South Lake Tahoe to light holiday tree, menorah

Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority winter tree lighting is Dec. 2 from 5-7pm at the South Lake Tahoe Senior Center (3050 Lake Tahoe Blvd.).

Instead of standing outside the cold like years past, people will be able to take refuge inside the senior center and Tahoe Art League Gallery.

Free sleigh rides will be offered by Borges Sleigh Rides.

Disc jockey Derek Tarpey will spin holiday tunes, while the South Lake Tahoe Children's Choral Society provides live music.

Tours of the Lake Tahoe Historical Society Museum and 1930s Log Cabin will be available.

The community menorah will also be lighted.

Bring a camera to take photos with Santa inside the South Lake Tahoe Senior Citizens Center or in front of the Lake Tahoe Historical Society Museum's Victorian Tree.

Food and toy donations will be collected for Christmas Cheer and Caps For Kids.

For more information, call (530) 541.5255 or email info@LTVA.org.

Annual Smokeout encourages people to not light up again

The American Cancer Society is marking the 36th annual Great American Smokeout on Nov. 17.



“Smokers who participate in the Great American Smokeout by not smoking on Nov. 17 take an important step toward a healthier life and the possibility of quitting for good,” Christy White, supervising health education coordinator for the El Dorado County Tobacco Use Prevention Program, said in a statement.

According to White, Californians have seen dramatic changes in tobacco use and related policies over the past twenty years.

An estimated 11.9 percent of California adults and 16.8 percent of El Dorado County adults smoke.

White admits that quitting smoking can be difficult, but emphasizes that it can be done. “To be successful in quitting, you need to know what you’re up against, what your options are, and where to go for help,” she said.

Many resources are available to help smokers quit, including the California Smoker’s Helpline.

For additional resources, including locations of local stop smoking classes, call (530) 621.6142.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Sarah Hussong-Johnson has been appointed director of engineering for South Lake Tahoe.

• Squaw Valley, Alpine Meadows and Northstar offer ski lessons through the North American Ski Training Center.

• West Virginia's 19th Crimes Against Children Conference convenes Nov. 16 with the keynote address given by Terry Probyn, the mother of South Lake Tahoe kidnap victim Jaycee Lee Dugard.

• Carol S. Heape, CEO and founder of Elder Options Inc. in Placerville, has been recognized by the National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers and awarded the Rose Kleiner Award.

• NV Energy was downgraded by equities research analysts at Bank of America from a "buy" rating to a "neutral" rating in a research note issued to investors Nov. 15. Analysts at Goldman Sachs reiterated a "buy" rating on shares of NV Energy in a research note to investors on Nov. 3.

Douglas County library to close Thanksgiving weekend

The Douglas County Public Library in Zephyr Cove will be closed Nov. 23-26.

The library will resume its regular schedule Nov. 30 at 11am.

For more information, call (775) 588.6411.

Vehicle of missing Gardnerville woman found; body not ID’d

The vehicle belonging to a missing Gardnerville woman was found Nov. 14 90-feet down the side of an embankment near the old power dam on the East Fork of the Carson River in Gardnerville.

The vehicle matched what 56-year-old Patricia Loraine Bosch was driving when she was reported missing by family members Nov. 11.

Bosch was last seen Nov. 2 when she left her home in Bodie Flats, South Gardnerville, to drive to the FISH Thrift store in Carson City.

Deputies said because of the extensive crushing damage on the vehicle and inverted positioning of the vehicle when it came to rest, the body inside the vehicle could not be removed or fully observed; therefore identity of the decedent is unknown. However, based upon the description of the vehicle and the recent missing person circumstances, it is suspected the body is that of Bosch, deputies said.

The vehicle is expected to be hauled out of the ravine today.

State Christmas tree hails from El Dorado County

The state Christmas tree will roll from downtown Placerville this morning to Sacramento.

The nearly 60-foot Douglas fir is from El Dorado County.



CalFire crews load this year's state Christmas tree. Photo/Teresa Mizuhara/CalFire

CalFire and California Highway Patrol units will help transport the tree starting at 8am.

“Over the years this event has drawn attention to both the beauty and diversity of the forested landscapes found in El Dorado County,” CalFire Amador-El Dorado Unit Chief Kelly Keenan said in a statement. “Soon families will flock to find and cut their own Christmas tree at one of the local tree farms.”

The tree will be lighted Dec. 7 at 4:45pm.

It will be decorated with 900 handcrafted ornaments created by children and adults with developmental disabilities who receive services and support from the state's development centers and 21 nonprofit regional centers. It will be illuminated by 10,000 ultra-low wattage LED lights.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Nonprofits benefit when volunteers fit the job they're assigned

By Phyllis Korkki, New York Times

The recession dealt a double blow to many nonprofits. Just as it ratcheted up demand for their services, it also forced them to cut their budgets. So in times like these, volunteers are more valuable than ever.

But volunteer work can be plagued by inefficiency. Suppose a nonprofit manages to recruit a large group of people to help with a project. It's not a given that they will have the right skills for the effort, or that the nonprofit will know how to mobilize them, said Michelle Nunn, chief executive of the Points of Light Institute, which helps organize volunteer efforts.

Sometimes, the nonprofits with the most need are those that don't have the money to hire people to supervise volunteers, said Gary Bagley, executive director of New York Cares, which mobilizes volunteer projects citywide.

To avoid squandering a volunteer’s good will, more organizations, including Points of Light and New York Cares, are working to match supply and demand with more precision. For example, they are enlisting volunteers to serve as managers of other volunteers. And, in the process, these people are broadening their experience and adding ballast to their résumés.

Technological advances are aiding this push to properly match volunteers. A Web site called Sparked, which started a year ago, allows people to use their computers to help others in a variety of ways. “It’s desktop volunteering,” said Ben Rigby, the company’s chief executive. People can spend as little as a few hours or even just a few minutes helping out.

Read the whole story

Santa on his way to Tahoe City

Tahoe City Parks and Recreation Department’s inaugural Breakfast with Santa at Rideout Community Center is Dec. 3 from 8:30-10:30am.

This family event is co-sponsored by the Tahoe City Rotary Club.

The event includes a pancake breakfast, photo opportunities, letters to Santa, ornament decorating, and of course, Santa. The event is $9 for children and $5 for adults.

Register in advance to reserve a spot and don’t forget your camera.

For more information, contact Shaun at (530) 583.3440, ext.14.

Increase in pot grows tied to rising number of foreclosures

By Ashley Powers, Los Angeles Times

LAS VEGAS – The Ballard house was as unassuming as any in the stucco outskirts of Las Vegas: a two-story box the color of an oatmeal cookie. Police charged inside one night searching for a domestic violence suspect. Instead, they smelled something skunky.

Marijuana. Lots of it.

Two-foot-tall plants fought for space in a hallway, police later testified. Half a dozen jars of buds hid in a closet. The master bedroom was something of a jungle, with two Ballard children, ages 8 and 9, asleep on the bed.

The home – with four bedrooms and 61 plants – was one of the smaller alleged grow operations authorities have dismantled this year. At another home, authorities seized 878 plants worth an estimated $2.6 million.

Las Vegas has a pot home problem. And like many of the region's maladies, it's tied to the housing slump.

Last year, authorities took down 153 indoor grow sites in Nevada and seized more than 13,000 plants, compared with 18 sites and 1,000 plants in 2005, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration said. (By comparison, California busted 791 indoor sites last year.)

“You can’t have crime without opportunity,” said William Sousa, a criminologist at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. “And all those empty homes present an opportunity for criminal activity.”

Read the whole story

Opinion: Foreclosure system continues to hold back economy

Publisher’s note: ***This editorial is from the Nov. 13, 2011, Reno Gazette-Journal.***

Speaking in Las Vegas recently, the Republican presidential candidate and former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney was blunt when asked what he would do about the large number of homeowners facing foreclosure in Nevada, the nation’s leader in foreclosures.

The best thing the government can do, Romney said, is to let the foreclosure process run its course. Let the system work, he said.

In ordinary times, Romney would be right, of course, just as he would be right when he argues that the federal government should have let General Motors go through the bankruptcy process, and possible liquidation, instead of lending the auto giant money from the government’s depleted coffers.

In ordinary times, the system is able to deal with these sorts of financial troubles with a minimum of disruption to the nation’s economy.

These are not ordinary times, however, and they haven’t been since the near collapse of the U.S. banking industry in 2008, when overnight Wall Street’s failures suddenly became Main Street’s problems.

Read the whole story