Tahoe Forest Stewardship Day

The 2011 Tahoe Forest Stewardship Day is partnering with the Incline Village General Improvement District to focus on fuel reduction, native vegetation rehabilitation, trail and stream restoration, biomass cleanup and educational outreach.

The 14th annual event is Sept. 10 from 9am-2pm in Incline Village. It is open to all ages.

Wear sturdy shoes, long pants and bring water and snacks. Tools are provided.

Orientation is at 8:30am at the Village Green Park, 960 Lakeshore Blvd., Incline.

For more information, call (530) 541.5388.

Custody issues at center of father-daughter deaths on West Slope

By Stephen Magagnini and Peter Hecht, Sacramento Bee

Mourad "Moni" Samaan killed himself and his 2-year-old daughter, Madeleine Layla Samaan-Fay following a bitter custody battle that began even before the child was born, Samaan's father said Monday.

In an exclusive interview with the *Bee*, Dr. Makram Samaan said his son and granddaughter – found inside his son's sport-utility vehicle on Saturday evening in El Dorado County – died

of carbon monoxide poisoning from the exhaust pipe. (Authorities haven't confirmed the cause of death.)

The girl's mother, California Deputy Attorney General Marcia Ann Fay, 46, has declined to comment after several requests by The Bee.

Makram Samaan – a psychologist who helps couples mediate disputes and divorces – held his hands to the heavens and cried: "I've helped thousands of people and saved a lot of families, but I failed my son – I did not see it. I did not see it! Why should it not be me?"

Samaan, who wrote his master's thesis on suicide, said he knew his son Moni was in distress, but had no inkling how much.

He blamed the courts for driving his son over the edge.

"We need to take marriage and divorce out of the courts," said a sobbing Samaan at his Fair Oaks home overlooking Lake Natoma.

Read the whole story

Men of Worth at Boathouse Theatre

Masters of song and storytelling Men of Worth will appear at the Tallac Historic Site's Boathouse Theatre Aug. 18 at 7:30pm.

Ireland's James Keigher and Donnie Macdonald of Scotland blend their voices in harmony and support their collection of songs with an exciting selection of instruments. Their playful

approach to performance draws the audience into another world, one true to the Gaelic-Celtic music and stories. Their show is a unique combination of humor, intriguing tunes and soulful, heartfelt ballads.

Tickets are $18 for adults, $15 for children.

Go online for more information about the South Shore performance.

Celtic-Gaelic performance at Boathouse Theatre

Masters of song and storytelling Men of Worth will appear at the Tallac Historic Site’s Boathouse Theatre Aug. 18 at 7:30pm.

Ireland’s James Keigher and Donnie Macdonald of Scotland blend their voices in harmony and support their collection of songs with an exciting selection of instruments. Their playful approach to performance draws the audience into another world, one true to the Gaelic-Celtic music and stories. Their show is a unique combination of humor, intriguing tunes and soulful, heartfelt ballads.

Tickets are $18 for adults, $15 for children.

Go online for more information about the South Shore performance.

DA may begin taking harder line on Tahoe pot cases

By Kathryn Reed

More marijuana cases may soon end up in El Dorado County Superior Court.

The combination of South Lake Tahoe being on the verge of finalizing ordinances related to pot dispensaries and deputy district attorneys receiving specialized training in these matters could change the tide when it comes to prosecuting pot-related cases.

Hans Uthe, deputy district attorney in the South Tahoe office, said the new approach his office plans to take involves commercial grows. But he would not give details.



"We are also waiting for the city to get two basic sets of ordinances passed so we know the rules and can enforce them," Uthe told *Lake Tahoe News*. "We are wary about (prosecuting cases), but it's not true about not wanting to."

With Proposition 215 in California allowing the use of marijuana for medical purposes, it conflicts with federal law that prohibits the use even for this purpose. This, at times, makes prosecuting cases difficult.

Uthe said prosecutors around the state have been hesitant to pursue cases. He said analysis coming out of Los Angeles looks good and that his office may adopt some of what his Southern California colleagues are doing.

The feds have said grows on federal property and exporting the product are the two main areas it will crackdown on.

Uthe said in the last year a handful of export cases have been prosecuted by his office. He said suspects are using UPS and FedEx more than the U.S. Postal Service as a means to deliver their goods.

“People ship it to colleagues in other jurisdictions where it’s sold at a high profit,” Uthe said.

With marijuana being cheap and legal to grow in California, it is being sent to states where cultivation is illegal and the end product is more expensive.

Uthe hasn’t noticed an increase in pot cases since the three collectives opened in South Lake Tahoe. He attributes the spike ever since Proposition 215 was passed in 1996.

Opinion: Fix flawed fire fee before it goes up in smoke

By George Skelton, Los Angeles Times

On the surface, the new state fire fee passed by the Legislature and signed by Gov. Jerry Brown seems prudent and fair. It requires people who live in woodsy and brushy terrain, being soothed by nature, to pay a larger share of their fire protection costs.

But this legislation was written in such haste, without public scrutiny or Capitol vetting, that no one really is sure how it’s going to work. It was cobbled together at the last moment before the Legislature’s June 15 budget deadline in order to help balance the deficit-ridden general fund.

And it smacks of Democratic payback for the Republicans’

refusal to vote for Brown’s tax proposal. Republican legislators represent most of the rural areas targeted for fire fees.

A couple of obstacles loom, however, before Sacramento can pocket the fee money.

The Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Assn. intends to sue, claiming that the fee actually is a tax. Therefore it should have required a two-thirds vote in the Legislature, not a simple majority. The bill passed pretty much on a party line vote.

Republican state Sen. Ted Gaines (R-Roseville) is trying to generate support for a ballot referendum to repeal the fee. He needs to collect 505,000 voter signatures by Oct. 6 and concedes “it’s an uphill battle.”

The cost of collecting enough signatures will be at least $2 million. There’s not enough at stake for special interests or deep-pocket types to bankroll such a venture. The proposed annual fee, per habitable structure, is capped at $150.

“Maybe it’ll catch fire,” Gaines told me, not really intending the pun. “It could take off with folks of a populist perspective. It’s another intrusion of government coming at the people’s wallet.”

Read the whole story

Placer County looking for nonprofits to give money to

The Placer County Fish and Game Commission is soliciting grant proposals from nonprofit organizations, schools, or other

individuals or organizations.

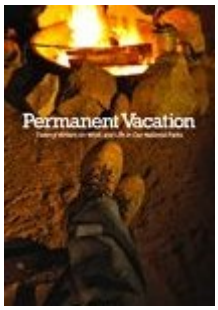
To be eligible, an organization has to use the money for education, environmental or habitat improvement, or enforcement activities. The use of the money must be related to Placer County's fish and wildlife. The maximum award amount of any single grant is $1,000.

Grants are available for projects consistent with the intent of California Fish and Game Code, Section 13103. The deadline to submit grant applications is Oct. 1.

For an application or additional information, please contact: Ed King, Placer County Agriculture Department, 11477 E Ave., Auburn, CA 95603-2799 or call (530) 889.7372.

Tahoe author to sign book in Carson City

Lake Tahoe author Janet Smith will be at the Costco in Carson City from 11am-2pm Aug. 20 for a book signing of the anthology "Permanent Vacation: Twenty Writers on Work and Life in Our National Parks."



The collection, published by Bona Fide Books of Meyers, features Smith's piece "Pretty Enough," a bittersweet account of coming of age in one of the world's wonders, Yosemite Valley.

Smith's piece details her experiences leaving home after high school for life among the granite in Yosemite National Park.

“At 12, I fell in love with Yosemite the way other girls in the 1970s fell in love with Bobby Sherman or David Cassidy.” At age 18, she moved to the park in search of meaning, and found something altogether different.

The book also features essays from Sequoia-Kings Canyon, Yellowstone, Denali, and Grand Canyon National Park among others.

Copies of “Permanent Vacation” will be available at the Carson City Costco, located on 700 Old Clear Creek Road. “Permanent Vacation” is also available at online.

A website allows park workers and visitors to share their stories and learn more about the contributors and their current adventures.

Bona Fide Books is seeking essays about national parks east of the Mississippi for a second volume of “Permanent Vacation.” Submissions are open through Jan. 1. Go online for more information.

Organized ride on South Shore bike paths

On Sept. 18, Lake Tahoe Bicycle Coalition’s board of directors will lead a recreational bike ride along South Lake Tahoe’s bicycle path system.

The ride starts and ends at Blue Dog Pizza at the north end of Raley’s Shopping Center near Stateline.

The ride begins at 1pm and is expected to last 3 to 4 hours and travel 15 to 20 miles. The ride is free and open for

everyone interested in a relaxed pace ride, stopping for photos, and chatting about the bike paths and surrounding areas.

RSVP to biketahoe@aol.com.

LTCC launches community ed with classes for athletes

By Kathryn Reed

Don't be surprised if competitors in next month's Iron Girl triathlon have better times than they did at the inaugural event in 2010.

This could happen because of three classes designed with the Sept. 18 South Lake Tahoe event in mind. The swim clinic, tri interval speed clinic, and tri circuit workshop are the first three classes offered through the resurrected Community Education program at Lake Tahoe Community College. They are geared toward improving performance.



They are three of the first four classes the college board of education has approved. It's likely at most of their meetings going forward they will be asked to OK community ed classes. Ed code requires the board sign off on them.

Megan Waskiewicz, who works 20 hours a week coordinating the program, said having these types of classes to start the program fit with what survey takers said they want. Nearly 80 percent of the 100 respondents said health-fitness-wellness

type classes are what they want.

A recent *Lake Tahoe News* "Question of the Week" also asked people what kinds of classes they would like.

The college also queried the 500 participants in this month's Spanish Institute what they would take in the future. With many of them from out of town, this taps into the destination visitor.

Waskiewicz envisions weekend classes that could involve part or the whole family. It might involve cooking, hiking or both.

Culinary programs were high the list of desires in the community survey.

Next summer she wants swimming programs to be part of community ed. As a former employee in the local ski industry, she is ready to tap that area – perhaps a women's ski class or something geared toward kids.

Community partnerships

Cynthea Preston, dean of Instruction at LTCC, told the board last week that Barton Health and Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority approached the college about putting on the three classes related to triathlon training.

"I would have liked it last year," board member Karen Borges said. "My friends and I were saying if we get a flat, we're done."

She did the tri last year and welcomes a lesson in changing a flat tire as part of the Sept. 17 class.

This particular tri is geared toward newbies, with nearly 90 percent of the 600 registrants competing in their first triathlon.

The college's website will have detailed information about the

various classes, while clicking on tri classes brings up the PDF for those particular ones.

Barton has an internal boot camp that LTCC will be part of when it comes to instruction.

That is one of the unique things about community ed compared to the regular college – classes don't have to be offered to everyone.

Nuts and bolts

Plus, grades are not involved. However, curriculum is written for each class.

This week the website will have an instructor proposal form added so anyone who wants to teach a class may fill that out. Then a committee will decide whether to pursue it.

Cost for classes and instructor pay will depend on what is being offered, the number of students, materials required and other factors.

For instance, the Aug. 20 and Aug. 27 tri classes are each $18, while the Sep. 17 tri circuit workshop is $35.

This compares to the three-day SAT prep class that runs $200, plus $25 for the text. That is the fourth class the community ed program is offering. Right now South Tahoe High doesn't offer such a class, so the college is hoping the Sept. 11-18-25 sessions are well received. It's being taught by Frances Lord, an LTCC instructor who has taught the subject elsewhere.

And the requirements to teach have nothing to do with what it takes to be a full-time or adjunct instructor.

"We have a lot of flexibility. Why not try some things that are different?" Waskiewicz said.