capacity when it should be at 61 percent.

Watersheds at lower elevations are already dry. This has fire personnel throughout the state and much of the West on edge.

"It's going to be quite serious," Gehrke said of the threat of fire.

He added, "There is some evidence of tree mortality because of the past two years." Gehrke said. He expects to see more of that as weather heats up and the state enters its third summer of drought.

And while the state is experiencing a bit of a heat wave this week, no records are expected to be set in the Lake Tahoe Basin. The record high for May 1 in South Lake Tahoe is 78 degrees, set in 1978. The forecast high for today is 73 degrees. Tahoe City's record high for Thursday is 74, set in 1947. The high there is expected in the upper 60s.

For May 2, the South Lake Tahoe record is 73 degrees set in 2004; forecast is for 71.

By the weekend temps will cool down, with Saturday being in

the upper 60s and Sunday in the low 60s, according to the National Weather Service in Reno. Highs will be in the low 50s next week with a 10 to 30 percent of precipitation. If snow falls, it will be at the upper elevations and is not expected to impact travel.

While people are starting to irrigate, the state is launching the Californians Don’t Waste outdoor water campaign.

On April 30 DWR released a report showing that throughout California groundwater resources are at historically low levels.

Key findings of the report include:

• Groundwater levels have decreased in nearly all areas of the state since spring 2013, and more notably since spring 2010.

• The greatest concentration of recently deepened wells is in the fractured bedrock foothill areas of Nevada, Placer, and El Dorado counties.

• The Kaweah and Kings sub basins have the greatest numbers of deepened wells in an alluvial groundwater basin.

• Of California’s 515 alluvial groundwater basins, 169 are fully or partially monitored under the California Statewide Groundwater Elevation Monitoring (CASGEM) program as of April 15.

• Forty of 126 High and Medium priority basins are not monitored under CASGEM as of April 15. There are significant CASGEM groundwater monitoring data gaps in the Sacramento, San Joaquin River, Tulare Lake, Central Coast, and South Lahontan hydrologic regions.

• Several areas of the state lack a current groundwater management plan that addresses all related requirements of the California Water Code.

Annual bike ride through Carson City

Tour of Carson City Bike Ride is May 4 at 9am.

The 27-mile loop goes around Carson City. It will begin and end at Bike Habitat, which is celebrating its seventh anniversary.

Lunch will follow the ride.

The event is free. However, donations and membership are encouraged to support Muscle Powered of Carson City. All donations go to Muscle Powered.

For more info, call 775.267.5053.

Protected status given to Sierra amphibians

By Dana M. Nichols, Stockton Record

SAN ANDREAS – The yellow-legged frog, a native of the High Sierra, will soon be listed as an endangered species, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced Friday.

The service also said that it will soon list the Yosemite toad

as threatened with extinction.

The listings will mean new legal protections for two species of yellow-legged frog and for the toad, which live at high altitudes primarily on federal forest or national park lands.

The listings was published Tuesday in the Federal Register on Tuesday and will become final on June 30. The action caps almost a decade and a half of legal and political conflict over the amphibians.

Read the whole story

Limits to ‘no pain, no gain’

By Gretchen Reynolds, New York Times

Exercise makes us tired. A new study helps to elucidate why and also suggests that while it is possible to push through fatigue to reach new levels of physical performance, it is not necessarily wise.

On the surface, exercise-related fatigue seems simple and easy to understand. We exert ourselves and, eventually, grow weary, with leaden, sore muscles, at which point most of us slow or stop exercising. Rarely, if ever, do we push on to the point of total physical collapse.

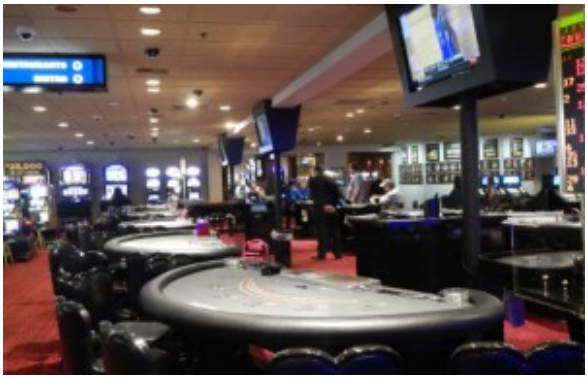
But scientists have long been puzzled about just how muscles know that they’re about to run out of steam and need to convey that message to the brain, which has the job of actually telling the body that now would be a good time to drop off the pace and seek out a bench.

So, a few years ago, scientists at the University of Utah in

Salt Lake City began studying nerve cells isolated from mouse muscle tissue. Other research had established that contracting muscles release a number of substances, including lactate, certain acids and adenosine triphosphate, or ATP, a chemical involved in the creation of energy. The levels of each of those substances were shown to rise substantially when muscles were working hard.

Read the whole story

Infusion of cash reinvigorates Boomtown at 50



Boomtown is now 50-years-old and has had $20 million in renovations. Photos/LTN

By Kathryn Reed

VERDI – Owners of Boomtown casino have taken an aging property and revamped it a bit.

The property off Interstate 80 on the outskirts of Reno turns 50 this year.

M1 Gaming bought the 318-room hotel, and casino with 15 table games and 560 slot machines from Pinnacle Entertainment in June 2012 for $12 million. Since that time, $20 million in upgrades have been made.

When M1, owned by Dean Dilullo, Edward Anthony St. John Jr. and Edward Anthony St. John III, purchased the casino they labeled Boomtown “highly distressed”.



Rooms are modern and standard.

The casino opened with Reno Mayor Bob Cashell as the owner. He was honored last week at a dinner at the property. He sold it in the 1980s.

Today the property has more life to it than it had in recent years. Money has been spent on new restaurants, bars, slots, table games, sportsbook, poker and keno.

The Guitar Bar has live entertainment every night. The carpet in the casino area – all 40,000 square feet – is new. The sportsbook has wall-to-wall televisions and more comfortable, softer seats.

There is a VIP area with new machines and private bathrooms.

Bistro 2100 is a new restaurant; serving three meals a day. The owners kept the legendary All-You-Can-Eat Lobster Buffet. While there are multiple places to eat, not all are open every

night.

The owners have also returned music to Boomtown, with headliners whose heyday was mostly in the 1970s and 1980s – like Brian Howe from Bad Company, Collin Raye and Larry Gatlin. Most performers play two shows for one night.



The Fun Center has games that have nothing to do with gambling.

What sets this casino apart from many is the size of its arcade. In fact, it’s called a Fun Center. A great aspect is that no alcohol or smoking is allowed in this area. It’s designed for big and little kids.

The Old West façade is still intact.

While the rooms look like they have been spruced up a bit, the dankness of the hallways and scuffed up carpet and walls could use some attention to make it more appealing.

Boomtown once was a truckers’ haven because it meant not having to find a spot to park their rig in Reno or having to be off the interstate. Those days are about to return.

Last June on a 5-1 vote the Reno City Council agreed the Boomtown truck stop could be resurrected. It will have to be in a different location because Cabela’s occupies the parcel

where the old stop was located. The new one will be on about 14 acres to the west of Cabela's.

Letter: County assessor has crossed the line

To the community,

The long arm of our El Dorado County assessor is now reaching inside the walls of our vacation homes. A tax on personal furnishings? This takes our breath away.

What a "wonderful" way to discourage purchasing or upgrading our vacation property. They want purchase prices on furniture, stoves, refrigerators and supplies. Does that mean silverware, dishes, can openers, blankets, toasters? All this going back to 2003 and prior.

My reaction to this letter from our El Dorado tax assessor is: "You have got to be kidding!"

I am a retired letter carrier and my wife is a retired waitress. Maintaining our modest vacation home is a struggle with advertising (VRBO), management fees, property taxes, HOA dues, utility bills, South Lake Tahoe permit fees, South Lake Tahoe rental/TOT taxes, insurance, and repairs.

We received our notice with a deadline date of April 1 on March 29 – three days before the due date. How wonderful of them to give us a five-week "extension" to reply.

They have opened up a "can of worms" by asking for purchasing histories going back earlier than 2003. I no longer have purchase receipts going back farther than five years. Much of

our home inventory are second-hand items we bring up after use in our primary home.

Are other counties around Lake Tahoe part of this new regulation? If that is not the case, this is both unfair and unethical.

Greg and Penny Ripke, South Lake Tahoe

Marriott's quarterly net income up 26%

By AP

A recovering economy and demand for hotel rooms helped lift Marriott International Inc.'s first-quarter net income 26 percent.

More people stayed in the company's hotels and paid 3.2 percent more per night.

The Bethesda, Md.-based company earned $172 million, or 57 cents per share, beating the 51 cents expected by Wall Street analysts surveyed by FactSet. That's up from $136 million, or 43 cents per share, in the same period last year.

Revenue rose 5 percent to $3.3 billion, in line with Wall Street's expectations.

Those increases come even after Marriott adjusted its reporting period to have three fewer days in the quarter this year.

The company's revenue per available room – a key industry

metric known as RevPAR – rose 6.2 percent in the first quarter, showing both an increase in occupancy rates and how much the hotels can charge for those rooms.

And nearly 6,000 rooms were added during the first quarter, including 3,300 rooms in international markets.

“While hotel industry supply in North America is growing only modestly, particularly in the full-service segment, we are taking a greater share of new hotels being developed around the world, reflecting owners’ and franchisees’ confidence in our brands and operational strength,” CEO Arne M. Sorenson said in a statement.

Marriott doesn’t own most of the hotels in its system but makes money off either managing or franchising its 18 brands, which include Ritz-Carlton, Fairfield Inn & Suites, Courtyard, SpringHill Suites and Renaissance.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

• South Lake Tahoe City Clerk Suzie Alessi received the 2014 Presidential Award of Excellence from the City Clerk’s Association of California.

• The little cub being taken care of at Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care now weighs 7.7 pounds. She arrived April 15 weighing 5 pounds, 6 ounces.

• The Genoa Cowboy Festival is May 2-4. More info is online.

• May is Wildfire Awareness Month in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

• Nevada will be receiving $2.5 million in federal highway grants for projects that are intended to improve safety on roads and interstates.