Appellate court bars class-action suit in Lake Davis poisoning

By Denny Walsh, Sacramento Bee

The state's Herculean effort to wipe the northern pike out of Lake Davis in Plumas County wreaked havoc on the economy in and around Portola, but the city and owners and operators of businesses and property may not proceed in court against the state as a class, an appellate court has ruled.

The character and interests of the proposed plaintiffs are far too varied to allow them to press a single lawsuit as a class, a three-justice panel of the 3rd District Court of Appeal in Sacramento decided.

The justices struck down class certification granted by Plumas Superior Court Judge Janet Hilde. Their ruling means the plaintiffs will have to sue the state individually.

In 1997 and 2007, the California Fish and Game Department dumped thousands of gallons of rotenone – a naturally occurring poison deadly to gilled creatures – into the scenic mountain reservoir and its tributaries to rid them of the invasive, voracious fish.

After the 1997 poisoning, which was unsuccessful, the Legislature determined the area's residents had suffered economic harm and appropriated more than $9.1 million to compensate them.

Read the whole story

Lake Tahoe sports camp designed for active women

Lake Tahoe's All-Women Sports Camp is hosting a weekend of mountain biking, road cycling, triathlon training and running for women of all abilities on Aug. 20-21 at Northstar-at-Tahoe.

The weekend will include endurance clinics, group bike rides, group runs, yoga on the beach, and stand-up paddleboard.

The All-Women Sports Camp will be led by mountain biker Marla Streb; professional triathlete Jessi Stensland; and former U.S. cycling team member Julie Young.

For more information, go online or call (530) 563.889.

Nev. highway construction stopped to accommodate Hot August Nights

By Juan Lopez, Reno Gazette-Journal

When Hot August Nights was first gaining a footing in Northern Nevada, Scott Magruder thought, "Well, this will only last for a couple of years."

Little planning went into dealing with the influx of vintage

cars those first years, said Magruder, spokesman for the Nevada Department of Transportation.

“Then we had all those cars backed up on Mount Rose and were overheating, (so) we started putting it in our (construction) contracts that we would do most of the work behind the barricade, but there would be no ramp or lane closures during Hot August Nights.”

Since older cars are more susceptible than newer vehicles to overheat in traffic, Magruder said, the traffic-reducing decision was made then to discontinue any highway construction work while Hot August Nights, now 25 years old, was in town. A majority of the work on highway construction projects was shut down Friday and will resume Monday after Hot August Nights concludes to lessen lane closures and highway congestion.

And traffic-reducing measures could not come at a better time, said Sgt. Jim Stegmaier with the Reno Police Department Traffic Division. Stegmaier, who has been on the force for 23 years, said he has “never seen construction work get this bad in this area.”

“It’s horrible,” he said. “Obviously, we have some big construction projects that are going on. These projects are creating tons of jobs, but at the same time, the timing is really bad with Hot August Nights coming into town. I’ve never seen it this bad before.”

Read the whole story

3 Gatsby-related events at Tahoe Tallac Site

The Tahoe Tallac Site is hosting three Gatsby-era events Aug. 12-14.



Kick off the weekend with the 17-piece Tahoe Dance Band and a swinging night of big band tunes. The dance is Friday at the Grand Hall, 7pm, $20.

Murder Mystery Radio Play returns this year with “Lights! Camera! Murder!” – where you’re more than an audience member, you’re a detective. This performance celebrating the Roaring ’20s South Shore lifestyle begins at 6:30pm Saturday in the Grand Hall. Tickets are $20 and $45. Wine and hors d’oeuvres are included in the ticket price.

Enjoy tea, sweets and vintage fashion at the Gatsby Tea on Valhalla’s Grand Lawn and Hall Sunday afternoon. Tickets are $35 each or $350 for a table of up to 10 guests and are sold through the Tahoe Heritage Foundation. Call Leslie DeTarr at (530) 541.0332 for information and/or reservations.

The Tahoe Tallac Site is off Highway 89 on the South Shore, north of Camp Richardson.

For information about upcoming events or the Tahoe Tallac Assocation, go online.

Boat bound for Tahoe covered in quagga mussels

By Jeff Delong, Reno Gazette-Journal

Inspectors discovered a powerboat encrusted with quagga mussels during a routine roadside inspection Sunday, officials report.



Thirty-seven quagga mussels were found on the boat, which was repeatedly decontaminated before being released from the inspection station at Spooner Summit, said Pete Brumis, public outreach specialist with the Tahoe Resource Conservation District.

It was determined the vessel had been recently operated in Lake Mead, which is heavily infested with mussels.

Read the whole story

Nevada casinos do well except on the South Shore

For the second month in a row Nevada casinos posted growth in revenues. The same cannot be said for the South Shore.

Statewide revenue was up nearly 16 percent in June compared to the previous year. While the South Shore saw an increase of 15 percent in May, in June the Stateline casinos reported a drop of almost 29 percent.

The monthly Nevada Gaming Control Board report released today shows Nevada casinos won $885.7 million two months ago; in June 2010 that number was $763.7 million.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Candidate files for LTCC and LTUSD boards

By Kathryn Reed

Lake Tahoe Unified and Lake Tahoe Community College might share a board member.

This is because Michael Bischoff is running for both boards in the November election. The 59-year-old believes his four years on the Dublin Unified School District board and a desire to give back to his community are reasons he would be successful on both boards.



While he has not attended a meeting of either board, he has spoken with administrators.

“I think a fresh set of eyes and ears might be helpful. I’m not politically connected and do not have a political agenda. I just wish to give back to the community,” Bischoff said.

He has lived here a little more than a year, but has been coming to the South Shore for a quarter century.

What Bischoff neglected to share this week in an interview with *Lake Tahoe News* is some of the controversy he got into while serving on the East Bay district's board that made numerous headlines.

His two drunken driving arrests led his colleagues to request he not attend graduation in 1999. The board censured him in 1998 for his actions regarding a petition and the state budget. Also that year he did not heed requests to step down from the board after it was discovered he ran personal errands while driving students on field trips.

Bischoff was on that board from 1996-2000.

In 2002 he ran for the Alameda County Board of Education. He lost with 22.7 percent of the vote in a two-person race. At that time his occupation was listed as certified professional estimator.

For the Tahoe election, Bischoff lists student as his occupation. He is taking classes at LTCC.

Asked why not run for only one position, Bischoff said, "My chances are that much better to get elected. I have two shots instead of one."

El Dorado County elections personnel said it's legal for him to run for both seats. It is up to the school boards to set policy that prevents any conflicts.

One problem Bischoff would face if elected to both is the boards usually meet at the same time on the same Tuesdays. Some boards have attendance requirements as well as conflict of interest policies.

No one besides Bischoff has filed to challenge the incumbents who are all running for both boards. That would be Fritz Wenck and Karen Borges for LTCC; and Sue Novasel, Larry Green and Mike Doyle for LTUSD.

Other races for Nov. 8:

• Dale Rise as of Aug. 9 remained unchallenged for his seat on the South Tahoe Public Utility District board.

• Four people are vying for the STPUD seat being vacated by Marylou Mosbacher. They are retired district employee Claude Gunsch, homemaker Mary Kortge, business owner John Runnels, and engineer Randy Vogelgesang.

• Candidates have until Aug. 12 at 5pm to file. If the incumbent fails to file, the deadline is extended to Aug. 17.

Car once belonging to George Whittell up for auction

By Katya Kazakina, Bloomberg

A tiger-hunting Rolls-Royce, a Ferrari estimated at $13 million and a Steve McQueen motorcycle are among the highlights of automotive auctions in California next week.

The sales coincide with the Aug. 15-21 Monterey Car Week, the annual extravaganza that gathers rare vehicles and wealthy owners. Auction houses Gooding & Co. and Bonhams will offer more than 500 lots of cars, motorcycles and memorabilia.

Bragging rights may go to a Ferrari 250 Testa Rossa prototype that’s coming on the block Aug. 20 at Gooding in Pebble Beach. Its forecast price of more than $13 million would set an auction record for an automobile.

Assembled in 1957, it competed in the Le Mans 24-hour race as well as in endurance races in Argentina and Venezuela. Its

curvaceous red body and a 12-cylinder engine made the Testa Rossa the most popular Ferrari racing model in the 1950s and 1960s.

“This model won almost all races between 1957 and 1963,” said Marcel Massini, a Swiss-based Ferrari historian, in a telephone interview. “It’s an iconic car and an iconic design.”

A star lot at Bonhams’s annual two-day sale in Carmel is a red 1925 Rolls-Royce New Phantom. Custom-designed for the Bengal tiger hunting expeditions of India’s Maharajah of Kotah, the four-door convertible is powered by an 7.7-liter, 6-cylinder engine and is expected to bring $750,000 to $1 million.

You could blow away the whole village along with the poor tiger. The car was outfitted with a mounted double-barreled shotgun, a rifle stand in the rear passenger compartment and a machine gun on a trailer hitch. A cannon could be mounted on the rear bumper.

“I highly doubt that anyone would go hunting with it,” said David Swig, a motorcars specialist at Bonhams. “It’s more of a museum piece.”

Another highlight is a 1931 Duesenberg, which is expected to fetch as much as $7 million at Gooding, exceeding the current $4.5 million auction record for a “Duesy.” One of the grandest and most elegant cars of its type, it was commissioned by Captain George Whittell Jr., who had a pet lion and a 40,000-acre Lake Tahoe estate.

Read the whole story

If you had a one-on-one with a politician attending the Aug. 16 Lake Tahoe Environmental Summit, who would you want to say what to?

Lousy real estate market puts more land in conservationists hands

By Julie Cart, Los Angeles Times

VOLCANO LAKE – The news is distressing: A cratering real estate market, tight-fisted banks unwilling to make loans and no appetite among elected officials to let go of a dime.

So why are conservationists smiling?

It turns out that the tattered economy has cracked open a window of opportunity for groups seeking to set aside land for preservation. With property developers and speculators on the sidelines – and cautious folks electing to forgo building that cabin in the woods – desirable land is on the market for a fraction of its former price.

And thanks to laws extending tax breaks and other incentives,

rural residents are lining up as never before to work with local land trusts in hopes of saving the family farm.

“There are some extraordinary deals out there, from [parcels in] the North Woods of Maine to timber companies divesting because there are no housing starts and they can’t sell their lumber,” said Rand Wentworth, president of the Land Trust Alliance.

Statistics are difficult to come by, but anecdotal evidence suggests that land conservation rates have maintained the pace of the first half of the decade. Total acres set aside by local, state and national trusts doubled from 2000 to 2005; a snapshot for 2005 to 2010 will be released in coming months.

Read the whole story