All-day seminar to empower middle school girls

Studies show girls' self-esteem drops significantly once they enter middle school and continues to drop as they push through to high school. Girls face fears such as bullying, relationship drama, grades, and body image to name a few.

Fortunately, girls who participate in sports and other extracurricular activities experience increased confidence and self-respect.

On Aug. 22 from 8am-8pm, South Lake Tahoe Women's Center is sponsoring a Girls' Empowerment Project for girls entering 6th, 7th and 8th grads. The project is designed to foster independence, empowerment and positive self-image through exciting workshops and hands on activities. Girls who participate will have the opportunity to learn skills and try activities they might not otherwise have access to.

Volunteers from the community will be teaching the following skills:

How to stay safe with self-defense

How to feel self-confident though dance

How to make a difference in their community with empowered leadership

How to create something new with something old

How to bring out their inner beauty with self-care

How to care for and protect both wild and tame animals

Registration is limited. Cost is $15 and includes three meals and a snack. Some scholarships are available so please call

Lisa at (530) 544.2118, ext. 7628.

Opinion: Time for S. Tahoe to honor its written agreements

Publisher's note: ***The following letter was read into the record at the Aug. 2, 2011, South Lake Tahoe City Council meeting.***

Dear Mr. [Hal] Cole and Members of the City Council,

Landscaping the Highway 50 Linear Park in front of Tahoe Meadows must be a top priority of the City this year in fulfilling an agreement between the City and Tahoe Meadows in 1999. Here is why this project should be number one, two or three on the City's Capital Improvement Project (CIP) list.

On March 16, 1999, now more than twelve years ago, the City of South Lake Tahoe entered into a legally binding agreement with Tahoe Meadows Association and other individual homeowners within Tahoe Meadows for the purchase of property along Highway 50 in order to create a "Linear Park". The Deed is filed with the El Dorado County recorders office under document 99-0016968. Part of the negotiated agreement stipulates that the City upon completion of the transaction shall landscape from the Highway 50 curb to five feet inside the fence in a manner acceptable to Tahoe Meadows.

No fewer than five different times within the last twelve years, we have sought to have this agreement enforced, to no avail. I quote a May 25, 2005 letter from our then president, Mr. Michael Fry to the City of South Lake Tahoe Planning Department, which says:

“Re: Linear Park Bike Trail Agreement for Acquisition of Real Property & Escrow Instructions – March 1997 to August 1997. The City entered into the above mentioned agreement with property owners along the Linear Park Bike Trail. Paragraph 3 b. of the agreement states, ‘Upon receipt of a written request from Seller, and mutual approval of a conceptual landscape plan, Buyer shall landscape and maintain a five (5) foot wide area along the length of the Seller’s lot.’”

Our board has repeatedly asked that the City, as Buyer, do its part to fulfill the agreement. The Linear Park should be landscaped with grass between the bike path and Highway 50 similar to what has been installed across Highway 50 and along Ski Run Boulevard. From the bicycle path to the City-owned fence should be a transition zone of shrubs and trees. Irrigation must be provided so that planting will not die, including the negotiated zone of five feet inside the fence. (I was informed … that the inside-the-fence irrigation may originate on the highway side of the fence). Irrigation is also important from a fire safety standpoint.

The Tahoe Meadows Board believes that the City has reneged on its legal promise because since 1999, the city has undertaken to landscape Ski Run Boulevard and other projects before fulfilling its prior commitment to Tahoe Meadows. As of this writing, the Linear Park has still not been landscaped and is thus a continuing eyesore. Our attempts to enforce the 1999 agreement have met with delays and excuses until recently.

We became optimistic when two years ago, Gene Palazzo engaged Landscape Architect Brett Long to develop plans for landscaping the linear park. However, in spite of repeated requests I made to Gene after these plans were drawn, he never allowed me (or anyone within Tahoe Meadows) to see the result of Mr. Long’s work. Finally, after Gene left the city’s employ, I contacted Nancy Kerry to determine the status of the project. On May 27, 2011, for the first time, I was able to see the plans and share them with the Tahoe Meadows Board on

May 29, 2011. The board was not happy with several aspects of the plan as drawn by Mr. Long. We specifically asked for grass between the bike path and highway all along the linear park from the North Gate to the South to join with the grass in front of McDonald's Restaurant. Our members at a Membership meeting ratified our request for grass prior to the time the park property was purchased by the City under threat of imminent domain. On Mr. Long's plans we also objected to the Plum at the entrance gate as being un-natural in this environment. We would prefer aspen or another species native to the Tahoe Meadows area at the entry. We would also like to see trash containers and cigarette disposal containers near the bus stops along with lighting incorporated into the plan for safety and fire reasons.

I am asking you to move forward in doing whatever is necessary to revise the plans as we request, obtain our approval for those revisions and take whatever action is required to implement the landscaping plan this year. Time is of the essence. We want to work with the City to avoid unnecessary continued delays. Please inform me of the Linear Park Landscaping ranking in the City CIP projects immediately following your August 2 Council meeting.

Sincerely,

Frank Bliss, president of Tahoe Meadows home owners

Tahoans asked to help shape policy throughout basin

By Kathryn Reed

What policies would you change to make Lake Tahoe function better?

Define what local contribution means, promote stewardship, overhaul infrastructure, improve transit, who is responsible for operation and maintenance costs, encouraging public-private partnerships, mandatory mediation before litigation, alignment within and between organizations, and balance environmental and economic goals.

Those were some of the overriding themes at the South Shore meetings on Wednesday. While all are not policy statements per se, when they reach Sen. Dianne Feinstein's hands next week they will be written as such.



Renovating the old Mikasa building is an example of the private sector improving South Lake Tahoe. Photo/LTN

Steve Teshara, with Sustainable Community Advocates, is tasked with culling together a manageable document to present to lawmakers.

Four workshops are being conducted in the basin at the request of Feinstein, D-Calif. Public sentiment, unlike years past, will be a central them to this year's environment summit.

Feinstein is hosting the public event at Homewood Mountain Resort on Aug. 16 from 9-11:30am.

Two public vetting sessions were Aug. 3 in South Lake Tahoe, with two more today. The first is from 10am-noon at Granlibakken Resort in Tahoe City and then from 3-5pm at the North Tahoe Events Center in Kings Beach.

Five suggested topics were presented to the approximately 30 people (combined for the South Shore meetings), which included:

• Water clarity

• Infrastructure turnover

• Complete streets and transit

• Sustainable prosperity and stewardship

• Opportunities to expand regional match investment for the environmental improvement program.

Forest fuels was not broached until the Wednesday evening session when *Lake Tahoe News* brought up the issue. An unfunded mandate, like Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board's total maximum daily load, was another issue *LTN* triggered discussion about.

While Doug Smith with Lahontan tried to convince the room the TMDL is not an unfunded mandate, it fell on deaf ears. Same with his contention the regional board does not answer to the state water board.

Consensus was met on the need for greater public-private partnerships as well as looking at the region as a whole and not just project-by-project. Some of the thinking is to better leverage dollars and resources, as well as to possibly have combined projects meet TRPA thresholds.

Several people brought up how agencies don’t have the same philosophy throughout the organization. While this is not something the politicos can change, it is something they can advocate for. After all, 85 percent of the land in the Lake Tahoe Basin is owned by public agencies.

It’s getting the left hand to know what the right hand is doing.

The same goes for having each agency be on the same page.

“We need consistency,” El Dorado County Supervisor Norma Santiago said.

With the basin being such a litigious environment, it was suggested mediation be required before a lawsuit could be filed. While some suggested the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency rewrite the Compact to make that happen, it was noted resolutions are on the books that could bring some changes without the need for an act of Congress.

Ty Polastri with the Lake Tahoe Bicycle Coalition said money is out there, but people are hesitant in the current “I’ll sue you if you do that” atmosphere to write a check.

All heads appeared to nod in agreement.

Gary Midkiff, who once worked for TRPA and now has a private consulting firm, said it costs too much money and takes too long to bring a project forward in Lake Tahoe.

While the public has been asked before to weigh-in on such matters with no obvious outcome, this is new to have a U.S. senator go to the residents of Lake Tahoe.

Teshara said he believes Tahoe is at a tipping point – on the edge to right the ship that has been listing for so long.

Anyone wanting to submit policy suggestions may do so until Aug. 8 by emailing them to steveteshara@gmail.com.

Rescue team at S. Tahoe city pool receives kudos

The people who saved Amy Castillo‘s life were recognized publicly on Tuesday by the South Lake Tahoe City Council.

Castillo is the the 12-year-old girl who on July 20 was pulled from the bottom of the city pool by lifeguards. She is at home, reportedly without any repercussions from the incident.

Singled out for their rescue efforts were lifeguards Faye-Marie Pekar, Grace Usui and Sierra York-Tolen; swim instructor Shannon Marshall; police Officers Tony Broadfoot and Deanna Lewis; fire Capt. Jim Drenna; fire Engineers Steve Monday and Jack Stinson; fire Capt. Marty Creel; firefighters Chris Anaya and Jesse Snyder; and street Supervisor Azril Kalik.

— Lake Tahoe News staff report

Pending cases could lead to more Incline refunds

By Susan Voyles, Reno Gazette-Journal

David Creekman really knows how to silence a room.

Washoe County Commissioner David Humke asked the chief deputy district attorney the other night about outstanding lawsuits involving Incline Village.

Creekman said that five cases are outstanding.

In one case, the Nevada Supreme Court has not ruled on the lawsuit that would force county property tax values to be equalized, or made similar, to those of lake properties at Glenbrook in Douglas County. That could mean more refunds for the same 9,000 Incline Village homeowners.

“There is a potential for enormous financial liability in those five cases,” Creekman said. But he later said he had no estimate of what it could be.

Todd Lowe, a leader in the Village League to Save Incline Assets, said property values at Incline Village and Crystal Bay would be too high even if they were rolled back to 2002-03 levels. He said they were too high then.

The property tax bill for his lakefront home totals $64,343 this year. The home is listed as having a taxable value of $5.6 million, most of it in the land.

“I live in the county. I hate to see it unnecessarily harpooned again. But that’s their fault. It’s their actions,” he said.

As evidence, the residents compare the home of Maryanne Ingemanson, village league president, with two properties in Glenbrook that have bigger new homes, more acreage and more beach frontage.

Despite those attributes, Lowe said Ingemanson paid $369,284 in property taxes during six years ending in 2007, while one Douglas County homeowner paid $113,276 in taxes and another paid $151,196 during the same period.

Read the whole story

Tahoe animal rehab center opens doors to public for one day

Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care's annual open house is Aug. 7 from 10am-4pm.

This is the one time of the year the public is permitted on the grounds where the wild birds and animals are rehabilitated before being released back to the wild.

Various species to be seen include three bear cubs, five red-tailed hawks, seven barn owls, songbirds, raccoons, a coyote pup and a golden eagle.



A river otter is one of the animals rehabbed at LTWC. Photo/Provided

Trained LTWC volunteers will be on hand to guide you through the grounds and describe the reasons the various wildlife are at LTWC, and the prognosis for their eventual release back to the wild.

Retail items will be available, including the newly designed Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care T-shirts and hats, posters, LTWC license plate holders and magnets and Li'l Smokey lapel pins.

The bear cubs will be on closed circuit "BEAR TV" to watch as they play in their little world.

LTWC is at 1485 Cherry Hills Circle, off Elks Club Drive in Meyers.

For more information, call (530) 577.2273.

Failure with Garrido prompts legislative effort to reform parole

By Sam Stanton, Sacramento Bee

With the Phillip Garrido fiasco as a backdrop, legislative and law enforcement leaders today agreed to work toward preventing a similar one.

In a public meeting at the state Capitol convened by state Sen. Ted Gaines, R-Roseville, and El Dorado County District Attorney Vern Pierson, officials discussed the failures that led to Jaycee Lee Dugard remaining Garrido's captive for 18 years and offered ideas on how to improve supervision of sex offenders.

Gaines said he plans to introduce legislation soon to address a state Supreme Court decision from 2008 that he and Pierson say has created a spike in the number of inmates serving life sentences who are winning release from parole boards.

That decision held that a parole board may not base a decision on whether to release an inmate solely upon the circumstances of the crime that sent the inmate to prison. Because of that decision, from 2008 through 2010, 1,329 lifers have been granted parole, Pierson said, compared to 1,821 from 1978 through 2007.

Pierson contends that the law needs to be changed to allow parole boards to consider not only psychiatric and other reports on an inmate's behavior but also the nature of the crime.

Gaines said he believes such a change in the law can win widespread support.

Read the whole story

Identity theft workshop in Incline

As part of the Chamber EDucation program, the North Lake Tahoe Chamber of Commerce in partnership with the Sierra Economic Development Corporation to host a Business Identity Theft Compliance Workshop on Aug. 10 from noon to 1:30pm at the Mark Twain Cultural Center, 760 Mays Blvd., Ste. 10, Incline Village.

Deadline to register is Aug. 5.

Attendees will learn about identity theft laws and how they affect businesses, business liability when there is a breach, the types of identity theft and behavior awareness, as well as tools for creating a policy to protect their business.

The cost is $55/person (payable in advance by mail or credit card), and participants need to bring their own lunch. To register, call (530) 823.4703 or email info@sedcorp.biz.

This class will also be repeated Sept. 22 in Tahoe City at Granlibakken Lodge and Oct. 26 in Kings Beach at the North Tahoe Event Center.

Saturday Mornings at SNC

Saturday Mornings, the award-winning morning discussion and lecture series collaboration of Sierra Nevada College and Incline Village Parks & Recreation Senior Programs continue this fall.

College faculty and other knowledgeable locals present bite-size offerings of intellectually stimulating material to pique people’s interest and challenge their sensibilities.

An optional continental breakfast will be provided for $3.

Sierra Nevada College Professor Katie Zanto has been nominated as one of L.L. Bean’s top 10 Outdoor Heroes based on her work founding the Adventure Risk Challenge Program—a place-based program that integrates wilderness challenges with a rigorous literacy and leadership curriculum. Zanto is an educator, who, fueled by a great dedication to the environment, has created a variety of unusual unique opportunities for youth to discover their own passion and love for the outdoors. It is Katie’s broad interpretation of environment that is unique, which she blends into all areas of her work.

She speaks Nov. 12 from 10am-noon at Sierra Nevada College, Prim Library, Room 213, 999 Tahoe Blvd., Incline Village.

For details, contact Debi Noonan at (775) 831.1314, ext. 7420, dnoonan@sierranevada.edu.

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Rick Parsons, Sierra Nevada College professor of fine arts, has served as Sculpture Program Coordinator at Anderson Ranch Arts Center and has taught at the University of Dallas,and Colorado Mountain College. He has been a visiting artist at Colorado College, San Jose State University, University of Miami, and Arizona State University. His sculpture has been exhibited throughout the country, been featured in solo shows, and in 2007 Rick's sculpture was the focus of an article in *Sculpture* magazine. He was recently published in the book Confrontational Ceramics: The Artist as Social Critic and was featured in the documentary film "Questions of Art."

He he speaks Oct. 15 from 10am-noon at Sierra Nevada College, Prim Library, Room 213, 999 Tahoe Blvd., Incline Village.

For details, contact Debi Noonan at (775) 831.1314, ext. 7420, dnoonan@sierranevada.edu.