Firefighter to relive stories of breaking into male-dominated profession

The South Lake Tahoe Friends of the Library Program for April 26 has been changed. Gina Geldbach-Hall, the first Las Vegas female firefighter, is taking the place of Debra Gauthier who is unable to travel.

Gelbac h -Hall never intended to be a pioneer, but this “firegal” changed the firefighting world forever.

At the end of a 25-year career in fire and emergency services, Geldbach-Hall retired as a battalion chief. But the winding road she took to get to that position was fraught with turmoil, harassment and a lawsuit that took nearly 12 years of her life.

Being a female firefighter was never easy, but because of a desire to make a difference, the author persevered, changing the culture of firefighting along the way. In her memoir, “Firegal Rising from the Ashes”, she recounts in vivid detail her journey of making it in a man’s world and doesn’t shy away from the troubles she endured. Yet at its best, the work isn’t about Geldbach-Hall’s awful treatment, but how she found peace, hope and, most important, herself.

eldbach-Hall will share her stories of life as a firefighter at the South Lake Tahoe Library (1000 Rufus Allen Blvd.) at 1pm Saturday.

Safeway profits falter in advance of merger

By Heather Somerville, San Jose Mercury News

PLEASANTON – Safeway profits slid in the first quarter this year as the supermarket chain began to fully see the financial loss of selling hundreds of stores in Chicago and Canada.

Safeway's lackluster earnings for the first three months of the year show how dramatically the grocer has scaled back its operations in an effort to compete with regional grocery companies that are eating away at the market share.

The consolidation has also primed Safeway for its merger with Albertsons, which is expected to be complete by the end of the year. The merger is part of an estimated $9.4 billion deal orchestrated by New York private equity firm Cerberus, which owns Albertsons and bought Safeway last month, and plans to combine the two to create the nation's second-largest supermarket conglomerate.

Read the whole story

Dismal Tahoe snow doesn't doom Vail Resorts profits

By Jason Blevins, Denver Post

Despite one of the worst winters ever for resorts around Lake Tahoe, Vail Resorts on Wednesday reported that stellar snowfall in Colorado buoyed the company's performance for the

2013-14 ski season.

“Our performance this year reflects our ability to drive outstanding performance across our business despite varied conditions,” Vail Resorts chief Rob Katz said in a statement.

Lift revenue at the company’s eight destination resorts – four in Colorado, three in California and Canyons in Utah – climbed 7.6 percent over the previous season. Visitor spending climbed 7.5 percent for ski lessons, 3.1 percent on food and drink and 5.1 percent on retail and equipment rentals over the 2012-13.

Ample snow and strong visitation to Vail, Beaver Creek, Breckenridge and Keystone helped Vail Resorts weather a record decline in snowfall at its Heavenly, Northstar and Kirkwood ski areas.

Total skier visits across its destination resorts climbed 2.3 percent over the 2012-13 ski season.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• *Travel + Leisure* magazine calls the 72-mile ride around Lake Tahoe one of the country’s most scenic waterside drives.

• Comments on the Tahoe Donner Nordic Center recirculated mitigated negative declaration are being taken until May 20. For more info, go online.

• There will be fund-raising party for the Truckee Bike Park on May 8 at 6pm at Bar of America in Truckee. The $20 tickets include a dinner buffet and music from Groove Foundry.

• The general trout opener in many counties throughout California is April 26, one hour before sunrise.

• The Summertide estate, once owned by Frank Sinatra, is for sale in Crystal Bay.

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2 hurt in Kingsbury Grade collision

Kingsbury Grade is expected to reopen by 2:45pm Thursday after being closed for a couple hours because of an accident.

Two SUVs collided head-on at an angle about halfway down the Carson Valley side.

The two drivers were taken by air ambulance to Renown Medical Center in Reno with moderate injuries.

Further details, including names of those involved, were not immediately available from the Nevada Highway Patrol.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

K’s Kitchen: Fresh strawberries in a green salad

By Kathryn Reed

This was the first time Sue was disappointed the salad was gone. Clearly, I’ll be making more.

My only disappointment is that I had not made it sooner.

With strawberries being so sweet right now, I’m guessing we’ll be having this salad regularly. I only made a small bowl the first time because I didn’t know how much we would like it, and a dressed salad doesn’t last long. We will each eat a slightly soggy salad the next day, but beyond that – no thanks. And it’s something I would never serve to others.

I like buying the big tub of mixed spring greens and then feasting on them for a while. Spinach would work just as well for this salad.

Prepared strawberry vinegar would suffice, too. But making it is pretty darn easy. I’m sure there are other uses for the vinegar, but I’m too busy making the salad to discover them.



Mixed Greens and Strawberry Salad

½ small shallot, finely chopped

2 T strawberry vinegar*

2 T olive oil

½ pound greens

1 C strawberries, thinly sliced

1/3 C sliced almonds

2 ounces crumbled feta cheese

Mix shallots and vinegar in bowl. Drizzle in oil. Whisk together. In separate bowl mix greens, strawberries, almonds and cheese. Add vinegar concoction. Toss thoroughly.

***Strawberry Vinegar**

¼ pound strawberries, hulled and quartered

½ C white wine vinegar

¼ C rice wine vinegar

1/8 C sugar

Combine strawberries, white wine vinegar, rice wine vinegar, and sugar. Refrigerate in glass jar up to 24 hours. Discard strawberries and strain vinegar through cheesecloth or a coffee filter into a glass jar or container. Vinegar will keep up to 1 month refrigerated.

Calif. moves to boost water saving toilets, faucets

By Rory Carroll, Reuters

With California facing its worst drought in a century, state

officials have fast-tracked first-in-the-nation water efficiency standards for new toilets, urinals and faucets, an action expected to save about 8.2 billion gallons of water the first year while cutting energy use and greenhouse gas emissions.

The draft standards, released late last week, would prohibit the sale of appliances in California that do not meet proposed standards, which are expected to go into effect in 2016.

The standards would require that toilets use no more than 1.28 gallons per flush instead of the current limit of 1.6 gallons per flush.

They would limit urinals to a half a gallon of water per flush, half of what is currently allowed.

Lavatory faucets would have a maximum water use level of 1.5 gallons per minute under the proposed standards, down from the current limit of 2.2 gallons per minute.

Read the whole story

South Lake Tahoe man reported missing



Police are trying to locate Timothy Duran.

Updated April 24 2:50pm:

Timothy Duran has been located and is safe.

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A 24-year-old South Lake Tahoe man has been missing since the afternoon of April 22.

Timothy Duran has no history of being a danger to anyone, but is on medication for mental health purposes and can become confused without them, according to South Lake Tahoe police officers. Duran's mother is his caretaker, and reports that he has not likely been taking his medication for a few days.

Duran has a history of occasionally wandering away for a few days at a time, but usually remains within the Tahoe area. In the past, Duran has been known to wander in the woods and along roadways. He will occasionally hitchhike or frequent local drinking establishments.

Duran is Caucasian, 5-foot-10, 135 pounds, with brown collar-length wavy hair and a short beard/mustache.

Anyone seeing Duran should call 911.

— Lake Tahoe News staff report

Hundreds in South Lake

receive free books



Karen Cutter, left, gives a book to Susanne Wink. Photo/Denise Haerr

World Book Night is an annual celebration dedicated to spreading the love of reading, person to person. Each year on April 23, Shakespeare's birthday, tens of thousands of people go out into their communities and give half a million free World Book Night paperbacks to light and non-readers.

A group of givers from the Friends of the South Lake Tahoe Public Library gave out 320 books to people on the beaches, at bus stops, the Food Bank truck, city recreation center, Senior Center, Juvenile Treatment Center and Tahoe Senior Plaza among other places in town.

Larson moving from STHS to district office

By Kathryn Reed

South Tahoe High School is nothing like it was eight years

ago. And that’s a good thing.

While it took many people – including the voters of the school district – to help transform the school, it was the leadership of Principal Ivone Larson that led the charge.

Larson has known for some time this would be her last year at the helm of STHS. What she found out April 22 is the board agreed to hire her as assistant superintendent of secondary curriculum and instruction, career technical education. This is a part-time position.



Ivone Larson had a special pink hard hat to wear during all the construction at STHS. Photo/LTN file

“Ivone is an incredible visionary. She has certainly been a gifted grant writer. We’re hoping she will continue to bring needed funds into our district,” Lake Tahoe Unified School District board President Wendy David told *Lake Tahoe News*. “She has been a relationship builder. She is passionate about the opportunities we can give our kids.”

Larson said part of her accomplishments are luck – like being in the right place at the right time. But the truth is if she had not had the vision or grant writing skills, the improvements to the school site would not be what they are. She helped the district secure millions of dollars beyond what the voters approved that went into transforming STHS from a

rundown old school to a state-of-the-art center of education.

“I’ve had the ride of a lifetime,” Larson told *Lake Tahoe News* of her experience these last eight years. She said she has grown professionally and personally.

The next chapter will build on what she has been doing. It will also take some weight off Superintendent Jim Tarwater, especially as the state increases its mandates on local districts.

LTUSD has not had an assistant superintendent since Barbara Davis left in August 2005. And she was full time. At the end of the 2010-11 school year Tarwater also took over many of the human resources duties when the director’s position was eliminated.

“The board has been interested in putting back into our administrative budget a position that could really be of help to Dr. Tarwater,” David said.

More money is likely to be flowing to LTUSD from Sacramento in the next eight years because of the makeup of students, class-size reduction and career technical education.

“We are transforming education and that will take a lot of people at every single level of education,” Larson said.

She calls the changes “the most revolutionary things I’ve seen in California education.”

Funding, Common Core and assessment accountability are the big changes. LTUSD is in the process of implementing the Local Control Funding Formula, Local Control Accountability Plan, Common Core, and the Smarter Balance Assessments – all state requirements.

“The cool thing about it is it includes the voice of everybody,” Larson said.

While she is excited about the next step, she is already realizing leaving South Tahoe High is going to be more difficult than she expected.

“It’s harder than I thought,” Larson said. And while she will still be around, she said, “It won’t be that day-to-day with the kids.”

But her motto is, “Dream big and it can happen.”

Now the district is in recruiting mode for a principal at STHS.