Budget gift: Helping Boys & Girls Club

Publisher's note: ***Lake Tahoe News is looking for gift ideas that are less than $20. Find out how to make a suggestion.***

The Boys & Girls Club of Lake Tahoe has two ways that you can impact the lives of many young people in our community this holiday season. The first is our Holiday Angel program. As a Holiday Angel, you have the opportunity to make a young person's holiday a little brighter by purchasing a special gift (not to exceed $30) for them.



For information about the program, contact Matt Sampson at msampson@bgclt.org.

The second way is to make a donation in honor of a special person this holiday. The recipient will receive a certificate that a donation in their honor was made by you to the Boys & Girls Club, and you will receive a letter acknowledging your donation with our tax ID number.

For additional information or to make a donation, email khouser@bgclt.org.

As the holidays near, we are reminded every day how important our club, programs and services are to our members and families. More than 200 of the 750 registered members ages 5-18 attend our two sites every day after school. We thank you South Lake Tahoe for being a part of the "village" that our children need to grow up knowing there are so many people who care about them. To find out more about these and other programs, services, and initiatives of the Boys & Girls Club

go online, phone (530) 542.0838 or drop by 1100 Lyons Ave., South Lake Tahoe.

– Karen Houser

California farmers must learn to cope with changing climate

By Suzanne Bohan, Contra Costa Times

SACRAMENTO – The succulent cherries and juicy ripe peaches that Californians enjoy every summer could disappear in some regions as climate change warms the cold winters that trees need to bear fruit in the spring.

In the past century, the state's winter lows have warmed by 2 degrees Fahrenheit, "a significant increase," one expert told a forum last week.

Although that warming trend hasn't yet disrupted crops, it is accelerating, Dan Sumner, director of the Agricultural Issues Center at UC Davis, told the Sacramento gathering.

"There's potential for complete crop failure, especially cherries, apricots and other stone fruit," said Louise Jackson, a UC Davis researcher. As an example, Sumner said that as winters heat up, peach growers in the warmer southern San Joaquin Valley may have to move northward, where it's cooler.

The forum drew experts in agricultural and climate science, and water and pest management with concerns over extreme

weather’s threat to California’s rich agricultural heartland.

California farmers grow more produce than any other state, supplying half of domestic fruits and vegetables, and almost all the almonds, apricots, raisins, grapes, olives and pistachios. California ranchers are among the leading livestock producers.

But California’s fast-changing climate will challenge farmers’ resiliency. Climate models predict global temperature increases from 2 to 11.5 degrees by 2100, depending on heat-trapping greenhouse gas emissions.

Read the whole story

Learn to ski-board weekend features 7 resorts

The 12th annual Learn to Ski and Board Weekend is Dec. 10-11. It is geared for beginners, costs $30 and includes an all-day beginner lift ticket, group lesson and gear rental.

First-timers have their choice of seven resorts to learn at including Alpine Meadows, Boreal Mountain Resort, Granlibakken Resort, Homewood Mountain Resort, Northstar, Squaw Valley and Sugar Bowl.

Reservations are not required, but participants should arrive early. Lesson packages can be purchased at each resort the day of lessons.

Some restrictions apply.

Sierra tree farmers boasting about this year’s crop

By Debbie Arrington, Sacramento Bee

No complaints from these farmers; this should be a Christmas season to remember.

“It’s the best crop we’ve had in years – truly tremendous,” said Geri Hyder of Indian Rock Tree Farm in Camino. “The mild weather we had this year made a beautiful crop of trees.”

At tree farms dotting the Sierra foothills, evergreens benefited from unusually cool summer temperatures and lots of moisture.

“We had a cold snap at just the right time to set the needles,” said Dee Kobervig, president of the El Dorado County Christmas Tree Growers Association. “In our business, weather can make or break it. And this year has been just about perfect.”

Tree farms within a two-hour drive of Sacramento expect a flood of shoppers, eager to bring home the perfect tree for their holidays.

“We’ll get several thousand people just at our place,” said Hyder, who sells cut-your-own and pre-cut trees in 10 varieties. “We’ve only got four weekends to make our business for the whole year.”

Read the whole story

Opinion: Clear-cuts impoverish forests, economy

By Katherine K. Evatt

I spent a recent Monday on a Sierra Pacific Industries' forest tour outside the rural Calaveras County town of West Point. Sierra Pacific has clear-cut thousands of acres in Calaveras. It has removed nearly every tree on each site, scraped off and burned the surface vegetation, deep-ripped the soil and sprayed herbicides to kill leafy plants that compete with newly planted conifers.

Sierra Pacific, California's largest private landowner, is owned by Fortune 400 member "Red" Emmerson. The corporation owns 1.7 million acres of timberland in the state and plans to clear-cut more than a million acres. Over the last decade or so, it has received the state's permission to clear-cut – or near-clear-cut – more than a quarter million acres of its land, nearly 391 square miles.

Much of this activity has occurred in the Mokelumne River watershed, where we took our tour.

Clear-cuts destroy existing wildlife habitat. They release massive amounts of carbon from the soil. Impacted roads release sediment into streams. And clear-cuts tear at the hearts of those of us who love the Sierra's forests.

Katherine K. Evatt is president of the Foothill Conservancy.

Read the whole story

3 docs blaze community health care trail in S. Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

No white coats, no stethoscopes around their necks. One could easily mistake this threesome for just an ordinary group of friends.

But they aren't.

Paul Rork, Greg Bergner and Brooks Martin are the reason the Barton Community Clinic exists. In 1989, they were the doctors who made up Tahoe Family Physicians. That year they opened what was called the El Dorado Community Clinic. For six years the doors stayed open under their care despite the red ink getting brighter and more voluminous.



Paul Rork, Greg Bergner, Brooks Martin -- circa 1980s

Today the clinic is still thriving. More people are using it than ever before (about 1,900 a month) and it has outgrown its current location. Proceeds from the annual Festival of Trees and Lights (Dec. 2-4 at MontBleu) will go toward renovation of

the clinic, which will begin next year.

Permits are in hand. Moving into the new facility is slated for between Thanksgiving and Christmas 2012; then renovation of the older section begins.

“It will be more efficient,” Martin said.

The clinic is the original Tahoe Fracture office. What was the X-ray room is in the middle of the clinic, which makes it a bit dysfunctional when it comes to the flow.

Recognizing hard work



Paul Rork, Greg Bergner, Brooks Martin -- circa 2011

But it was their vision, their generosity and their commitment to their profession that has earned them the Spirit of Philanthropy Award that will be presented at the annual Barton Gala on Dec. 3. (The event is sold-out.) The award recognizes a person or people who have demonstrated extraordinary dedication to the health of the South Lake Tahoe community in general and to Barton Health in particular.

Rork, Bergner and Martin sat down with *Lake Tahoe News* this month to talk about life 22 years ago and what is in store for 2012. All have been practicing medicine on the South Shore since at least 1981.

While they remain steadfast friends and doctors within the

Barton Health Care system, only Martin is an integral part of the clinic. He manages it.

Barton Hospital took over the clinic from them in 1995 and a year later moved it to what is the old part of the hospital – where the emergency room used to be. In 2002, it was officially designated a rural health clinic.

The clinic has had a few homes, including in the building where Sprouts restaurant is. Those were the days of brown walls and orange carpet.

The docs were the only primary care physicians at the time taking Medi-Cal patients. That's what led them to start the clinic. It was better to break that segment off from their main practice. Midlevels were brought in to provide much of the care – which is the same today.

Today, like when things started, the clinic is overseen by doctors, with one going to the facility each day.

But it was a Catch-22. Two midlevels (which are nurse practitioners or physicians assistants) were seeing 25 patients a day, five days week. That pace could not be maintained, nor could the financial loss be sustained.

That's when Barton took over.

Time brings change

The three pioneers have seen many changes over the years.

"You could work in the casinos in the '80s at a low level job and have insurance. Then the casinos laid people off and rehired them at part time," Rork said. "There are a lot more unbenefitted patients."

In the 1980s and 1990s the county public health clinic was more vibrant, too. Now the services it provides are few and far between.

“The community clinic has become more and more important,” Bergner said.

None of the doctors foresees the day when the clinic won’t be needed.

“As long as the American health care system has a work related health system, not everyone will be offered it,” Martin said. “And private is not affordable, so the clinic is clearly needed.”

He says clinic patients involve more psychosocial issues because usually there is more than just the medical issue to deal with. Loss of job, financial problems, possible language barriers – this all contributes to what Martin says becomes some of the most difficult patients to care for because of the complexities of the whole patient.

Evolution of care

Changes since they started the clinic include specialists going to the clinic, telemedicine and psychiatric care.

“There is so much more chronic care involved in primary care,” Bergner said.

They pointed to how just a couple decades ago a cancer or HIV diagnosis would be a death sentence – that’s not the case now.

But all the changes are not welcome.

“Only one country in the world allows television prescription ads,” Rork said.

Martin said with the number of studies funded by drug companies there is “corporate pressure to increase the use of medications.”

More than doctors

All three have been chief of staff. Rork and Bergner are on

the board of directors, while Martin has been chairman of the physician advisory committee at Barton Hospital for more than 17 years.

They have participated in and coached local sports teams. They helped the local library when it needed funds, and have regularly donated to fundraisers for community organizations.

Their families grew up together.

The night before the interview they had dinner together.

While one day they will retire, they envision a more tapering off approach instead of all or nothing.

One thing won’t change no matter how many hours they devote to medicine – that’s their friendship.

“We’ve been best friends forever. That will never change,” Rork said.

Opinion: Successful Thanksgiving feast

To the community,

The Brotherhood Motorcycle Club wishes to thank local businesses and community members in South Lake Tahoe and Stateline for their generous donations to our annual fundraiser, HOGG WILD XVI.

Because of our community's generosity we were able to provide 50 complete turkey dinners to families in need this Thanksgiving.

The giveaway at Sierra Community Church was a huge success thanks to the following individuals, businesses and community members. Thanks to Christine from Lira's Market for putting the dinner packages together. Thanks to Joanne, Jody, Virginia and Tom Davis from Christmas Cheer who were there to help distribute the turkey dinners at the Sierra Community Church. Thanks to southtahoenow.com news site for the online promotion of our event.

The Brotherhood Motorcycle Club could not have done this without the generous raffle prize donations from our wonderful community and numerous individuals for our annual event. Also, a special thanks to The Brothers Bar for hosting our event and Sierra Community Church for allowing our annual Turkey Giveaway to be held there.

Thank you, South Lake Tahoe.

Brotherhood Motorcycle Club

Miss Marcia dance students on stage at Harrah's

"'Twas the Night Before Christmas" is a special holiday

production by Lake Tahoe's Shining Stars of the Marcia Sarosik Dance Studio.

It returns to Harrah's Lake Tahoe on Dec. 4 at 1pm and 4pm.

The production, based on the classic holiday poem, made its debut in 2006. The dancers range in age from 2½ to 18.



Mellisa Jo Marsh is part of Miss Marcia's dance group. Photo/Tara Pielaet

"Jingle Bell Rock", "Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer" and "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree" are some of the favorite holiday songs performed by the dancers.

Excerpts from Tchaikovsky's "Nutcracker" include the Sugarplum Fairy danced by Melissa Jo Marsh, who recently attended the Boston Ballet's summer intensive. The Snowflakes and the Waltz of the Flowers will be presented by the middle school and advanced ballet students, with younger ballet students performing as angels in the "Magic Toy Shop".

A Rockettes style kick line in addition to contemporary, lyrical hip hop and tap dances to songs that follow the story are included in the show. Some of the dancers making their stage debut at this event are part of the Shining Stars' outreach program, which sponsors dance education for students

who would otherwise not be able to participate in dance classes and performances.

The high school couples class brings some of South Tahoe High School's athletes to the stage and the dance class and glee chorus from the high school will also perform.

The proceeds from this year's productions will benefit organizations that support needy children on the South Shore.

Ticket prices are $12 general admission and $6 for seniors and students. Tickets are available online until Friday afternoon and will be also be available at the door 30 minutes prior to each show.

Early Walt Disney drawing to be auctioned off in Reno

By Hollywood Reporter

An original, autographed drawing by Walt Disney, believed to have been made around 1920, will go up for auction this week in Reno.

The whimsical drawing of a cigar-chomping man wearing a derby hat will be among 1,400 items up for sale at the two-day auction set to begin Tuesday at the Atlantis Casino Resort.

Titled "Fill Up My Can," the illustration has an estimated value of $35,000 to $50,000. It was made before Disney hit it big in the entertainment world and is believed to predate his Mickey Mouse, which made its cartoon debut in 1928.

“Real pieces signed by him (Disney) are really rare,” Fred Holabird of Reno-based Holabird-Kagin Americana, which is staging the auction, told the Associated Press. “This is one of the earliest known signed Disney pieces, if not the earliest.”

The drawing was once owned by Disney’s sister, Ruth Disney.

Read the whole story

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