Great Gatsby Gala is a trip back in time

Put on your Glad Rags for the Great Gatsby Gala on Aug. 13 at MontBleu in Stateline.

Attire is 1920s. Free Charleston lessons will be given.

Cocktails are at 6:30pm, dinner 7pm, dancing at 8pm. Dinner and dancing is $60; just dancing is$20.

Tickets are available at both Tahoe Youth & Family Services offices, 1021 Fremont Ave., South Lake Tahoe (530) 541.2445 or in Gardnerville at 1422 Mission St. (775) 782.4202. Tickets may also be purchased online. All proceeds go to Tahoe Youth & Family Services.

Leviathan Mine treatment may set a record

Contractors for Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board expect this to be a record summer for treatment of acid mine drainage at the Leviathan Mine superfund site in Alpine County.

Treatment prevents toxic discharges from the mine to Leviathan Creek, Bryant Creek, and the East Fork Carson River.

As a result of the highest amount of rain and snowfall since 1995, acid mine drainage from ponds at Leviathan Mine threatened to overflow in April. The Water Board mobilized a contractor three months earlier than normal to prevent

overflow.

From April through May, the Water Board conducted spring treatment of the AMD to prevent discharge of untreated water. That operation treated more than 7 million gallons of AMD.

Summer treatment operations that just begun are expected to treat an additional 10 million to 15 million gallons of AMD, potentially making it the greatest amount of toxic mine drainage treated by the Water Board at the site.

Leviathan Mine is an abandoned sulfur mine five miles east of Markleeville and six miles west of Topaz Lake that was owned and operated by the Anaconda Copper Mining Company in the 1950s and 1960s. California acquired the mine in 1984 to clean up water quality problems caused by the mining operations. The Water Board completed a pollution abatement project at the mine in 1985, and since 1999 has continued to actively treat waters discharged from the mine site.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• South Lake Tahoe Mayor Hal Cole will give a state of the city address Oct. 20 at 6pm at Lake Tahoe Airport.

• Chase International real estate agents Joshua Talayka and Edee Campbell were the only two from their profession to be selected to serve on the Nevada Foreclosure Mediation Program’s advisory committee. Selected by the Nevada Supreme Court, they will serve with 12 other professionals from

various fields and backgrounds.

• Proponents of legalized recreational use of marijuana have been given the green light to begin gathering the nearly 505,000 signatures they'll need to put the measure on the ballot in 2012.

• Kirkwood Mountain Resort is working with the U.S. Forest Service on a proposal to expand its mountain bike park. Comments should be sent to Micki Smith at mdsmith@fs.fed.us.

• Steve Brooks, doctor with Barton Family Practice, will talk about heart disease on Sept. 21 from 6-7pm at Kahle Community Center in Stateline. For more information, call (530) 543.5656.

South Tahoe hotel implementing sustainable practices

Avalon Lodge in South Lake Tahoe has partnered with Clean the World Foundation to recycle amenities to be redistributed to impoverished and disaster stricken areas in need.



This is just one of the ways it is promoting sustainability.

Hotel amenities will be collected, recycled, sanitized, and

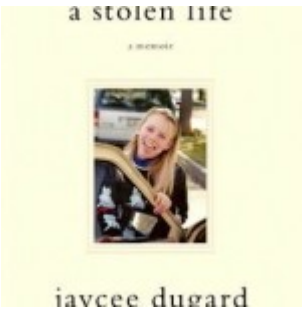
distributed worldwide to reduce the risk of pneumonia, diarrhea, the leading cause in deaths of children under 5, as well as other diseases. Studies have shown the risk of disease has been reduced 60 percent in regions that received donations. Countries receiving recycled soaps include Haiti, Pakistan, Armenia, India, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Ethiopia, Uganda, and Swaziland.

To further support sustainable living, the Avalon Lodge uses local vendors whenever possible, resulting in handmade furniture by local craftsman Mike Leary, breakfast breads from the Sugarpine Bakery and art and jewelry featured for sale in their Market Café by members of the Tahoe Art League. This summer, the Avalon Lodge began promoting walking and biking rather than driving by providing bicycles for their guests to borrow free of charge.

Dugard's book breathing life into publishing world

By Ben Schenkel, Sacramento Bee

Jaycee Lee Dugard's memoir, "A Stolen Life," has been zipping off bookstore shelves since its release two Tuesdays ago.



Orders for new copies from Amazon.com are taking up to two months to fill. If that wait is too long, resellers at the website will sell you the tell-all – for nearly twice the price.

That's right, used.

That blockbuster of a book, along with George R.R. Martin's "A Dance With Dragons," has energized summer sales in an industry beset by upheaval.

Just last week, Borders announced the liquidation of its big-box stores, including five in the Sacramento area and the Carson City store. Amazon is resisting having to charge its California customers the state sales tax. Ironically, independent bookstores are holding their own in this morphing landscape, despite predictions to the contrary.

Though not exactly "beach reads," with their dark and complex premises, the Dugard and Martin books have transcended expectations for how they would sell and be read – and by whom.

They have seemingly little in common, besides their July 12 release date and their status as the top best-sellers nationwide.

"A Stolen Life" (Simon & Schuster, $24.99, 288 pages) is the harrowing account of the 18 years the author spent in captivity and the abuses she endured.

"A Dance With Dragons" (Bantam, $35, 1,040 pages) is the long-awaited fifth part of a fantasy series called "A Song of Ice and Fire." Its narrators are many and its conflicts all too unreal.

Retailers and publishing veterans say the books have attracted readers who wouldn't normally gravitate to those genres – or to any book whatsoever.

Read the whole story

Art and Animals workshop for youth

The Lake Tahoe Humane Society and S.P.C.A. are presenting a weeklong Art and Animals workshop Aug. 15-19.

Designed for youth ages 11 to 13, the class is an introduction to drawing and painting in all media. Instructor Matt Kauffmann is a professional artist and the mentor for the community graffiti project. Basic drawing techniques, watercolors and acrylic painting mediums will be taught. Students will learn fundamental concepts (including value, color, proportions and composition) by drawing and learning about four-legged friends.

Live furry models will participate.

The class fee of $50 for five classes includes art materials.

To register, call Liz Maul at (530) 542.2857.

Opinion: School board work – a challenging job

By Vicki Barber

A friend said to me recently, “I didn’t know being on a school board would be so difficult. I thought I would just try to help out. This is work.”

I imagine most people have similar thoughts. It’s a school board. How hard can that be? These days, with the kinds of

decisions facing board members, I would suggest that it is extremely hard! My friend was concerned about the necessity of lay-offs in her district. California's declining budget is forcing the board she's on to look at a change in structure. Unfortunately, the need for this change in structure will most likely lead to severe changes in staffing and, potentially, in student achievement.



Vicki Barber

Yes, she can make a decision to balance the budget, but she also knows what that will mean to programs and services. After she votes for something that must be done, she will go home to the same neighborhood that also houses the families her vote will affect. Yet, if she chooses not to vote for the layoff, she will have to decide what else can be cut in order to balance the budget.

We have historically looked at the decisions school boards make as falling into one of three categories – busing, budgets, and buildings. How do we get students to and from school? How do we adequately staff our schools? Do we build a new science wing or tear down the old gym? Even in good times, those challenges were the cause of much debate and planning. Now the questions are more intense. Do we even run a bus service? If we approve a budget, will we actually get the funds to meet it? What programs can we cut or modify? What cuts are least likely to negatively impact the students? Yes, we know the building is old, but closing it this year is not an option, so what, if any, improvements to it can we make?

Those are only a few of the questions board members are facing. And, they are not just facing them at one meeting, but at every meeting they attend. They are not just facing the questions at board meetings. They are being asked by neighbors, staff members, and administrators, “What are we going to do?”

This is truly uncharted territory. Those of us who have been in education for a few years are familiar with the ups and downs of school budgets. We learn to prepare for the cycles. This circumstance, however, is unprecedented. We have never before seen shortfalls this severe. Board members and educators alike are trying to find good solutions for the current situation.

Our dedicated school board members deserve a great deal of credit for the amount of effort they are putting into their work. Not all of the decisions are popular. Few of the decisions are easy. But board members in every school district in El Dorado County are doing the hard work of determining how to navigate this difficult time. As my friend said, “This is work.” Yes it is, and thank you for being willing to do that work.

Vicki Barber is superintendent of El Dorado County Office of Education.

Inertia plagues South Tahoe council regarding sign rules

By Kathryn Reed

What’s another two hours of discussion about South Lake

Tahoe’s sign ordinance when it’s been on the books for the past 15 years?

The problem is the issue wasn’t resolved at 9:15pm Tuesday when the talking ended. The council directed staff to come back with revisions to the law. It may be October when the next round of jibber-jabber commences.



If South Tahoe creates a historical sign category, Sno-Flake may qualify. Photo/LTN

This was a continuation of the June 29 workshop. And like that meeting, everyone agreed inconsistent enforcement is a big issue.

“It shouldn’t take six to 12 months to enforce the sign ordinance,” City Attorney Patrick Enright said. Streamlining that process is something staff has been directed to do.

At times the heart of the issue seemed lost two nights ago as council members nitpicked about whether the U.S. flag should be used as promotional material and whether garage sale signs are a nuisance. The irony being the flag isn’t even addressed in the ordinance, as staff had to point out to the five during the July 26 evening workshop.

Councilman Bruce Grego’s hang up was believing all signs will

look alike, making for a homogenous setting.

What to do about historical signs like Sno-Flake and Stardust is also an issue yet to be resolved.

Hilary Hodges, Community Development director, said if business and property owners would use a bit of creativity, plenty of sign diversity would exist.

The main issue, though it didn't receive much attention until Councilwoman Angela Swanson made a passionate speech, is how to address the signs in the way of Caltrans' Highway 50 project from Trout Creek to Ski Run Boulevard.

Hodges said 31 non-conforming signs, with seven of them being multiple business signs, exist in that area.

Staff came up with an incentive plan where the city would fund partial replacement of freestanding signs in that section of town at a cost not to exceed $138,000.

While no action was taken at the meeting, it appeared the council wants to move in that direction. But it was also stated they want funding to be available for everyone as the roadwork phases continue.

To improve the roads, and put in curbs, gutters and bike paths is means signs need to be moved out of the right-of-way. The city needs to decide if it is going to allow the signs to be put back in or force the compliance issue during road construction.

Is now the right time to mandate enforcement of signs – therefore creating an expense for businesses or property owners – or is waiting until the economy improves more prudent? Those are questions the council is wrestling with.

A freestanding sign can cost $10,000.

The smaller issue, though the one that gets more attention, is

the use of temporary signs. The council is leaning toward allowing sandwich boards and banners for special events and limited time periods.

6-day tour of art studios in South Lake

The 4th annual Tahoe Art League's Artist Studio Tour is July 29, 30 and 31 and Aug. 5, 6 and 7 from 10am-5pm each day.

Maps are available at tour headquarters at 3062 Lake Tahoe Blvd. in South Lake Tahoe or by download.

For more information, call (530) 544.2313.

This year's tour features 26 artists at 14 studios.

Admission is free and art work is for sale.

El Dorado County farmers challenge food regulations

By Carlos Alcalá, Sacramento Bee

Pattie Chelseth thinks she has the right to sell you a fraction of a cow.

Chelseth, operator of My Sisters' Farm in Shingle Springs, keeps two cows owned by 15 people.

A cow’s owner can legally drink its milk filtered but unpasteurized, so she believes each of those 15 owners is entitled to a share of the raw milk.

California’s Department of Food and Agriculture sees it otherwise.

“We consider that a commercial transaction and subject to the dairy food safety laws,” said Steve Lyle, the agency’s public affairs director.

A battle in a milk bottle is brewing, as small farmers challenge state and federal regulations.

Chelseth is trying to land the latest blow, floating an ordinance for El Dorado County that she thinks would give small producers the right to sell unregulated goods – milk, cheese, home-baked pies and more – directly to the person who consumes them.

She will hold a local meeting at her farm on Friday.

Read the whole story