Real estate brokerage firms swap assets

By Jason Hildago, Reno Gazette-Journal

Two area real estate brokerage firms swapped assets through branch acquisitions, as part of a strategic realignment that focuses and increases market share for both companies in their respective areas.

The Select Group Real Estate Services and Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate Mason-McDuffie acquired offices from each other in the greater Reno area and Truckee on Nov. 16.

As part of the deal, The Select Group acquired Better Homes and Gardens' Reno and Sparks operations. In exchange, Better Homes and Gardens acquired The Select Group's Truckee operations.

"This strategic realignment allows us to focus more on Northern Nevada and Lake Tahoe and allows them to focus and expand their market share in the Truckee area," said Dan Jacuzzi, owner of the The Select Group. "It's a positive for both of our companies."

The Select Group is always on the lookout for opportunities to expand its operations, Jacuzzi said. The operations that The Select Group acquired are significantly larger than what the company sold to Better Homes and Garden.

Read the whole story

Final winner picked for Festival of Trees and Lights

Karen Bender (and five people she chooses to take) is going to the Dec. 2 Family Night during the annual Festival of Trees and Lights on the South Shore.

Lake Tahoe News in collaboration with the Barton Foundation is giving away four packages of tickets to Family Night. The package includes tickets for six people to the festival and a group picture with Santa.

Thank you to everyone who participated. For those who did not win, tickets are available for purchase.



State Supreme Court ruling affects retiree health benefits

By Denny Walsh, Sacramento Bee

In a development that may help Sacramento County retirees regain lost health-care subsidies, the California Supreme Court ruled last week that counties can be bound by an

“implied contract” with retired employees.

In a federal lawsuit that was filed in April, the Sacramento County Retired Employees Association is challenging the county’s drastic reduction of subsidies that help retirees pay for medical and dental insurance.

As a cost-saving measure in tough economic times, the Board of Supervisors slashed the subsidy in 2010 by $100 a month – from a maximum of $244 to $144 – and then, in 2011, to a maximum of $80.64 a month.

The association, which claims a membership of approximately 8,000, alleges in its complaint that the board’s actions breach an implied contract in violation of the U.S. and California constitutions.

The “substantial subsidy” provided by board actions from 1993 through 2009 is evidence of “a legislative intent to create a contractual right, because it induced plaintiffs to remain employed with the county and they relied upon it in deciding when to retire,” attorney Mark Merin wrote in a brief opposing the county’s motion to dismiss the suit.

Read the whole story

Tree lighting in Meyers

On Dec. 9 at 6pm Meyers will have its inaugural tree lighting in the Divided Sky/Downtown Café parking lot.

The event is free and open to the public.

The tree will be wrapped in 7,000 warm white lights, and attendees may enjoy hot chocolate, popcorn and entertainment.

For more information on attending or on how to donate to the event, contact Rene Brejc of the Meyers Business Group at (530) 577.7111.

Truckee recovery center pays it forward

By Jill Oberly, Reno Gazette-Journal

TRUCKEE – On April 10, 2008, Steve Wallace broke his back skiing at Squaw Valley. He was paralyzed from his T-9 vertebrate, in his lower spine, down.

He was left with the possibility of never being able to walk again, let alone ski.

With the assistance of the Truckee-based High Fives Foundation, Wallace was skiing in the spring of 2009. Today, the 30-year-old walks, skis and practices yoga as part of his continued recovery.

“I do all these things to get better because somebody along the way – Roy Tuscany – told me that I was going to walk again,” Wallace said. “That provided me with hope to take those steps needed to get on track to a full recovery.”

Tuscany is the co-founder and president of High Fives Foundation, a nonprofit he started in 2009. It is dedicated to raising money and awareness for winter sports athletes who have suffered a life-altering injury.

The organization has grown quickly. It now has two full-time employees, one part-time employee, an intern and a new facility, the CR Johnson Healing Center. It was named 2011 nonprofit of the year by the Truckee Donner Chamber of Commerce.

Read the whole story

Lake Tahoe Community Rock Ensemble

Members of Eric Hellberg's Lake Tahoe Community Rock Ensemble class will be hosting a benefit concert Dec. 9 at 7pm the Lake Tahoe Community College Duke Theater.

In addition to class members, special guest Coherence will be performing.

All proceeds from the event benefit the programs and services of the Boys & Girls Club of Lake Tahoe. Admission is $5. Ticket and raffle tickets are available from Rock Ensemble members, at the Boys & Girls Club and at the door.

For more information, call (530) 542.0838.

Douglas County school site

close to having for sale sign

By Kathryn Reed

When Douglas County School District board of trustees meet next month they are likely to vote on whether Kingsbury Middle School should be put up for sale.

Declining enrollment at Lake Tahoe forced the district to go from three schools at the lake to two in fall 2008. KMS has sat dormant since then.



Declining enrollment forced the closure of KMS. Photo/LTN file

The 36,000-square-foot school sits on 10 acres of pristine lake ridge property above Lake Village in Stateline. It comes with a cafeteria/commercial kitchen, full-size gymnasium, locker room and TRPA required BMPs.

Nevada law requires the district to put an asking price no less than the highest appraised value – which is $4 million.

Two appraisals were sought – another state regulation. The one that came in at $2.5 million was working with comparisons in the local market, while the $4 million appraisal looked at a broader spectrum, according to CFO Holly Luna.

The money from the sale must go toward future capital improvements. State law does not permit it to go into the general fund.

The board meets Dec. 13 at 3:30pm at Douglas High School in Minden.

Budget gifts: Donation to Family Resource Center

So often we give what we would like to receive and at this stage in our life we seldom want.



So, what about donating $20 to the Family Resource Center with a friend’s name listed? It is a win-win because the money is dispersed locally. Those in need receive and your friend is still acknowledged by your generosity.

The FRC is a solid organization that truthfully does provide much needed services and supplies to all of our Lake Tahoe Unified School District children’s families.

This idea was submitted by a South Lake Tahoe resident who wants to be anonymous.

Lake Tahoe News is looking for budget holiday gift ideas. Find out more about the budget idea by reading this story.

K’s Kitchen: Apple crisp makes guests think you worked hard

By Kathryn Reed

What to do with the three remaining pippin apples? You can’t just eat these like any ordinary apple. That would be wasteful – plus they are pretty bitter. These are practically gold in the world of baking.



Needing to use them before they went bad (these aren’t quite as hearty as real bullion) I consulted with mom. She suggested a crisp.

She just said do this, do that and you will be fine. While I’m sure I would have been fine, I figured it would be better to consult with a cookbook so I would have something to share with all of you that came with real measurements.

Crisps really are one of those basic desserts that tastes like you’ve gone to a whole lot more trouble than you did. And if you have fresh fruit in the house like peaches or blueberries or strawberries or cherries or pears – they can all become a crisp.

For people who don’t want to deal with a full pie, this is the

best solution.

The recipe said to let it cool. I put vanilla ice cream on my first serving – cooled it right down.

I got the recipe from Sunset's "Easy Basics for Good Cooking" cookbook. This was one of the first two cookbooks I was given. They were Christmas gifts from my parents when I was a sophomore in college.

The cookbook says the crisp is best eaten the day it's made. I have to agree.

Apple Crisp

1 C firmly packed brown sugar

1 C all purpose flour or whole wheat flour

2 tsp ground cinnamon

½ C butter or margarine

7-8 baking apples (2-2½ pounds)

2 tsp lemon juice

1 tsp grated lemon peel

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly grease a 9-inch square baking pan; set aside.

In a small bowl, stir together sugar, flour and 1 teaspoon of the cinnamon. With a pastry blender or your fingers, cut in butter until mixture is crumbly; set aside.

Peel apples; slice thinly into prepared baking pan. Sprinkle with the remaining teaspoon of cinnamon, lemon juice, and lemon peel; to coat apples, then spread them out in pan. Sprinkle crumb mixture evenly over apples.

Bake, uncovered, for 50-60 minutes or until apples are fork-

tender and top crust is browned and crisp. Let cool for at least 30 minutes before serving, or let cool completely and serve at room temperature. Makes 6 to 8 servings.

Boat shuttle takes skiers from S. Tahoe to Incline and back

The Tahoe Queen paddle-wheeler is resuming its ski shuttle between the South and North shores.



In years past the shuttle went from Ski Run Marina to Tahoe City. Starting in January it will go from South Lake Tahoe to the pier at the Hyatt in Incline Village. The idea is skiers could spend a half day at Northstar before going back to the South Shore.

Roundtrip tickets start at $59 for adults and $30 for children. That’s just for the boat ride.

Advanced reservations are required by going online.