Orphaned cub likely from Humboldt area

The mystery behind where the tiny bear cub came from seems to be resolved. The Bear League received an anonymous call from a man who claimed responsibility for rescuing the orphaned cub and leaving it in the driveway of the West Shore facility.

The man knew the answer to every question regarding where she was placed, what else was out there, the color of the blanket in the kennel and more. He said he found her crying and hugging her deceased mother near Humboldt Redwoods State Park. He did not know how the mama bear died, saying it was quite a distance from a road.

He said when he notified authorities (but he would not say which agency) he was told to leave it alone. He told the Bear League his conscience would not allow him to walk away and leave her to die.

California Department of Fish and Wildlife will be running DNA from her hair and blood in an attempt to pin down her origins. If it points to that general area, the she will be released there.

In the mean time, Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care is getting her ready to return to the wild.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

No problem hooking a fish on Lake Tahoe

By Danny Lloyd, Fish Sniffer

Spring mackinaw fishing has been very consistent at Lake Tahoe. The only stumbling block in recent days has been the wind, which has been strong and gusty.

“I got out (Saturday) morning. It was still breezy but fishable and we did well,” reported Mickey Daniels of Mickey’s Big Mack Charters. “I had five anglers on the boat and at one point we had 6 rods hooked up at once. The fish we got were good quality macks ranging from 5 to 7.5 pounds.”

“My last trip on Tahoe was a bit slow, but overall my clients have been catching a lot of lakers,” related Rick Kennedy of Tight Lines Guide Service.

Gene St. Denis of Blue Ribbon Charters has also been enjoying limit style fishing while trolling minnows teamed with dodgers.

Read the whole story

Placerville man accused of sex crimes

A 26-year-old Placerville man is accused of soliciting sex from a 15-year-old boy.

El Dorado County sheriff’s detectives said Glenn O’Rourke, 26,

first sent sexually suggestive and descriptive text messages to the youth on April 14. Later O'Rourke sent the boy homemade pornographic videos and sexual photographs of himself.

With the assistance of the teen, detectives contacted O'Rourke using the boy's cell telephone and impersonated the boy. Detectives arrested O'Rourke without incident.

Deputies said they don't believe this youth is O'Rourke's only victim.

O'Rourke was using the name Glenn Coco when he contact the boy.

Anyone with information is asked to call Detective Rich Horn at 530.642.4715.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Then and now: Railcar returns to its original intent



This train started rolling more than 100 years ago. Photo/Nevada State Railroad Museum

According to the Nevada State Railroad Museum, the McKeen Motor Car Company of Nebraska built 152 gasoline-powered “railcars” between 1905 and 1917.

A new McKeen Motor Car (No. 22) entered into service for the Virginia & Truckee Railroad on May 9, 1910, and made round-trips between Reno and Minden. No. 22 was retired and sold 35 years later.





The train became a diner in the 1940s. Photos/Nevada State Railroad Museum

Its body became a stationary diner in the 1940s, and by the 1980s it had become Al’s Plumbing Supply office in Carson City.



The train becomes a plumbing business. Photo/Nevada State Railroad Museum.

In 1996, it was donated to the Nevada State Railroad Museum in Carson City and now is the only restored and operable McKeen motor car in existence . It is also a National Historic Landmark.



Railcar returns to old glory. Photo/Nevada State Railroad Museum



Restored railcar. Photo/Bill Kingman

On National Train Day, May 10, the museum will offer rides on No. 22, celebrating its 104th anniversary date since being delivered to the V&T.

– Bill Kingman

Veggie garden in Tahoe? – Yes, it's possible



Bob Rockwell has been growing vegetables in Lake Tahoe for 40 years. Photos/Kathryn Reed

Publisher's note: ***Today begins a random series of stories about growing a vegetable garden in South Lake Tahoe.***

By Kathryn Reed

Sun, soil, seeds. Those are the primary elements that make for a successful garden.

Now is the time for Lake Tahoe gardeners to be getting their soil ready. With much of the soil in the basin being decomposed granite, it is necessary to amend the soil. This means mixing in nutrient-rich ingredients in the form of compost.

Compost can come in bags from a nursery or be even fresher if it comes from Full Circle Compost in Minden. Be careful about using steer manure because that can burn plants. Full Circle uses food waste from South Tahoe Refuse to create some of its product.

Bob Rockwell of South Lake Tahoe has used both, but finds the Full Circle product to work best.

Rockwell learned to garden at the side of his mother when he was a boy. When he bought his first place in town in 1974 he started his own garden. Now his primary gardening spot is the lot he owns next to where he lives in the Al Tahoe neighborhood.



A radish pokes above ground.

“I’m learning as I grow,” Rockwell told *Lake Tahoe News* as he perused the compost that still needed to be mixed in with the dirt.

Rockwell doesn’t claim to be an expert. But he is willing to take chances, experiment and to even expand his growing area. In the near-vacant lot his main garden is 16 feet by 25 feet. Just behind it is the secondary garden that is 8 feet by 12 feet. He has another plot behind his house. In a small wood box he is seeing what grows in an all compost mixture. Last week radishes were starting to sprout.

“Tahoe soil is good for growing pine trees and not much else,” Rockwell said. Thus the need to help it out a bit.

Rockwell doesn’t count the hours it takes to tend his garden. It’s one of those labors of love. He’s playing in the dirt nearly every day except during winter and the spring storms.

He used to only use compost from Scotty’s. He still has bags of it sitting next to the original shack that came with the property. Now he swears by Full Circle Compost. Rockwell had some delivered last fall that he then spread on top of soil where he knew he would be planting. Soon all of it will be mixed in.



Bob Rockwell mixes compost in with Tahoe’s naturally granite soil.

Rockwell uses a shovel for the mixing. A rototiller would speed up the process.

Once the soil and compost are mixed, Rockwell will rake it smooth. Then distinct rows will be created to plant seeds. Mounds will be created for things like potatoes.

He says even if people are just now starting to think about

the soil, that’s fine. But amend, amend, amend. And he says loosely packed soil is the best.

Fresh compost isn’t something people want to plant in right away because it can be too hot and burn the seeds or plants. That is a reason to get it in the fall and not the spring.

A raspberry plant and onion are coming up in the main area. These are volunteers – things he didn’t plant. But he’s not about to pull them either. He wants to see how they do.

His eyes, though, are always on the weather forecast. He follows four weather sites. This time of year it’s all about determining if he needs to be covering what is growing.

Various greens are a big component of Rockwell’s garden.

“When you have a salad with dinner that you grew there is nothing better,” Rockwell said.

Letter: Heavenly ski patrol comes to B&B’s rescue

To the community,

Heavenly ski patrol’s “all in with high energy” motto was clearly demonstrated at the April 21 Adopt A Day of Nourishment sponsorship dinner.

Ski patrol volunteers Adrian Brown, Audrey Bayless, Rick Rogers, Colton Terry and Rick McGuire enthusiastically jumped right into sorting and filling the 70 “to go bags”, moved on to serving 98 dinner guests, and stayed to help clean up the kitchen and put away the tables and chairs.

Heavenly ski patrol's donation of funds and time made it possible for B&B to provide the evening's full course meal which has been occurring every Monday at St. Theresa Church's Grace Hall for over 24 years. Also with the help of our many donors, B&B began serving soup and pasta meals five years ago this month, at the Lake Tahoe Community Presbyterian Church.

B&B would like to express our appreciation to Heavenly's ski patrol members for their generous $250 donation and sending a great volunteer crew who brought a lot of fun, energy and good will to evening's dinner.

Speaking for the ski patrol, Bayless wrote, "HSP values community outreach. It was a wonderful experience to volunteer and give back."

Thank you Heavenly Ski Patrol.

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth

Placer signs deal to construct biomass facility

Placer County has signed an agreement for Phoenix Energy to build and operate the biomass gasification plant between Tahoe City and Truckee.

The 2-megawatt plant will use forest biomass from the area to make electricity, heat and biochar, which is a solid carbon byproduct that is used as a soil conditioner and filter media.

The Lake Tahoe project is Phoenix Energy's third biomass gasification plant in California. When it is fully operational it will be the company's largest plant.

“I believe there is a great opportunity for small community scale biomass plants to produce clean renewable energy for California and our third plant shows the technology is gaining momentum,” Phoenix Energy CEO Gregory Stangl said in a statement.

The plant will be run as a subsidiary of San Francisco-based Phoenix Energy.

Placer County for years has been seeking to develop an alternative to open burning of large piles of slash.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Placerville fire deaths ruled murder-suicide

By Cathy Locke, Sacramento Bee

Two women whose bodies were found following a fire in their Placerville-area home in March died as a result of a murder-suicide, according to the El Dorado County Sheriff’s Department.

Sheriff’s officials said investigators determined that homeowner Crystal Ward, 58, shot Carolyn Hague, 62, in the head, then set the house on fire using flammable liquids, before turning the weapon on herself.

Sheriff’s investigators were called to 1601 Rose Lane for a death investigation March 7. Firefighters had responded about 5:45am to find a home engulfed in flames. As firefighters worked to extinguish the blaze, others rushed inside to search for occupants believed to be trapped in the house.

Read the whole story

Acting better than storytelling in ‘Transcendence’



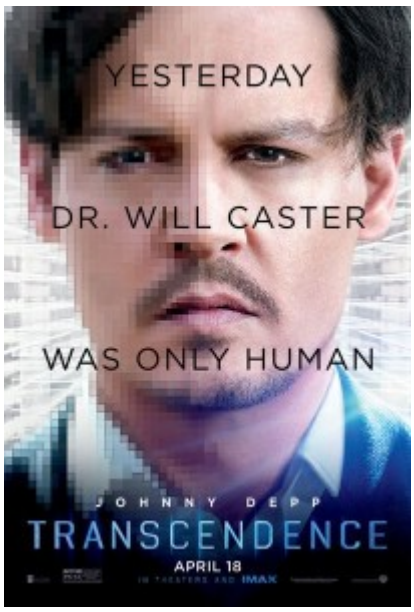
By Jeremy Miller

“Transcendence” is the first film from cinematographer turned director Wally Pfister, best known for his cinematography on “The Dark Knight” and “Inception”.

It stars Johnny Depp, Rebecca Hall, Morgan Freeman, Paul Bettany and Kate Mara.

Dr. Will Caster (Depp) and his wife/partner Evelyn (Hall) are the topmost pioneers in the quest to develop an artificially intelligent sentient machine that also envelops the basic personality of human beings. Will has been performing experiments trying to develop technology to allow transcendence, or the transfer of a personality into the digital world, as a personality-driven computer. They are highly acclaimed in their field and most certainly have pristine reputations amongst their peers, but what would a story be without some controversy?

An underground extremist group with the motto “unplug” led by Bree (Mara) isn’t too keen on the whole “play god” scenario and assassinates several leading members of the field developing the AI.



In their rampage they attempt an assassination on Caster and fail … or so we think. Caster eventually finds that he has been poisoned by the bullet that hit him and will eventually kick the bucket. Clever little rebels did their homework. His quick-witted and highly loyal partner Max (Bettany) sits down with Evelyn and they decide to attempt transcendence with Caster to keep him “alive”. It’s successful and Caster becomes the first emotionally powered A.I. in history.

Max and Evelyn quickly discover that even the purest mind can be overcome by greed and power. They then realize that some anti-computer hoodlums are the least of their worries.

Bam! There’s the plot.

What did I think? Well, it was all right. The first 30 minutes or so I was really feelin’ it. I am a sci-fi junkie and loved the basic premise. Even in the last act I was well entertained, but I wasn’t too thrilled with how the story actually panned out.

It was nice to see Depp back on the big screen. I feel like he doesn’t do enough these days. I will say that his performance was a bit underplayed, which some would argue isn’t fair because 75 percent of the film he’s a computer, but, hey, Scarlett had me glued the whole time in “Her” and you couldn’t even see her face so it’s no excuse.

I thought Paul Bettany really delivered, as he typically does. His character adds a needed comfort and grounding presence

throughout. I was into the evolution of his character. Wally Pfister is one of my favorite cinematographers, as he's done some of my all-time favorite movies. Visually the film was rather subtle for its genre and kept things within reach of reality. The introduction of the technology of the somewhat futuristic scene was perfect and intriguing. I felt like toward the end, however, it was just a large canvas of copy-paste effects, very uniform and underplayed. The script was decent. I shook my head a few times at the cheese, but hardly enough to call it a problem. Overall, it was a pretty good time.

My only qualms with it really are partially aesthetic and mostly storytelling. The third act could have played out with a little less hesitation, and the effects could have been more elaborate and powerful. Overall, a well-rounded sci-fi flick following the trend of exploring our desire for a more intimate relationship with machines; and why we should just let them keep our news feed updated and provide us with funny YouTube videos.

South Lake Tahoe resident Jeremy Miller has more movie reviews online.

Extended fire season puts California on alert

By Haya El Nasser, Aljazeera America

The climate change debate currently pits the bulk of the scientific community against holdouts who don't believe rising temperatures are the result of human activity. But in California, a state suffering from a historic drought, why the

phenomenon is happening is less important than the simple fact that it is.

Forecasters and fire agencies have tossed aside their normal fire calendar – mid-May to mid-October – and now prepare for what some call a new normal of a greatly extended fire season. They are hiring extra staff and issuing more warnings. Some local officials have warned that fire season in some parts of California has basically become a year-round phenomenon.

The National Weather Service has been issuing an unprecedented number of fire forecasts and alerts in the thick of the usually-wet season, months earlier than normal. Its forecast offices have kicked into fire-season mode well ahead of schedule.

The Sacramento office, which issues fire forecasts for interior Northern California, decided last week to up its daily seven-day forecasts to twice a day, and its National Fire Danger Rating System, which measures the seriousness of fire conditions, is going out earlier.

Read the whole story