Bridge repair on West Slope will cause traffic delays

El Dorado County Department of Transportation has scheduled a temporary closure of the Mosquito Bridge over the South Fork of the American River for annual maintenance activities.

These activities include inspection, adjustments to hardware installed last year, and overall cleaning of the structure.

The closure is scheduled for July 18-29 between 8am and 3pm.

For more information, call (530) 642.4909.

Washoe County deputies slash types of calls they respond to

Washoe County sheriff’s deputies are cutting back on the types of calls they respond to because of budgetary constraints.

Effective immediately, patrol units will no longer be automatically dispatched to incidents where:

* Parties are already separated, except in domestic violence calls

* The suspect in no longer at the scene

* There is no evidence available at the scene

* Total loss is less than $2,500 or does not involve the loss

of a firearm. The total loss figure will rise to $3,500 beginning on Oct. 1 as a result of an amendment to state law passed during the 2011 legislative session.

Because the majority of intrusion alarm responses are for false alarms, deputies will no longer respond to residential or commercial alarms unless there is additional information from a responsible party that indicates an actual crime may be in progress or has occurred.

In addition deputies will no longer automatically respond to:

* Non-injury or hit-and-run vehicle accidents and accidents that occur on private property (such as a commercial parking lot), unless one of the drivers is believed to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, there is an existing traffic hazard to a public roadway or if there is evidence still on the scene of an accident that occurred on a public roadway.

* Civil problems in which there is no court order directing deputies to respond.

* Graffiti, unless it is a call to an act in progress.

* Basic property crimes, such as vehicle burglaries, destruction of property, commercial burglaries, larcenies and fraud.

* Threats, unless there is a reasonable belief of a present and immediate danger.

* Juvenile problems, noise disturbances and Dumpster rummaging, in cases where the description of the incident does not arise to the level of a crime.

The public may file reports online. For further information, call (775) 328.3001.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

• The Frances C. and William P. Smallwood Foundation awarded Tahoe Youth & Family Services $6,000 and the Community Foundation of Western Nevada through the Community Partnership Fund donated $5,000 to support the agency's Youth Drop-in Resource Center in Douglas County.

• South Lake Tahoe's next Fiscal Sustainability meeting is Aug. 4 from 2-4pm at Lake Tahoe Airport.

• Tahoe Women's Care has launched a new website.

• Tahoe Derby Dames compete at Bijou Community Park in South Lake Tahoe starting at 5pm Aug. 20.

• Sue Novasel is putting a portion of the profits from weddings she schedules at Lake Tahoe Community College's Ledbetter Terrace into a college scholarship fund.

Royal Gorge ski resort defaults on $16 mil. loan

Royal Gorge LLC, owners of North America's largest cross country ski resort, has defaulted on its loan.

According to the notice filed in Nevada and Placer counties, Royal Gorge property owners owe Armed Forces Bank of Irvine

$16,743,442.91.

The owners have until late September to pay the loan or face the prospect of having the Donner Summit property taken over by the bank.

In 2005, owners purchased 3,000 acres that include the ski resort and Rainbow Lodge with the intention of building 1,000 condos and a link to Sugar Bowl Ski Resort.

All of those plans were met with great opposition from a slew of groups, most notably Sierra Watch.

“It’s our job to make sure that, if the property does indeed change hands, it moves away from speculative development and into permanent conservation,” Tom Moores of Sierra Watch said in a statement.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Summer libations keep the season lively

By Kathryn Reed

Relaxing poolside, lakeside, on a patio or on a friends’ deck – summer cocktails make the occasion even more festive.

To pretend winter wasn’t taking over spring, a few of us started ordering what could be considered summer drinks even when hot cocoa may have been better to take off the chill from the outdoors.

In the process of trying so many different concoctions, as

well old standbys, we learned a bit. Just like beer and wine, which I have more knowledge of, no two vodkas or tequilas are alike. Perhaps this is obvious to others, but some of us are still learning things.



Sue Wood and her pitcher of mojitos at Brooks Bar & Deck. Photos/Kathryn Reed

Besides doing a taste test to tell the difference, many bars and restaurants are listing on the menu the specific brand of alcohol that is used in drinks.

While flavor is the ultimate decider if a drink will ever be ordered again, the size of glass and quantity of alcohol play a roll in deciding if the price was worth it.

My favorite drinks in this three-month process were at Brenda’s house – creative, flavorful and free. She graciously is allowing her creations to be published. (See below.)

But for those who are not invited to Brenda’s, I recommend Voodoo on Your Woody at Riva Grill in South Lake Tahoe; Sue says order the mojito at Brooks Bar & Deck at Stateline; Brenda wants another Fleur D’Lis from the Chart House in Stateline; Linda says the Picon Punch is a must-have at Louis’ Basque Corner in Reno.

The tastings begin

It’s a warm afternoon in April and we’re on the deck at Riva Grill at Ski Run Marina. No prices on the drink menu. I still have a problem with any bar that does that. The impression it gives is a fluctuating price scale.

At first I thought the drinks were overpriced at $11.75 each. Then I kept drinking and seeing what other places had to offer. Size does matter, and that Woody stands up to all the other libations I ingested.

Riva Grill is known for its Wet Woody. I had the Voodoo on Your Woody and Sue had the Malibu Beach Wet Woody. We both say get the Voodoo.

The original Wet Woody is $10.25, with the price dropping to $5.25 on Wednesdays.

It’s Easter weekend – I’m at SolBar in Calistoga with my three sisters and mom. We decide to share three cocktails between the five of us – all are unique to this restaurant on the northern edge of the Silverado Trail. We would order each one again.

The mixologist at SolBar knows what he is doing.

“All are really good, with good complex flavors,” Jann said.

“They are all very refreshing,” Tami said.

We all agreed the flavors came through instead of a heavy alcohol taste.

They are pricy, but so fun and different that forking over $13 or $14 per drink seemed like a reasonable thing to do. And a girls’ weekend is about not worrying about the credit card bill that’s a month away.

We recommend the Le Djinn du Vin en Orange (g’vine nouaison

gin, house-made vin d’orange, ginger-honey syrup, lemon, house-made fennel bitters, grains of paradise and egg whites), Pink Slip (Plymouth gin, house-made ginger-rhubarb cordial, lime juice and rose water), and Terra Nostra (distillery 209 gin, house-made vin d’orange, fusion N.V. verjus, citrus blossom honey syrup, tincure of Solage lavender, citrus foam, foraged herbs).

The next girls’ weekend had us in San Francisco for Bay to Breakers in May. We figured a cocktail with our dinner at Perbacco the night before the race would make us walk faster. Jann, Pam and mom had the Fragolino (Prosecco, strawberry puree and aperol). Sue had the Mandarino (Absolut mandarin vodka, pomegranate, cointreau and lime.) I had the Perbacco (Ketel One Citron, Amaretto di Saronno, Meyer lemon).

All the cocktails on the menu are $10 – and worth it.

Of them all, I liked the one I ordered the best. Refreshing is the word that kept coming to mind. Sue liked it so much she had it as her second drink. The Fragolino came with good reviews from Pam and mom – saying it was a nice change from straight Prosecco, while Jann thought the puree was too heavy for the sparkling wine

Circling the South Shore

While the Rum Runner at the Beacon at Camp Rich has long been one of my favorite summer drinks, things have gone down hill in the last couple years. To confirm my opinion, I brought Sue and Brenda to the bar. We all agreed – don’t need to order that again.

The flavor just isn’t what is used to be. The color is not the vibrant orange of days gone by. It tastes more icy than slushy. And by the time it sat in the glass a while the flavor was horrible. The aftertaste is nasty.

We wonder with the restaurant now selling the concoction in

bottles if the recipe had to change. It would be nice if is changed back to what it was, because what it is is not worth a fraction of the $8 they charge.

Letting the bartender pick out a fun drink for the night turned out to be the right decision at McDuff's Public House on Fremont Street in South Lake Tahoe. While the Rum Punch was not exceptional, the price ($6) and quantity made up for the flavor.

And had I not been in between school board meetings, I probably would have appreciated that the drink had more rum than fruit juice. It was just one of those nights where less alcohol would have been more appropriate.

But Sue and I would go back again. We liked that there were two kinds of rum, fresh OJ, cranberry and pineapple juice in the drink.

In a previous lifetime (my first stint in South Lake Tahoe in my 20s) I had three bars I frequented regularly, getting a different drink at each one and where the bartender knew what to bring without my asking.

The Cantina was one of them. At the time it was a blended strawberry-banana margarita. (I could walk to my apartment on 13th Street from there.)

On this particular night I order the French Margarita. While it's made with Cuervo Gold, it's really the Grand Marnier that matters. It's almost $9, but hit the spot that night.

Sue had the $8 Tahoe Tropics, their version of the Blue Hawaiian.

"I forgot how sweet they are," she said, indicating perhaps she's outgrown this drink.

Sue's favorite drink is across the state line at Edgewood Golf Course – at the sports bar. The original mojito is what she

wants. It’s the bar’s specialty drink.

Check out this video of bartender Jimmy Kelso making one at Brooks Bar & Deck.

The best deal is a pitcher (and these are the old-style large pitchers) for $24. Individual glasses are $8.

“It’s the perfect blend of simple things,” Sue said.

Sitting on the Timber Cove Pier enjoying summer in Tahoe – it’s hard to beat Blue Water Bistro’s location. And the Juicy Peach ($10) is tasty, but comes in a super small martini glass. Same goes for the $10 Pama Tini.

While the Chart House in Stateline is nowhere close to being right on the water, it does have one of the best views of Lake Tahoe. Sunsets from this mountain perch are spectacular.

Drink during happy hour to get the best deals. Although not all drinks are discounted, enough are to at least satisfy the three of us.

The overall favorite of the night was the Fleur D’Lis (Malibu coconut rum, Midori melon liqueur, with a splash of DeKuyper peachtree schnapps, and orange and pineapple juice.)

“It just tastes like summer,” Brenda said.

I ordered the blueberry mojito. Don’t need to do that again. It tasted like syrup and was way too sweet.

The second round had Sue getting the Tuaca Lemon Drop (Tuaca liqueur, Stoli citrus vodka, fresh squeezed lime juice). We all agreed the Tuaca ruined the drink. Save that for hot drinks.

The second round favorite was the Pomegranate Martini (Pearl Pomegranate vodka, DeKuyper pomegranate, splash cranberry juice) that Brenda ordered. But it didn’t come close to the

Fleur D’Lis.

I had the Agave Necta-Zita (Milagro Silver tequila, agave nectar). It was a good margarita, but nothing that wowed any of us.

Moving around and beyond the lake

Chart House’s margarita couldn’t compare to what I had had the day before at Caliente in Kings Beach, where margaritas are their specialty. They range in price from $8-$14, but are $3.95 during happy hour.

Ted, Caliente’s bartender, is that perfect mix of being helpful, conversing with guests, but leaving them alone. He talked a bit out how tequila is the fastest growing spirit – in terms of consumption. And how they all taste different based on soil, aged oak and other factors.

With Sue not drinking tequila, Ted was great with ideas about which margaritas on the menu would be good to substitute vodka. She started off with the Heart-on, which is basically a pomegranate margarita. I had the Strawberry-Basil Margarita.

Definitely liked mine better. The ice is crushed, which is a nice change. It was super refreshing.

We shared the El Matador Margarita. The blood orange in this is a unique flavor that would be worth having again.

We had a taste of the Chupacubra – a combo of rum, peach schnapps, tequila and other stuff. The consistency is like a wet woody, which makes since because Caliente and Riva Grill have the same owner. This was the best by far.

“The margaritas at Caliente are made with pure Agave Nectar and fresh lime juice along with 2 ounces of 100 percent blue Agave, Reposado tequila. Most places use sweet and sour and Mixto tequila. Mixto tequila is the tequila that gave tequila a bad name,” explains Scott Craig.

On a recent trip to Reno, Linda and Frank made a pilgrimage to one of their favorite watering holes (and dinner houses), Louis' Basque Corner.

"Our favorite drink there is Picon Punch, of course, the national drink of the Basques. Although we've sampled Picon at most of the Basque restaurants throughout Nevada, where they're a bar staple, we think Louis' version is somehow more crisp and smooth," Linda said. "Have more than a couple and you'll know how punch became part of the name!"

The stemmed glass instead of a squat, old-fashion glass added to the experience.

According to Louis' new owner, Brian Elcano, 28, who, with his partner Chris Shanks, 26, purchased the restaurant in March from Louis and Lorraine Erreguible, there are many variations of the recipe, but not all call for the grenadine. Picons make up 50 percent of their bar sales.

Here's how to make Picon Punch a la Louis':

• A splash of grenadine

• 1½ ounces of Torani Amer liqueur

• Soda water

• Stir, then float with brandy

• Finish with a twist of lemon

Topa! (That's cheers in Basque.)

I'm ready to go back to the River Ranch Patio at the entrance road to Alpine Meadows on the North Shore. The Tiki Torch ($8) is Bacardi 7, Tiki rum, tropical juices, fresh squeezed lime and touch of blackberry brandy. It was so good and the setting along the Truckee River such a delight, I really wanted another. But I cut myself off because the car keys were in my

pocket.

Sue had the CoCo Mai Tai ($9) and would order it again.

Back in San Francisco for Fourth of July weekend, this time we are drinking at The View – the bar on the 18th floor of the Marriott on Fourth Street. While the view is worth checking out and drinks acceptable, the price ($14 each) for a cosmo and a raspbatini made us stop for the night.

The Slanted Door inside the Ferry Building, though, was a different story. Each cocktail is $11. Mine was so good I didn't want to share even a sip – though I did. I had the French 75 – Dudognon Reserve Cognac, and Prosecco, lemon; served on the rocks.

Sue's cocktail was yummy, too, just not quite as enticing. She had Ginger Limeade – Hangar One Kaffir Lime vodka, ginger, lime; served on the rocks.

What to make at home

The following drinks are ones Brenda Knox created in her Tahoe Paradise kitchen. I may be a little biased in liking the one named after me, but it really is my favorite of the three.

Publisher's Punch

Served martini style with pineapple juice, orange-mango juice, a hint of lime, Ketel One vodka and a splash of Grand Marnier.

Sue's Magic Margarita

Served on the rocks after a vigorous shaking of Ketel One, margarita mix, lime and splash of Grand Marnier.

Creative Cosmo

A cold refreshing cosmos with Ketel One, cranberry juice, lime and two splashes of Grand Marnier. A touch of homemade pomegranate liqueur adds the exclamation point.

Susan Wood, Brenda Knox and Linda Fine Conaboy contributed.

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Opinion: Use Measure S money to pay down debt

To the community,

All of the fussing and feuding over S, B, and R reminds me of a family fighting over money that a rich uncle, who died, has left in a poorly written will. Who will get what?

The dead uncle is S and its off spring B. And of course the ice rink has failed as a revenue source for the city. And R has created more factions that we don't need.



Bill Crawford

In 2000 I wrote the ballot argument against S. I believed then that S was all about the rink. Seems I was right. There's just one S ball field and few "new" post S bike paths.

I think it's time to use the "surplus" tax money and pay down the debt. That should stop the fussing and feuding. And it's time to admit that S is a failure.

Bill Crawford, South Lake Tahoe

Wagner leads ACC after first round

By Dan Hinxman, Reno Gazette-Journal

STATELINE – Jack Wagner found the form that helped him win the 2006 American Century Championship and rode it the first-round lead at sunny Edgewood Tahoe Golf Course on Friday.

Wagner, known for his work as a soap opera actor, finished with 29 points in the modified Stableford event, five more than both 2007 champion Chris Chandler, a former NFL quarterback, and recently retired NHL star Jeremy Roenick. Mike Modano, the NHL's all-time leading scorer among American-born players, has 20 points and is the only other player at 20 points or better.



Mike Modano's work on his short game Thursday paid off Friday. Photo/Kathryn Reed

“I made a couple putts early, and when you can make a few putts in this tournament it can build your confidence for the whole day,” said Wagner, who birdied his first two holes and shot a 68 on the par-72 course.

The second round begins at 8:05am today with players hitting off both the first and 10th tees.

Read the whole story

Science day teaches youth about Tahoe’s environment

Children are invited to spend Aug. 13 with scientists learning about the unique ecology, function, restoration and preservation of Lake Tahoe.

The 12th annual Children’s Environmental Science Day is a free event sponsored by the UC Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center.

More than 20 interactive science activities hosted by organizations around the region will be available for children ages 6 and up. The day will include interactive science demonstrations by UC Davis scientists, local agency and nonprofit organization staff, and AmeriCorps members. Hands-on activities are designed for the whole family to enjoy.

Get up close and personal with fish and microscopic zooplankton from Lake Tahoe, learn about invasive species in the Tahoe basin, test the water quality of a stream and observe mosquito fish eating their prey. This exciting event will bring together many of our community partners who are

committed to protecting Lake Tahoe and its watershed.

Children's Environmental Science Day is at the Tahoe Center for Environmental Sciences in Incline Village. The Tahoe Center for Environmental Sciences is located on the Sierra Nevada College campus at 291 Country Club Drive in Incline Village, off Highway 28.

For more information, call (775) 881.7560, ext. 7474.

Paddling between watering holes on the shore of Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

First paddles of the season can be problematic. Launching, having all the gear, syncing strokes, using muscles that aren't used to that motion – and white caps.

Luckily, everything went smoothly last Sunday except for the water as we headed back to port. Lake Tahoe has been windy for what seems like all of 2011, with the National Weather Service in Reno constantly issuing wind advisories.

No body of water should be navigated with human power when high winds are howling. Lake Tahoe, though, seems to be particularly precarious because it's in a basin and can create its own weather. Plus, the water is so dang cold.



Human powered watercraft are growing in popularity on Lake Tahoe. Photos/Kathryn Reeed

We wear our lifejackets no matter how close we are to shore and no matter if we can see the bottom.

Wanting to stay close to home, we opted to go out on Tahoe instead of another Sierra lake. And with wild stories told to each of us about kayak trips down the Upper Truckee River this year, we didn’t want to attempt taking the 17-foot canoe on the fast moving, icy waters. (We have a hard enough time on it in calmer waters.)

Launching at the beach of Edgewood Tahoe Golf Course was easy. This weekend it would be impossible to even drive to the clubhouse because of the American Century Celebrity Golf Tournament. But doing the reverse route of what we did would be an option for anyone not wanting to pay to see a little white ball being whacked about.

Our original destination was Lakeland Village because the South Lake Tahoe police boat guys had told me there is food served on shore close to the beach. Silly me thought that would mean alcohol, too. After all, we needed one last day of research for the summer libation story.

No alcohol was available, so back in the canoe we went. Not

far up is Timber Cove Marina – home of Blue Water Bistro.

Lots of people are playing near shore in rented paddleboats, on standup paddleboards and in kayaks.

Others are doing what we want to do – getting a bite to eat and something to drink. This is one of the few places on the South Shore that has lakeside dining.

Last year we were able to paddle under the pier. Not so this year. Lake Tahoe is more full than it has been in recent years.

Beaches are scarce throughout the basin because of the snowpack that has yet to completely melt. But for the last three days the lake level has been pretty consistent at 6,228.35 feet, according to the National Weather Service in Reno. (For comparison, on June 1 the lake was at 6,226.78 feet.)

The legal limit is 6,229.1, which is when water must be released from the dam in Truckee that sends water to Reno and points east. The natural rim, though, is 6,223 feet.

Water officials say the lake won't hit the legal limit and that the numbers will start heading down soon.

We take our time going back. It's a bit of an architectural tour going past lakefront hotels, then the gated community of Tahoe Meadows, then back into Nevada.

Lakeshore Lodge looks like the place to be. If only the "private party" signs weren't on the beach facing us.

For years Discount Tire has rented out the lodging property for its employees. The economy doesn't seem to be affecting the tire guys. Three volleyball courts are set up, multiple bars, a stage, and flags from several countries are on the water's edge.

Most boaters are friendly– letting us cross the channel as they are going in. We do have the right-of-way, but not everyone knows the rules of the water.

However, the guys at Ski Run ferrying people to and from the marina and private boats could slow it down a bit. A wave of the hand doesn't negate the large wake created from going more than 5 mph.

Houses of varying sizes dot the shoreline. Some are cabins, several are larger – but no mansions on this stretch. But they all have incredible views.

The cross in Mount Tallac is striking with the amount of snow this time of year. White stuff dots other peaks, too.

Passing Lakeside Marina I pay attention to the waves hitting both sides of the canoe. So much for hitting the wake head-on. The breaker protects the boats in the marina, but is a bit disconcerting when in a canoe. Paddle harder, I tell Sue. That was the only part of the voyage that wasn't fun. But it's not a long stretch by any means.

The odd shaped roofline of Edgewood's clubhouse is visible. We paddle on. We know mojitos are in our future.

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Partial version of Dream Act bill on Brown's desk

By Torey Van Oot, Sacramento Bee

Legislation that would extend more scholarship opportunities

to college students who are undocumented immigrants was approved by the state Senate today.

Assembly Bill 130, one of two “Dream Act” bills under consideration in the Legislature this year, would allow undocumented immigrants who currently qualify for in-state tuition to apply for scholarships funded with private donations. The bill, by Assemblyman Gil Cedillo, D-Los Angeles, was approved by the Senate on a 26-11 vote.

Sen. Anthony Cannella, R-Ceres, was the only Republican to vote in favor of the bill.

The group of students targeted by the bill, which is not limited to undocumented immigrants, represents a small segment of the overall student population at California colleges and universities.

The second “Dream Act” measure, Assembly Bill 131, would make undocumented immigrant students eligible for publicly funded financial aid, including Cal Grants. It has yet to come up for a full floor vote in the upper house.

Read the whole story