Sinatra does it his dad’s way at Harrah’s Lake Tahoe

By Mel Shields, Sacramento Bee

The career of Frank Sinatra Jr. has never been easy.

His appearance at Harrah’s Lake Tahoe on Saturday night will mark the fourth time he’s performed “Sinatra Sings Sinatra,” but he’s quick to point out that this is not a simple undertaking. Nor is it a gimmick.



Frank Sinatra Jr.

“It dates back to 1998 when Frank Sinatra died,” Sinatra said. “At the end of that year, I decided I would do a show that celebrates his music. It was when he was very fresh in people’s minds, and I thought a testament show would be the right way to pay tribute. My original idea was to do it for a year and a half to two years.

“It has been very successful, which is unusual for me, and we’ve been traveling around the world.”

In his early years, the younger Sinatra would open acts for big stars, play the small lounges, occasionally hit the headlines (like with the famous 1963 kidnapping, which happened while he was playing the cabaret at Harrah’s Tahoe), and endure the inevitable comparisons, usually to his

detriment, with his famous father.

During the latter years of the elder Sinatra's life, however, the son embraced the relationship.

"For the last seven years he worked, I had the experience of being his conductor," Sinatra said. "This gave me a chance to go through all the music and learn all the charts. I did not allow him to do the same music performance after performance. I wanted to keep him frosty.

"It is certainly no secret that, in those late years as he was approaching 80, he was slowing down. I wanted to keep him on his toes."

Those charts inevitably necessitated a live orchestra. Sinatra would perform in front of 30 musicians. The younger Sinatra will use even more.

Read the whole story

Discussion about youth drug use

The Youth Task Force is having a parent information meeting Oct. 20 at 5:30pm to discuss drugs and alcohol.

The panel presentation will include law enforcement, drug counselors, doctors and probation officials.

The event is at South Tahoe Middle School's multipurpose room.

For more information, contact Heather at Tahoe Youth & Family Services, (530) 541.2445.

Controlled burns in Truckee area start today

The Truckee Ranger District will begin fall prescribed burning today with 15 to 20 acres in the Sawtooth area. Predicted winds are out of the northwest, which should push smoke into the Watson Lake area.

The timing of all burning depend on favorable weather conditions and may continue periodically until significant snow accumulates.

Weather is the most critical factor in determining when a prescribed burn can begin. Temperature, humidity, fuel moisture, and wind conditions are monitored for the right burning conditions. In addition to weather factors, wildlife needs, soil conditions, tree survival, sensitive plants, and fire suppression activities are all considered in the timing of prescribed burns.

A benefit of the prescribed burning will be reduced intensity of future wildland fires in the treated areas. These areas may also provide firefighters with safe locations to control wildfires in the future.

Some of these burns are located in more remote areas of the forest, while some are near communities. Within the Truckee Ranger District of the Tahoe National Forest, pile burning is planned along Alder Creek Road, at Tahoe Timber Trails, and along Highway 89 North. Underburning is planned near Klondike Flats, in the Sagehen Hills, on Sawtooth Ridge, and near Stampede and Boca Reservoirs. Smoke may be visible in these areas.

In addition to prescribed fire, we are working to reduce fuels by thinning dense stands of trees and cutting back or removing brush and smaller trees using mechanical thinning, mastication, and hand removal of vegetation throughout the forest. All of these techniques are important in reducing the amount of forest fuels.

Night Ranger in Stateline

Night Ranger plays at Harrah's Lake Tahoe on Dec. 17 at 7:30pm.

Tickets are $35.

For more information, call 800.786.8208.

S. Tahoe cops arrest man ordered to stop soliciting money for hurricane victims

By Larry Altman, Daily Breeze

A Rolling Hills Estates man ordered recently to stop soliciting donations online for Hurricane Irene victims has been arrested in South Lake Tahoe, police said.

Benjamin Ellis Freedland, 28, was taken into custody Saturday stemming from a case in which he tried to run a man over with

his car in Redondo Beach in 2010, police said.

Freedland, a Palos Verdes Peninsula High School graduate, remained in custody Tuesday on $50,000 bail in the El Dorado County jail.

A warrant was issued for Freedland’s arrest in September when he failed to appear in court for a hearing related to an assault with a deadly weapon conviction.

The charge stemmed from a road rage encounter in April 2010 in which Freedland tried to run a man over, Redondo Beach police Sgt. Shawn Freeman said.

That occurred shortly after Freedland prevented the victim from merging into traffic to pass a construction zone. When Freedland pulled up next to him and blocked him, the victim asked, “What’s your problem?”

Freedland threw a bag of sunflower seeds at the victim and followed him home to the 700 block of Knob Hill Avenue, police said.

Freedland then drove at the victim, a mixed martial arts enthusiast who hit Freedland’s car with his nunchakus, a hand weapon used for defense.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Anyone interested in learning more about Edgewood Tahoe's hotel project may go on a tour Oct. 21 from 3:30-5:30pm or Nov. 1 from 10:30am-12:30pm. Meet at the clubhouse of the Stateline golf course. Or save yourself the trouble by reading what *Lake Tahoe News* wrote from having been on the tour.

• Two meetings in November are all about transportation in the Lake Tahoe Basin. Click on flyer for more details.

• If you want to talk aquatic invasive species, then show up for the Nov. 16 5:30-7:30pm meeting at the North Tahoe Events Center, 8318 North Lake Tahoe Blvd, Kings Beach.

• Adam T. Spicer of South Lake Tahoe passed the Nevada bar exam.

• Incline Village's 32nd annual Pumpkin Patch is Oct. 22 from 10am-3pm at Incline Elementary School. There will be pony rides, bounce house, picture booth and raffle prizes. Admission is free.

Opinion: Finding the truth to myths circulating in S. Tahoe

Publisher's note: ***The following letter was submitted by South Lake Tahoe resident Mary Ann Klein to the City Council prior to the Oct. 18 budget hearing. Lake Tahoe News is publishing it with her permission.***

To all those sharing my concern about the proposed layoffs and privatization initiatives by the South Lake Tahoe City

Council:

I met in person with our city manager, Tony O’Rourke and our mayor pro tem, Claire Fortier. I have been corresponding daily with Tony since Oct. 10. Claire has been on vacation for 10 days and was just now responding to my letters. I asked my husband to accompany me as well. We attempted to clarify several issues for over two hours. I do not have political acumen; I was nervous and had lost a night of sleep. Despite this, Tony and Claire were attentive. They put me at ease and heard me out completely. The discussion took a few bunny trails, but overall the discussion was very focused.

1) There were questions about Tony O’Rourke’s background, motives and his hiring process. For the record:

• Tony O’Rourke has absolutely no affiliation with any type of mega-enterprise such as “CNL Financial Group”, CNL Lifestyle properties, or ski resort conglomerates. He had no clue what I was talking about.

• Tony has shown acceptable tenure with all his city manager jobs, including 14 years in Beaver Creek, seven in Coral Springs, five in Richardson, Texas, three in Dallas and one in Tallahassee. Note the average tenure for city mangers is four years nationally.

• Tony was selected by all nine members of the Beaver Creek Resort Co. He was selected by all four [South Lake Tahoe] council members, with Bill Crawford choosing to abstain from the entire process.

• He did have a few litigation issues in his previous jobs that were summarily dismissed.

I wasted a lot of time checking out an unsigned link which implied Tony had some sort of criminal intent, researching the actual facts and then wasting more time questioning Tony, to confirm he has no agenda but to do what the City Council hired

him to do. This “link” also contained a very twisted analysis of the city budget reserves. Both Tony and Claire explained the erroneous figures. I suspect a certain person authored this slanderous document; who no longer lives in this state.

2) For the record, the city is not considering a $4.25 million property purchase. Claire explained there has been a plan in place for a long time to improve public access to the lake on the California side from the casino corridor westward. The California Tahoe Conservancy was approached about an existing beachfront Stateline Avenue property on the California side, but the Conservancy had no money. The Conservancy has in the past bought property and then given it to the city for the environmental and capital improvement projects. There is no funding for operational expenses with this venue. It was a no go because there were no dollars. In general, the city owns property, but did not try to buy this property with city funds.

3) A very legitimate suggestion was submitted to end future retiree benefits, offer early retirement incentives, limit frivolous spending (Christmas trees, signage improvements, etc.), reduce training and conference expenses, consider salary cuts and wage adjustments to preserve positions scheduled to be terminated, and have a regard for old-fashioned, committed, public service. This writer asked a very profound question: Where does the entitlement “give me more” end? Claire discussed what she calls, “The corruption of the attitude of service” in this country. There are cities which owe employee entitlements which exceed their budgets; no manner of drastic wage adjustments can prevent them from going bankrupt since the entire budget is owed to retirees. It gave me pause.

Tony O’Rourke updated what is already being done by the city: “First, we are requesting our employees to contribute to their pension and health care plans. These contributions represent $1.5 million in savings to the city. To date all senior

managers have committed to do this, as well as all fire personnel. The other city employees covered by collective bargaining units are also on the verge of making this commitment. Second, lifetime health care benefits for retirees cost the city $2 million a year. The city has already eliminated this benefit for anyone hired after 2008. Third, the city has over the last several years offered early retiree incentives. The key to them is to vacate the retiree position to create long-term savings. We will continue to offer this program. Fourth, expenditures like a decorated holiday tree are easy to criticize unless you forget we are a tourist-based destination and economy and guests want to see these kinds of entry statements and amenities. Believe me, $7,000 is not the reason for our $5.2 million projected deficit. Fifth, we have significantly reduced training and conference expenses. For example, I have not gone anywhere over the past year. Nonetheless, some training is vital to enhance staff or City Council skills and knowledge. Can you image teachers never upgrading their abilities? Finally, the funds earmarked for signage improvements ranks with infrastructure improvements has the number public priority based on the December 2010 Citizens Survey. People in this community are tired of crumbling roads, no sidewalks, insufficient bikeways, no streetlights and a blighted aesthetic appearance. Hence, the City Council's $5 million commitment to roads and capital improvements this fiscal year and funds to assist businesses clean up of our cluttered aesthetic environment. These are the priorities of the community and the city is committed to address them. Thank you for your ideas and interest in the community."

4) Suggestions about increasing motel/hotel TOT are being implemented. A 2 percent increase to the city, as opposed to the visitors' bureau, is planned for 2013.

5) The redevelopment litigation, when settled "would not have any affect on budget balancing" (Tony O'Rourke) It is my

understanding if the litigation went in the city's favor, the monies would be applied to the city's projected $5.2 million deficit.

6) I, Mary Ann Klein, implored the city manager and the mayor pro tem to once more, give careful consideration to the proposed layoffs. The concept of a "community family" being torn asunder was received thoughtfully by Claire. It is the graceful interface our present staff provides between a warm family community (where many have no other family) and social destitution. Apparently of the 21 jobs being considered for termination, four have been saved. Which jobs were not discussed.

The discussion at this point felt painful for everybody at the table. The analogy given was something like: If there is a sinking ship with 500 people and only enough life boats for 40, who is to say which go and which do not? The point is, the ship is sinking. There are many hard questions and no easy answers.

6) Several people were skeptical about the public "survey" on which the council is relying to set priorities. The methodology involved a random sampling, statistically based. Apparently 1,200 people were queried in this random sample. The survey can be answered online on the South Lake Tahoe website.

7) A question was asked by several writers about why the original attempt to privatize the golf course failed? Claire Fortier could not remember the details from 10 plus years ago, but it involved Knox Johnson being concerned that the community was not being served appropriately, or something like that. The ice rink is faring well, financially, thus far. It is reasonable for the public to be skeptical about privatization when we have only 60 days so far by which to judge the asset of the ice rink. Other cities have employed very creative ideas which involve variations on privatization.

I think Claire referenced Half Moon Bay, but I can’t remember how they problem solved.

Claire Fortier, our mayor pro tem, encouraged me to read an article in the current issue of Vanity Fair entitled Will California Sink the US? I have only had a chance to scan it, but already I feel I have a broader perspective of what we must face in our city. She commended our “state of the art high school,” despite the negative economic vortex, and other amazing community initiatives. Tony crunched the numbers with experience and is steadfast about what has to be done else we go broke, but I feel Claire lent compassion for the individual suffering and faltering morale down here at the grass roots.

Respectfully submitted and with gratitude for our dedicated city employees.

Thanks and God bless you,

Mary Ann Klein, South Lake Tahoe

October is National Book Month. What are you reading and would you recommend it?

Art is a medium of generosity

By Robert Schimmel

The art of generosity. Is there such an art? You decide because to me this art form, that comes entirely from the heart and out of service can't be displayed in any tangible way other than through its effect on others lives.

What or who first comes to your mind when you think about or hear the word "generosity"? My guess is some kind of philanthropic organization or exceptional individual. That's certainly the case for me, though recently I was reminded how many artists are by nature generous and often to a near fault. Take my recent reunion with David Lemon, a nationally known and respected Western sculptor who has been doing museum quality bronzes for many years yet lives on a shoestring (or Indian feather) most of the time. He just had a show in August of bronzes and in-process clay images at the James Harold Galleries in the Boatworks Mall in Tahoe City during which he sculpted clay daily and interacted with patrons, children and general visitors.



Robert Schimmel

Lemon and I have known each other for 15-plus years, and he has always been gentle-hearted and giving, yet I was particularly touched when he gave one of his unique sculpting tools to the appreciative parent of a budding young artist.

The good news is Lemon is not an anomaly and that a dominant

percentage of artists are more than happy to share whatever they have or create. Why?

We all have creativity, but the true and humble artist lives and breathes to grow and express it, and one of the manifestations of that gift and its use is the profound understanding that giving and sharing are part of the package. So, having that personal connection with an artist is just one good reason to attend gallery exhibits, outdoor shows, studio tours and any other venues where artists are featured, not just the art. N We shouldn't be looking for freebies, but rather supporting the artists and experiencing the magic of those who go out of their way as both a job and a passion to earn a living while giving tirelessly of their time and talents to educate and motivate any audience.

Arts organizations are also a wonderful example, especially the nonprofit variety, and loaded with people who may not be artists but know all about and exhibit the fine art of generosity. They're called volunteers. You may be one (artist or not) and therefore responsible for entertaining, educating and enriching people's lives while providing funding for a myriad of causes, events, etc. Thank you, from the fullness of my too often presumptive and forgetful heart.

Wonderful examples of such organizations or groups abound in Tahoe, so I will only name a few, specifically for our kids and youth who need it most: Tahoe Arts Project, Arts for the Schools, BATS (Bringing Art to The Schools), Tahoe Youth Ballet, and the Sphere of Influence.

Taking these few individual and group examples out of generosity's densely populated barrel in Tahoe recalls to me an oft heard comment, "There's nothing to do here; sure wish I lived (wherever)." To which I might wryly say, "Move," if the person is lucky. However, perception is reality to most, so we must look further into and discover all the treasures of generosity available and thus expand our worlds of

appreciation as well as support. Only then can one feel the effects of this art form and risk knowing that you, too, are capable of having the “heart” of generosity.

Robert Schimmel is a professional artist and teacher in South Lake Tahoe as well as host of “Lake Tahoe Art Scene” on KTHO radio on Thursdays at 5:15pm.

IOC: Denver won’t be punished for giving back Olympics

By Brian Gomez, Gazette

COLORADO SPRINGS – If the U.S. Olympic Committee submits a bid for the 2022 Winter Games with Denver as a candidate, the black eye of the Mile High City once returning the Olympics won’t play a factor with International Olympic Committee voters, according to the leader of the IOC.

“There would definitely be no grudge for the fact that Denver abandoned the race,” IOC president Jacques Rogge said this week at The Broadmoor hotel before the end of the IOC international athletes’ forum, a biennial gathering staged in the U.S. for the first time.



The Colorado Ski Museum in

Vail talks about the Denver Olympics that never happened. Photo/LTN

The Colorado Springs-based USOC still hasn’t determined whether it will enter the fray for 2022, with Bozeman, Mont., Reno/Lake Tahoe, Nev., and Salt Lake City also in the mix, or throw its weight behind a bid for the 2024 Summer Games, in which possibilities are Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, New York, Philadelphia and Tulsa, Okla. Bids for 2022 are due in 2013, with the IOC scheduled to pick the winner in 2015.

Denver is the only city to give back the Olympics. The IOC relocated the 1976 Winter Games to Innsbruck, Austria, in 1973 after outcries from Colorado taxpayers over rising costs and environmental effects. It hasn’t reappeared on the Olympic ballot, and since the United States hosted four Olympics – two winter and two summer – from 1980 to 2002, it has lost its past two Olympic bids, faltering with New York for 2012 and with Chicago for 2016.

Read the whole story