Optimist pancake breakfast

South Lake Tahoe Optimist Club’s semi-annual pancake breakfast is Oct. 1 at the senior center.

Breakfast will be served from 8:30-11:30am.

The $5 tickets are available from various youth clubs raising money or can be purchased at the event. All money is donated back to the youth of the community.

Contact Sandy Herback for more information – (530) 544.6500.

Wet conditions push back start of warterfowl hunting season

By Matt Weiser, Sacramento Bee

The start of waterfowl hunting on public lands in the Sacramento Valley has been delayed by a week because of the lingering effects of a wet winter.

The state Department of Fish and Game announced that hunting on wildlife refuge lands will start Oct. 29, a week later than usual. The reason highlights a complex relationship between refuge operations and rice farming.

Read the whole story

Photo exhibit at SNC captures the ruggedness of the West

Sierra Nevada College presents Great Basin Exteriors: A Photographic Survey, a free public exhibition of 30 photographs by three regional artists – Adam Jahiel, Daniel Cheek and Nolan Preece – which examines loss, change and abandonment in the American West.

In this exhibit, the Great Basin is roughly defined as the area between the Wasatch Mountains along the Idaho and Utah borders and the Sierra Nevada Mountains along the Nevada and California borders. The three photographers featured in the exhibit have independently concentrated on the documentation of subjects that are changing in or rapidly disappearing from the Western landscape.



Great Basin Exteriors: A Photographic Survey is on display through Nov. 15 in the Lake Gallery of Prim Library, seven days a week.

Geologically, the Great Basin is part of the Basin and Range Province that covers most of Nevada and more than half of Utah, as well as parts of California, Idaho, Oregon and Wyoming. Jahiel's photograph of cowboys in Northern Nevada illustrates this rugged way of life and its marginalization in contemporary society. Cheek's work celebrates the spaciousness of the Great Basin, which is then juxtaposed with small intrusions in the landscapes that are indicative of a changing West. Preece examines the rustic patina that is diminishing

with restoration and development across the Great Basin.

The work of each photographer reflects a distinct style and technique, perfected during careers as highly regarded professional artists.

For group tours or more information, contact Library Director Betts Markle at emarkle@sierranevada.edu or (775) 881.7511.

LTUSD enrollment starts strong

Enrollment increases are exactly where Lake Tahoe Unified wants them – at the elementary level.

While the official tally for the state is not taken until October, officials are reporting 88 more students than last school year. The bulk of that growth is in kindergarten and first grade.

“That feeds the system,” is how Superintendent Jim Tarwater described it.

For a district that has had declining enrollment for years on end, to start off strong is a good sign. However, it’s what the numbers look like after the winter break that are more telling. That is often when people leave the district – then return for the fall when the weather is nicer.

The middle school is holding steady, with some decline at South Tahoe High. What’s different at the high school is 14 students are from Nevada – the largest contingency to date.

Even the student body president – Jack Percival – is from the Silver State.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Should one owl be killed to save another?

By Francesca Lyman, Sacramento Bee

It's a warm sunny day in early August and wildlife biologist Eric Forsman heads up to the Willamette National Forest in Oregon's Cascades mountains to climb trees. In this land of 200-foot Douglas firs, Forsman will hoist himself up in a harness to check the nests of red tree-voles, a staple of the northern spotted owl's diet.

From the large tree cavities where spotted owls nest to the decaying logs where they hunt for prey, these birds depend on the lush, old-growth forests of the Pacific Northwest. They are among dozens of species in these ancient forests threatened with extinction, mostly as a result of habitat loss.

But Forsman and his crew of wildlife researchers are reckoning with another threat to the spotted owl: A rival bird getting a critical claw-hold in nesting areas. The barred owl, a larger, brasher, faster-breeding transplant from the East Coast, has invaded the spotted owl's territory, which ranges from Northern California to Washington.

"If you asked me 30 or 40 years ago, I'd tell you that if we just did a good job of protecting old-growth forests, spotted

owls would do just fine," Forsman says.

Neglected for years, the northern spotted owl was listed as a threatened species in 1990, after decades of clear-cut logging reduced 90 percent of its old-growth habitat. A landmark 1991 federal ruling forced cutbacks of timber harvests, and the charismatic spotted owl became an icon in a bitter fight between the logging industry and environmentalists.

Lumber mills closed, and thousands of loggers lost jobs in the timber wars, as the Northwest Forest Plan cut harvests on federal lands by 80 percent.

Just as the northern spotted owl seemed spared, it has faced competition from the barred owl, its closely-related cousin. As spotted owl populations have plummeted – by up to 50 percent in Washington in the last 15 years – the number of barred owls has boomed. In some places, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, barred owls may have doubled and tripled within 30 years or less.

"The barred owl is throwing a huge monkey wrench into everything – our research and our management of the forests," Forsman says.

Read the whole story

Fuel reduction projects to impact beach parking areas

The U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit will begin fuels reduction and forest health thinning work near two East Shore beaches the week of Sept. 26.

The project areas are located on National Forest lands on approximately 15 acres near the Chimney Beach parking lot and 18 acres near Secret Harbor Beach on Lake Tahoe's East Shore.

Work could take up to a month to complete. The beaches will remain open and work will not take place during the weekend. However, log removal will affect access to parking lots. For public safety, Forest Supervisor Nancy Gibson has issued a Forest Order temporarily closing the parking lots at each beach while the contractor conducts thinning activities. The order is effective Monday through Friday from 7am-6pm Sept. 26-Oct. 25.

Fuel reduction work will consist of mechanical removal of conifer trees up to 29 inches in diameter. A few large slash piles could remain. The Forest Service will burn the piles once the fuels are dry and weather conditions permit.

The Forest Order and maps of the project areas are available at the Forest Supervisor's Office, 35 College Drive, South Lake Tahoe or online.

Opinion: Recognizing Heavenly's gift to Bread & Broth

To the community,

Bread & Broth would like to again thank Heavenly Mountain

Resort for the continued support in our Adopt-A-Day of Nourishment Program.

Volunteers from Heavenly help Bread & Broth volunteers serve those in need a well balanced nutritious meal. The team at Heavenly has been very generous in their efforts all year to help our cause.

Bread & Broth is able to continue its mission of feeding the hungry of South Lake Tahoe in large part because of the generosity of the local community. A $250 sponsorship covers the cost of food and beverages for the approximately 100 people who visit each Monday evening.

To find out how your family or business can Adopt A Day of Nourishment, contact Connie Blue at midwest2tahoe@yahoo.com or (530) 544.4945.

David Smith, Bread & Broth volunteer

‘Back yard’ camping trip opens up new terrain

By Kathryn Reed

MARKLEEVILLE – Hiking into Thornburg Canyon I kept wondering why it had taken me so long to even know this area about an hour from South Lake Tahoe even exists.

Thank goodness for the recommendation from the Grover Hot Springs State Park employee that we explore this gorgeous area with its expansive view into Pleasant Valley and foreboding rock structure above it.



Pleasant Valley from the Markleeville side. Photos/Kathryn Reed

Discovering new territory and revisiting a favorite waterfall were part of our annual girls' camping weekend in August. With the nights spent at the campground neighboring the hot springs, we spent our days on foot seeing what Mother Nature had in store for us.

Sue and I arrived first. With our campsite occupied, we drove around checking out the other 75 campsites until we stumbled upon a U.S. Forest Service presentation about fire safety that involved Smokey Bear and the advice not to try to run from a bear.

That afternoon the four of us stretched our legs along the nature trail. Unfortunately it's one of those trails the state park plans to do away with, but you don't that while you're on it. You just keep wondering what the 26 numbers mean and why it leads you into a marshy area.

On Sunday we head for the waterfalls.

Instead of stopping at the pools above the first falls, Darla leads us farther up the path. That is, if you can call crossing the stream multiple times, following the trail.

Despite our circuitous route, it was beautiful. Less than a

handful of people were seen this whole hike – adding to the tranquility of the day.

Even a month ago the water was flowing rapidly – a reminder of the abundance of snow the Sierra received last winter.

Later that day we soak in the hot springs that are walking distance from the campground. We get in free because they are closing early since no lifeguard is on duty. (With the state parks' financial situation a bit precarious, I'd call before making the trek for a day at the springs.)

Something about camping makes things like spaghetti, a taco bar, pancakes, and eggs all taste better. Maybe it's all that fresh air mixed in instead of the normal stale indoor air.

Fortunately, we brought plenty of wood with us – at 5,800 feet this area cools off at night and stays that way well into the morning.

On Monday we hop in Pam's truck for a short ride to the trailhead the parks employee recommended. We head toward the town of Markleeville, turn right on Pleasant Valley Road and make another right on Sawmill Road. We park before we need four-wheel drive, but before the gate for the trail.

A steady climb along what is clearly a road takes us to the trailhead for Thornburg Canyon.

This is all part of the Mokelumne Wilderness. Had we completed the entire 7-plus miles, we would have ended up in the Blue Lakes area. We didn't know that at the time.

It's a forest of mostly pine and hemlock. Beyond the overlook into Pleasant Valley it's a single-track trail that is some places has waist-high Manzanita on either side.

Sagebrush and tall grass consume other portions of the trail.

Looking into that valley it seemed like cattle and cowboys

should be rustling there. Trails go through there, making me want to explore the area again and find out a little history about this land.

In the distance the peaks still have snow – which at this rate is likely to be there until the white stuff starts falling again.

We trek up farther, thinking we'll reach the rock formations we had seen from the overlook. But they are never around the next bend. Instead, with no markers on the trail telling us how far we've gone or how far we have to go, we decide cocktail hour is approaching.

It's time to enjoy the campsite.

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Opinion: New accusations are reason to legalize online gambling

Publisher's note: ***This editorial is from the Sept. 21, 2011, Reno Gazette-Journal.***

If federal prosecutors are right, poker players who looked to the Internet hoping to make some easy money were taking a bigger gamble than they thought.

There have been lots of stories of cheaters working in boiler rooms to beat too-trusting players. When you can't see what's happening in front of your opponents' computers, anything is possible.

But, in a revised lawsuit filed Tuesday in New York, the feds said that one of the most popular online poker sites, the now-closed Full Tilt Poker, wasn't even a legitimate Internet casino. Rather, the lawsuit alleges, it was a giant Ponzi scheme, using the players' money deposited in Full Tilt accounts to pay off company owners and board members. Among those who profited by receiving millions of dollars from the accounts, the lawsuit alleges, were several well-known professional poker players.

Full Tilt already was facing money-laundering charges, and the federal government seized its bank accounts. But players who'd made deposits with the website and were hoping to get their money back once the charges were settled now appear to be out of luck.

Read the whole story

Sparks cancels Street Vibrations because of shootings

By Reno Gazette-Journal

4:42pm update: Street Vibrations events in Sparks tonight are canceled in the wake of Friday's night's shooting in John Ascuaga's Nugget and a retaliatory shooting this morning nearby, Sparks Mayor Geno Martini said.

"We're canceling it in Sparks," Martini said. "After the retaliation it's just too tense of a situation. It's hard to say what's going to happen. It's just not worth the chance."

Street vendors and live entertainment had been scheduled in Victorian Square tonight.

After the late-night shooting that killed one and wounded two, another shooting occurred about 10:30 a.m. at Victorian and Stanford that left one wounded. Martini could cite no details but called the shooting “definitely a retaliation.”

4:30pm update: The following is an excerpt from a Sparks news release:

In light of a shooting involving rival members of motorcycle clubs at a Spark Casino Friday night, and a subsequent drive-by shooting on Victorian Avenue in Sparks this morning, a state-of-emergency has been declared by the City. It is expected the Governor will also declare a state-of-emergency on behalf of the City of Sparks. Pursuant to the police powers vested in the City of Sparks, the Street Vibrations motorcycle event in Sparks will be canceled for the remainder of the weekend.

“The safety and security of the public is our number one priority,” said Sparks Mayor Geno Martini.

Read the whole story