CalFire: Evacuation plans, emergency kits save lives

Publisher's note: ***This is the third of three articles from the Amador-El Dorado Unit of CalFire regarding the "Ready-Set-Go!" fire and life safety campaign.***

By Teri Mizuhara

CAMINO – "Leave your home before you are ordered to evacuate. You will not only be giving your family the best chance of surviving a wildfire, but you will also be helping emergency service vehicles by keeping the roads clear. Plan today and have at least two escape routes out of your neighborhood. Drive them in the day and night so you are comfortable with the routes. You don't want to guess how to get out of your neighborhood when heavy smoke and flames are surrounding you," says CalFire's Amador-El Dorado Unit Chief Kelly Keenan.

Preparation is the key to a smooth evacuation. Make sure your evacuation kits are prepared for every member of your family now in the event you have to evacuate later this summer. Your kit(s) should have enough supplies for a minimum of 72 hours (three days) without any outside assistance. Plan for a minimum of a gallon of water per day per person, non-perishable food, medications, clothes, toiletries, flashlights with spare batteries, radio, first aid kit, etc.

Don't forget about your family pets, they too will need their own evacuation kits with water, food, cages, crates, collars-leashes, etc. You can find more information at our website, FEMA, and the Humane Society.

"Don't forget to practice your evacuation drill. Everything you are planning on taking should fit in your smallest vehicle since you may not have your larger vehicle at home at the time

of an emergency. Review your plans, phone lists, meeting areas and other important details with your family members. Post instructions and lists in a highly visible area of your house and never stay behind and hide, it is the quickest way to becoming a fire victim. Remember, disaster preparedness begins and ends with you. Thank you for planning to survive," Keenan adds.

For more detailed information on what you have read, visit CalFire's website or call (530) 644.2345 to receive a free brochure on the Ready-Set-Go program and evacuation tips for your family and pets.

Cops increasing patrol throughout Douglas County

It took 10 deaths in seven months on Northern Nevada highways for the Nevada Highway Patrol and Douglas County Sheriff's Department to step up traffic enforcement.



A Calaveras County woman is the most recent victim, having been killed in Stateline by an alleged drunken driver on July 30.

"Key factors in many of the recent fatal highway traffic accidents have been driver inattention, failure to yield to oncoming traffic, and failure to wear safety restraints," sheriff's Sgt. Jim Halsey said in a press release. "While NHP troopers and DCSO deputies will continue to enforce all traffic violations on all roadways throughout the county,

these three violations in particular will be targeted and enforced on the major highway. Citations will be issued to violators.

Troopers will also be in the air to monitor traffic, and to spot unsafe vehicle operation such as excessive speed, unsafe lane changes, or following too closely.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Opinion: Meaningful debate on military spending is MIA

By Daniel Wirls

As the president and Congress grind their way to a budgetary compromise that will do far more to further alienate the American public than solve our fiscal crisis, one thing – military spending – is all but overlooked. For all the strife over taxes and entitlements, the president and majorities in both parties agree on the following: Military spending is essentially off the table, even though it is far and away the most distorted part of the national budget, the most egregious mismatch between the country's rational needs and the commitment of national resources.

Let's remind ourselves of a few basic facts. Since 2001, the nation has spent more than $1.2 trillion on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. During the same period, military spending has increased more than 80 percent. That 80-plus percent increase is separate from, in addition to, the $1.2 trillion for the wars. U.S. military spending is higher than at any point since World War II, without counting the hundreds of billions for

the wars. The United States spends close to half the world's total in military spending and our closest allies bring the total to more than 70 percent. At about $80 billion, the Pentagon's budget for research and development, alone, exceeds the entire military budget of any nation except China.

Moreover, the fastest growing entitlement program is not Medicaid, Medicare or Social Security – it's veterans' benefits, a separate category of spending, independent of the Pentagon budget or war spending. Over the last decade, the Veterans Affairs budget increased from $47 billion to $124.7 billion per year, or 162 percent (compared to Medicare's 109 percent, Medicaid's 119 percent, and Social Security's 61 percent).

Daniel Wirls is a professor of politics at UC Santa Cruz.

Read the whole story

Tahoe Family Festival

The 2011 Tahoe Family Festival, benefiting KidZone Museum, a nonprofit children's museum, is an event full of activities for families looking to play, discover, explore and have fun.

This year's Family Festival is Aug. 28 from noon-6pm at the Truckee Regional Park. There will be live music, food, cycling, face painting and more. Kids are free. Adults are $5.

In two years the event has raised more than $16,000 for programs at the museum such as free bus service for 30 to 50 families from Kings Beach and Truckee to visit the museum and participate in science and art through the museum's nationally recognized program KidsReach.

For more information, email director@kidzonemuseum.org, or call (530) 587.5437.

Bijou Bash

Bijou Bash at Bijou Community Park in South Lake Tahoe from 10am-4pm. Event is free and geared toward families.

NV Energy's net income shorting out

NV Energy's net income dropped $12.9 million or 65 percent compared to the second quarter for 2010.

In April-June 2010, the Las Vegas-based firm posted a profit of $36.9 million.

The blame for the drop this year is being placed on weather, regulatory adjustments and construction costs in Southern Nevada.

NV Energy has 367,000 electricity customers in Northern Nevada, including the Lake Tahoe Basin.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Young Shakespeare Program on stage throughout region

This month the Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival proudly presents the D.G. Menchetti Young Shakespeare Program – celebrating its 10th anniversary of entertaining families and connecting young audiences to the classics.

An interactive, free and family-friendly performance adaptation of William Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night" designed to complement the festival's main stage production – with the young audience member in mind, the D.G. Menchetti Young Shakespeare Program runs through Aug. 11 at Sand Harbor State Park and at venues throughout Tahoe-Reno.

Co-directed by Joe Atack and Michelle Calhoun-Fitts, this season's production features a fun-filled adventure set in the early 1900s. "Twelfth Night" tells the tale of young Viola who, after being shipwrecked on an island and having lost her twin brother Sebastian, must disguise herself as a man to survive in a unknown, new world. Widely regarded as one Shakespeare's greatest comedies, "Twelfth Night" brims with mistaken identity, larger than life characters and swashbuckling swordplay. Audiences will be involved in the action as well when an extraordinary company of professional and young actors, acting side-by-side on stage, bring many of Shakespeare's most memorable characters to life.

The D.G. Menchetti Young Shakespeare Program serves as an internship program for young and aspiring actors/artists. The program is modeled after a fully professional production process, complete with a rigorous rehearsal period and a full company of professional actors, designers and production team members. Each young actor is mentored by a professional artist beginning in rehearsal and carrying through to performance – receiving hands-on instruction in acting, movement, stage

combat and voice – with an emphasis on Shakespeare's language.

All performances of the D.G. Menchetti Young Shakespeare Program's production of "Twelfth Night" are free to young people of all ages and their chaperones. Seating is on a first-come, first-served basis and reservations are required. Please note that the parking fee at Sand Harbor State Park performances is $10 (in-state) and $12 (out-of-state) per vehicle. Call (775) 831.0494 to reserve parking and make arrangements for buses.

To reserve tickets, go online.

Program calendar:

Aug. 2-4: Warren E. Trepp Stage (Sand Harbor State Park),10am

Aug. 5: Tahoe Tallac Site, Boat House Theatre (South Lake Tahoe) ate 11am and 2pm

Aug. 8: Robert Z. Hawkins Amphitheatre (Bartley Ranch, Reno) at 7pm

Aug. 9-11: Warren E. Trepp Stage (Sand Harbor State Park) @ 10am.

Stunt pilots lined up for Lake Tahoe air show

The 22nd annual Lake in the Sky Air Show takes flight Aug. 27 from 7am-4pm.

It features some of the world's top aircraft performers. as well as radio-controlled demonstrations, Navy H-60 Seahawk

helicopters and an Air Force C-17 Globemaster static display.

Flying legends Bill Cornick, former Air Force pilot; Jon Melby, 33-year freestyle aerobatic air show pilot; and Spencer Suderman, known for intense gyroscopic maneuvers on the Pitts S-2B Biplane, will entertain spectators with aerial stunts and demonstrations.

Pre-opening events include a 5K race/Kids Fun Run and a Kiwanis pancake breakfast.

Go online for more information.

Camping during the Perseids meteor shower

The Perseids meteor shower comes every year beginning in late July and stretching into August. On Aug. 12, camp under the stars and watch the night sky light up at Squaw Valley High Camp.

On this night, sky watchers can witness colorful fireballs, occasional outbursts and long hours of gracefully streaking meteors.

Perseid Meteor Shower campers can upload the Cable Car between 5-6:30pm. Upon arriving at High Camp, guests have the option of starting off the evening with a self-led sunset hike around Squaw Valley’s upper mountain peaks or eating dinner at the resort’s mountaintop café (not included in price). Following, there will be an informational briefing on telescopes as well as campfire activities, with meteor shower viewing beginning at 10pm. In the morning is a continental breakfast from

7:30-8:30am before downloading the Cable Car.

Reservations for the Perseid Meteor Shower Campout are required and this event does sell out. Those interested in more information or in making reservations may call (530) 583.6985.

Cost is $75 for adults, $50 for children 15 and younger.

League: Pier-TRPA issue relatively new news to them

Updated: Aug. 1 9:45am

The League to Save Lake Tahoe is back pedaling when it comes to standing by Tamara Fritz, now saying it was just in the last few weeks they knew anything about the violations at her Tahoe City property.

That property is where the League's annual fundraiser is conducted.

"The League to Save Lake Tahoe views the environmental violations that took place at the site of our fundraiser as a very serious matter," League board Chairman Robert Damaschino said in a statement. "We support the efforts of TRPA and the landowner to correct them and assure they are not repeated."

Updated July 28 5:20pm

A fine of $35,000 is too low for someone who illegally extends her pier at Lake Tahoe. That's the thinking of some Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Governing Board members.

Tamara Fritz had agreed to pay the penalty for altering her Tahoe City property without the proper paperwork in order. But it was pulled from the consent item at Wednesday's meeting. Because neither Fritz nor a representative was at the meeting in Kings Beach the issue was postponed.

Before the August board meeting the legal committee is expected to convene to discuss the possibility of making the fine larger.

While illegal pier extensions crop up as issues now and again, the twist to this particular property is the annual fashion-show fundraiser for the League to Save Lake Tahoe is conducted there each August. (This year the event is Aug. 6.)

Also an issue for TRPA is Fritz not abiding by the cease and desist order to stop using the dirt lot next to her for storage. This presents erosion issues.

The TRPA says it has never received a permit application for the event. While the League says Steve Sweet with the TRPA said no permit would be required this year, but that one would be required in future years if the event were to be at the Fritz property and the lot used for parking.

– Kathryn Reed