Restaurant opening helps food bank, air races families

Chef Mark Estee of Truckee's Moody's and Burger Me hosts the grand opening of his Reno restaurant CAMPO on Nov. 16 from 6-9pm.

The grand opening will benefit the Food Bank of Northern Nevada and Think Kindness Reno Air Races Family Assistance Fund. Tickets are $20 and include small bites, wine and beer.

CAMPO is located at 50 N. Sierra St. on the ground floor of the Palladio.

Tickets may be bought online.

TRCD receives cash for watercraft inspection program

The Truckee River Fund has awarded $267,267 to the Tahoe Resource Conservation District to protect Truckee area water bodies from the growing threat posed by aquatic invasive species.

The funding will also be utilized to work toward the implementation of a mandatory watercraft inspection program and the establishment of a stakeholder collaborative to fund a long-term, sustainable aquatic invasive species prevention program for the Truckee area.

Entering its third year of managing the Truckee Regional Aquatic Invasive Species Protection Program, the Tahoe RCD

will continue to conduct watercraft inspections and develop and refine a comprehensive AIS education and outreach plan for the Truckee River watershed. Funding will also be utilized for early detection monitoring of AIS, an essential component of prevention programs.

Tahoe RCD and the Truckee River Watershed Council will be meeting with decision-makers in the coming weeks to develop an ordinance for mandatory boat inspections in the Truckee area. Boaters may see changes to the inspection process at Donner Lake and Stampede, Boca and Prosser reservoirs.

State allocates funds for regional road projects

Following last week's general obligation bond sales, the California Transportation Commission this week allocated $784 million in funding for 61 projects.

Placer County will receive $40.413 million to build a water quality collection and treatment facility from 0.2 miles south of the El Dorado-Placer county line to the Truckee River Bridge.

Work is expected to begin next summer and be done by December 2015.

Caltrans expects to reduce the traffic restrictions between June 15 and Labor Day to better handle the increased number of vehicles during the peak summer visitor period.

Truckee will receive $144,000 for road slurry seal for approximately 40 miles of roadways. The El Dorado Local

Transportation Commission will be getting $143,000, though no project was associated with it.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Author to speak about education vs. job skills

Community educators are joining forces to bring another 21st Century Education Speakers Series to the Lake Tahoe Basin. This year's series kicks-off with author Bernie Trilling on Nov. 8 from 6:30-9pm at Sierra Nevada College in the Tahoe Center for Environmental Sciences.



Trilling is a key organizer of the nationwide Partnership for 21st Century Skills initiative – 33 organizations advocating education readiness by building collaborative partnerships among education, business, community and government leaders. Trilling will talk about the profound gap between the knowledge and skills most students learn in school and what is needed for a thriving 21st century community and workplace.

Trilling is a 21st century learning expert, advisor, author, and the former global director of the Oracle Education Foundation, where he directed the development of education strategies, partnerships, and services for the Foundation and its ThinkQuest programs. He has served as board member of the Partnership for 21st Century Skills and co-chaired the committee that developed the highly regarded "rainbow" learning framework.

Trilling co-authored the seminal book on the subject, “21st Century Skills; Learning for Life in our Times”. Through a multi-media and interactive presentation he will help participants both envision and experience the skills and capacities that children need to be successful adults in our rapidly changing society.

This event is free and open to all community members. On Nov. 9, Trilling will facilitate a teacher development day for all local educators to focus more deeply on means and methodologies for implementation of these new ideas. The teacher workshops are free to local educators and will take place from 3–5pm at the Parasol Foundation, 948 Incline Way, Incline Village.

For more information about the sessions and to reserve a seat, go online.

Opinion: Rise and Runnels right for STPUD

To the community,

My name is Ernie Claudio and I was on the STPUD board of directors for two years in 2007. The only candidates I met while on the board were Dale Rise and John Runnels. These two candidates have proven their ability to say “No” to the STPUD management.

STPUD or the district is a multimillion-dollar organization with dreams of becoming even bigger by increasing water rates. We need candidates who can say, “No, economic times are bad, people are struggling, give the citizens a break and put your

growth on hold for awhile.”

The district’s strategy is, “Ask for high rates and see if anybody complains.” “If the people don’t complain, then we will raise the rates.” We need to complain. If there are a lot of complaints, then the board of directors will not let the district increase the water rates. We need Mr. Rise and Mr. Runnels on the board because they are the only candidates who have proven they’re ability to stand up to the powerful district management.

I have a water meter and my bill jumped up by $120. At this rate, my water bill will increase by more than $400 a year. We need to organize. There is a local group called The Citizens for Responsible Government. This group successfully stopped the Business Improve District tax proposed in 2004. This group is thinking of holding a public meeting to see how many people are not in favor of this rate increase.

Meanwhile, we need to show up at every STPUD meeting and speak for three minutes at the beginning of the meeting, the meetings start at 2pm on the first and third Thursdays. Show up, speak and be on our way home by 2:30pm.

See you at the next meeting.

Ernie Claudio, South Lake Tahoe

Tahoe Douglas picks chief from within department

Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District has promoted Ben Sharit to fire chief.

Sharit started with the district in 1985 as a firefighter/paramedic, rising through the ranks in the last 26 years. He started his career a volunteer with the Oakland department 30 years ago.



Ben Sharit

He earned his associate degree in fire science from Lake Tahoe Community College in 1999 and continued on as an adjunct EMT and fire science instructor. In 2009, Sharit completed a bachelor's degree in fire administration through a joint program of the National Fire Academy and Cogswell College.

Sharit replaces Guy LeFever who retired in September after 32 years with Tahoe Douglas.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Andre Tyson, aka rapper Dreda Dre, will be back at his alma mater Nov. 16 giving away thousands of dollars worth of clothes. He was at South Tahoe High a year ago doing the same thing.

• Design Workshop, an international landscape architecture, land planning, urban design and strategic services firm, won

three American Society of Landscape Architects Professional Awards. Design Workshop's three awards were among the 37 ASLA Awards given this year out of more than 567 award nominations submitted.

• Lake Tahoe Community College's fall play is "Distracted". Performances in the Duke Theatre are Nov. 12 at 8pm, Nov. 13 2pm, Nov. 17-19 8pm, and Nov. 20 2pm.

• The Reno Tahoe Winter Games Coalition relaunched its website.

• With the state selling bonds this fall, $2.2 million will be coming to South Tahoe High in November for the Sports Medicine Academy. Construction could start next year.

• Here is the Caltrans Sierra roadwork schedule and El Dorado-Tahoe schedule for next week.

Barton on target to make profit after $1 mil. loss in 2010

By Kathryn Reed

Salaries and people unable to pay their bills are adding to the expense column for Barton Health, which is compounded by the number of patients being on the decline.

For 2010, Barton Health recorded a loss of nearly $1 million.

"The 2010 loss reflects a write down of value in real estate owned by the hospital as required by generally accepted

accounting principle," Barton CFO Dick Derby said. He added that the transaction did not impact cash flow.



Barton tries to balance needs, with modern offerings like the improvements to the birthing center where Peggy Wright works. Photo/LTN file

The other time the hospital reported a loss was in 2008 – $513,841.

As a nonprofit health care facility, the South Shore entity must file financial documents with the Internal Revenue Service that are in large part public documents.

Barton's fiscal year is the same as the calendar year. The 2011 operating revenue was budgeted for $132,563,941, with operating expenses of $128,828,096. This leaves an anticipated gain of $3,735,845.

Employee costs (salaries, health, retirement, other taxes) represent about 47 percent of the annual budget. Barton employed 1,013 people in 2010.

Board of directors also receive compensation, mostly in the form of the same health benefits as employees. This is about $11,000 a year.

Even though Barton has laid off employees in the past few years, it remains South Lake Tahoe's largest private year-round employer. No raises were given in 2010, matching retirement contributions were reduced, employee health insurance contributions were raised, health insurance deductibles were increased, and other benefits were suspended.

"The salary freeze was lifted at the end of 2010 and in 2011 employees have received salary increases. Starting in 2012, Barton will change to a merit salary policy where salary increases will be based on performance," LeAnne Kankel, vice president of Human Resources, said.

Each year Barton compares its salaries to like-sized health care systems in Northern California and makes adjustments to "remain competitive", Derby said.

Salaries from the 2010 IRS report for the top 10 highest paid Barton employees:

• John Williams, CEO, $410,622

• Clint Purvance, chief medical officer, $348,864

• Dick Derby, CFO, $281,579

• Kathy Cocking, VP hospital operations, $223,959

• Mary Bittner, VP nursing, $196,640

• LeAnne Kankel, VP human resources, $183,486

• Barry Keil, pharmacist, $162,815

• Robert Quadri, director information systems, $147,932

• Terriann Cherry, pharmacist, $147,462

• Richard Belli, project management, $144,937.

Those who can’t pay

Barton writes off some of the care it gives because either people can’t pay the full amount or they refuse to.

“In terms of accounting, bad debt consists of services for which hospitals anticipated but did not receive payment. Charity Care, in contrast, consists of services for which hospitals neither received, nor expected to receive, payment because they had determined the patient’s inability to pay,” Kelly Neiger, CPA and financial analyst for Barton Health, said.

Information about Barton’s Charity Care and discount programs are online.

The following are the costs Barton has had to absorb over the last five years:

2010: Charity Care – $4,192,426; Bad debt – $7,950,035

2009: Charity Care – $4,773,459; Bad debt – $8,335,322

2008: Charity Care – $3,427,349; Bad debt – $8,407,000

2007: Charity Care – $4,105,269; Bad debt – $7,875,451

2006: Charity Care – $3,096,213; Bad debt – $7,303,827.

The dismal state of the South Shore economy is also evident by the number of people using Barton’s Community Clinic. In 2006, 14,634 people received care at the clinic. By 2010 that number had swelled to 18,840.

“This is partially due El Dorado County sharply decreasing their medical services in recent years. During 2010, the Community Clinic operated a net loss of approximately $700,000,” Derby said.

Unemployment in South Lake Tahoe is at 16.7 percent, which is a percentage point less than the high. No hard statistics exist of how many people in the area don't have health insurance. An indicator, though, is the fact 59.4 percent of the students in Lake Tahoe Unified in 2010-11 (stats for this year are not calculated yet) qualified for a free or reduced lunch. People who need help feeding their children often don't have jobs that come with health benefits.

Barton has stats for all of it patients, which includes locals and out-of-towners, for how they paid in 2010:

Private coverage: 38 percent

Self pay: 5 percent

Workers' compensation: 3 percent

Other government: 2 percent

County indigent programs: 7 percent

Medi-Cal: 14 percent

Medicare: 31 percent.

Community Clinic patients are mostly women and children – 60 percent. Teens and men make up the other 40 percent. Nearly half (43 percent) don't speak English as their first language.

"Patients are often undocumented migrant workers not eligible for Medi-Cal or are insured low-income patients with very high deductibles," Derby said.

Patient stats for Barton:

2010 – Inpatient admissions: 2,832

2010 – Outpatient registrations (including clinics): 159,198

2009 – Inpatient admissions: 3,116

2009 – Outpatient registrations (including clinics): 164,477

2008 – Inpatient admissions: 3,519

2008 – Outpatient registrations (including clinics): 151,309

2007 – Inpatient admissions: 3,909

2007 – Outpatient registrations (including clinics): 152,823

2006 – Inpatient admissions: 3,903

2006 – Outpatient registrations (including clinics): 141,200.

As people leave the basin, it means fewer people in need of health care. Good snow years can also hurt Barton's bottom line because of fewer ski injuries in all that soft powder.

Barton is trying to increase revenue without raising rates.

With Barton's emphasis on orthopedics, it is hoping to attract people to its facilities for the specialized treatment – call them the destination patient.

Eager skiers flock to Boreal on opening day

By Martha Bellisle, Reno Gazette-Journal

Within 15 minutes of opening, a lift line had already formed.

Keeping up its tradition of being the first ski area in Northern California to open for the season, Boreal Mountain Resort fired up its lift on Friday afternoon and hosted hundreds of snowboarders and a few skiers.

Boreal took advantage of cold overnight temperatures this week and used its snow-making machines to cover enough ground to open its terrain park, complete with seven features, including rails, jumps and boxes.

“We knew it was a holiday on Friday, Nevada Day, and a lot of people would be off, so we worked hard to make sure we could open,” said Jon Slaughter, director of marketing.

Friday marked the third year in a row that Boreal opened Oct. 29, he said.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Important to keep pets safe

By California Emergency Management Agency

The fall season is a festive and fun time of year for children and families, but a stressful and dangerous time for many pets. The California Emergency Management Agency (CalEMA) reminds Californians to take special precautions to ensure the safety of their pets, and those who may come in contact with them, during this season of entertaining and celebration:

* Do not leave your pet out in the yard unattended during high foot traffic community events and visiting hours. There are plenty of horror stories of vicious pranksters who have teased, injured, stolen, and even killed pets during some festivities.

* Keep pets, especially outdoor cats, inside several days before and several days after high foot traffic community

events and visiting hours; cats in particular may be at risk from children’s pranks or other cruelty-related incidents.

* Candies are not for pets: Chocolate is poisonous to a lot of animals and tin foil and cellophane candy wrappers can be hazardous if swallowed.

* Keep pets away from lit outdoor lanterns: Pets may knock them over and cause a fire. Curious kittens especially run the risk of getting burned.

* Do not dress your dog or cat in a costume unless you know for sure that he or she loves it. Otherwise, it puts too much stress on the animal. If you do dress up your pet, make sure that the costume is not annoying or unsafe; it should not constrict his/her movement, hearing, or ability to breathe or bark. Also, there should not be small, dangling, or easily chewed-off pieces on the costume that your pet could choke on. Pets should always be supervised, especially one that is dressed up in a costume. If your pet goes trick or treating with you, make sure they are always on a leash!

* All but the most social of dogs and cats should be kept in a separate room during visiting hours; too many strangers in costumes can be scary for a dog or cat.

* When opening the door for visitors, be very careful that your dog or cat does not dart outside. It is best to keep them locked in a separate room where they can feel safe away from all the noise.

* Make sure that your dog or cat is wearing proper identification (ID tag, license, microchip, tattoo, etc.). If for any reason they escape and become lost, you increase the chances that they will be returned to you.

For more information on pet safety, visit the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals online, your veterinarian or your local department of animal control.