Tahoe artist takes a swing at creating golf icons

By Kathryn Reed

Super-sized golf balls are cropping up around the South Shore.

The first two went in Tuesday at Edgewood Tahoe and Zephyr Cove Resort, with a third to be installed late Thursday afternoon at Harrah's Lake Tahoe. Two more will appear this weekend – one at Lake Tahoe Golf Course and the other at Heavenly Village.

South Tahoe artist Carole Beller is using her skill at creating artwork that looks like granite to dress up town for this week's American Century Celebrity Golf Tournament. She's so good the balls even feel like granite.



Carole Beller's golf art is popping up around the South Shore. Photo/Kathryn Reed

"You can't use real granite because it would be too heavy," Beller told *Lake Tahoe News* as she was still working on the third ball.

Still, they weigh about 400 pounds. They are made out of cement, steel and foam.

The whole contraption is 9-feet-tall, with the ball being 5-feet in diameter. Instead of sitting on a tee, the balls are atop what looks like a tree trunk.

Being the only house on the street allows Beller the space to spread her project out. A group of friends has been helping her get everything together so the artwork coincides with this week's tournament in Stateline.

The Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority commissioned the works of art.

"We think that the 'promotional' art achieves several objectives: celebrate and increase awareness of a specific event through an artistic interpretation, (and) promote one of our passions," LTVA Executive Director Carol Chaplin told *Lake Tahoe News*. "

This artwork is a work in progress, is how Chaplin described it. The first pieces were the oversized bicycles that cropped up as the Tour de California was about to start on the South Shore. More is likely at different times of the year for various events.

Opinion: Interior appropriations bill's extinction rider is bad

By Elly Pepper, Natural Resources Defense Council

Have you ever tried to explain extinction to a kid? It’s not easy. You’ll inevitably get questions like: “There isn’t even one?” “Couldn’t they come back some day?” “So I won’t ever get to see one?” They just can’t fathom that something could be completely erased from nature.

I can see where they’re coming from – the permanence of extinction is hard to wrap your head around. And it’s what makes it so disturbing that the GOP is messing with a law that prevents extinction in a must-pass budget bill.

Indeed, the 2012 House Interior Appropriations bill contains a rider that would bar all new listings of endangered species and critical habitat designations (p. 8), but allow the delisting and downlisting of species. While Rep. Dicks, D-Wash., attempted to strike this harmful provision during the Appropriations Committee markup yesterday, his amendment failed by a vote of 23-26 (notably, thre Republicans – Reps. Charlie Dent of Pennsylvania, Rodney Frelinghuysen of New Jersey, and Frank Wolf of Virgina – crossed party lines to support endangered species).

Next stop: a vote by the full House.

In defending the extinction rider, Republicans claim that they’re just trying to modify the Endangered Species Act to make it more effective and more manageable for the Fish and Wildlife Service to implement. Then why does the provision prevent any new species from being protected and prohibit the Fish and Wildlife Service from doing its job?

Call me crazy, but that sounds like an attempt to make the Act as ineffective as possible!

Read the whole story

Tahoe mineral company looking for gold in SoCal

Siga has successfully renegotiated its previously announced acquisition of the Big Bear Mining Claims group in San Bernardino County. Siga will now conduct an initial sampling and mapping program to verify the significant gold and silver mineralization of the Big Bear Claim group, as indicated in previous reports.

Siga Resources Inc., founded in 2007, is based in South Lake Tahoe. Siga is a mineral resource exploration and development company.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Benefit for Squaw Valley Community of Writers

By Whitney Mountain, Sacramento Bee

Tucked away near Lake Tahoe, a small town with a big history holds one of this country's worst-kept literary secrets: the Squaw Valley Community of Writers.

Since 1969, the Community of Writers has been considered among the country's most renowned literary conferences, along with the Sewanee and the Bread Loaf writers conferences. The literary troupe holds three genres of workshops every year:

one for screenwriters; one for fiction, nonfiction and memoirs; and most important to Sacramento, one for poetry.

On Friday, the Crocker Art Museum will serve as the location of the annual Community of Writers Poetry Reading Benefit.

For more than 20 years, the benefit was held in San Francisco, but this year the organization opted for a change.

Read the whole story

Author at Regan Beach

Scott Lankford, author of “Tahoe Beneath the Surface”, presents an illustrated talk on the stories of some of Tahoe’s most notable residents and visitors over the years.

The event takes place on the lawn at Regan Beach in South Lake Tahoe on July 15 at 7:30pm.

Bring a blanket, lawn chair, and picnic dinner or buy a specially priced meal at Regan Beach Lake Taco. There is no admission fee for the event.

For more information, call (530) 542.4637.

Author to speak at Regan

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Combo ski-parking pass available for Heavenly passholders

By Kathryn Reed

Harrah’s may have a few more empty parking spaces this winter. That’s because Heavenly Mountain Resort and South Lake Tahoe are partnering to offer skiers a deal to park at the garage near the gondola.



Until now Heavenly passholders had to pay the hourly rate of $3.75 or $25 daily rate – or park free at the casino and walk over if they wanted to access the mountain via the gondola.

On Tuesday the City Council approved a deal where Heavenly season passholders could park midweek for $229 or seven days for $299. This will be good for the length of the ski season. It compares to the winter monthly rate of $175. (The summer monthly rate is $50.)

The details of the parking pass should to be worked out next week between the entities.

The plan is the ski pass will have something on it indicating it is also a parking pass. This makes it non-transferable because it will have a specific person's name and picture on it.

Still to be figured out is if the pass has a magnetic strip to raise the arm to allow the vehicle to exit or some other way for people to leave the garage.

The garage has 420 regular spaces and 90 overflow. The plan is sell no more than 200 midweek passes and a maximum 150 unlimited passes.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Tahoe Area Mountain Biking Association is trying to keep track of trail conditions via its website.

• The fourth annual Heritage Trail tour of 18 museums from North Lake Tahoe to Roseville is Aug. 6-7. For reservation and information, call (530) 889.6500.

• Camp Richardson has a speakers' series going on this summer.

• Steve Mokrohisky, assistant Douglas County manager, has been appointed to the top job by commissioners now that Michael Brown has moved on.

• The Ritz-Carlton at Northstar foreclosure sale scheduled for Monday is now set for July 25. Hotel operations continue as normal.

Who's the best among pro sports players at golf?

By Brian Nordli, Reno Gazette-Journal

STATELINE – Ask almost any athlete at the American Century Championship celebrity golf tournament which pro athletes are the best at golf, and they will say their own.

Except the basketball players.

On a court, basketball players are in full control of their long, gangly bodies. They make sprinting end-to-end and dunking look like a stroll in the park. But put them on the golf course, and well, just look at how Charles Barkley swings a golf club.

"You know, basketball to me, they're the best athletes in the world," said John Smoltz, a former MLB pitcher with the fifth-highest odds to win the ACC, which formally begins Friday. "But the height is a little bit of an issue, I think."

This week, current and former athletes in professional basketball, baseball, hockey and football gather to play on

the Edgewood Tahoe Golf Course. They are all-stars and champions, but on the course, which sport produces the best golfers is about as clear as where Barkley's next shot will land.

"The football players and baseball players seem to dominate this thing, and hockey, too," said Deron Williams, a guard for the New Jersey Nets. "We got to change it, it isn't going to be me, but we have to change this thing."

Hockey, baseball and football all have ACC winners in their ranks, as well as favorites to win this year's Stableford-format tournament.

Basketball has never won, and its best golfers, Michael Jordan and Ray Allen, are long shots at best.

Read the whole story

Opinion: S. Tahoe Aspens project threatened by state

Publisher's note: ***The following comments were read into the record at the July 12, 2011, South Lake Tahoe City Council meeting. They are reprinted with permission. The council could not comment because the issue was not on the agenda, but instead brought up under public comments.***

Honorable members of the City Council, members of the city staff,

My Name is Greg Whittaker and I am the owner of the property where the affordable housing project known as the Aspens has been planned to be built.

The Aspens:

Has all financing in place.

Has all regulatory approvals in place and Construction could start in the middle of August.

It will create a lot of local jobs.

It will generate $160,000 in property tax revenue annually.

Gov. [Jerry] Brown’s decision to eliminate redevelopment agencies poses a legal issue that has threatened the project.

Without an execution of the loan agreement authorized in the Resolution and Commitment given by the City Council, the credits and bonds will have to be returned in 60 days and and the project will be effectively ended.

The most important issue is the distinction of the word “new” in the legislation.

Is the loan agreement a new contact, or a new obligation, or is it a documentation of the terms, conditions and restrictions already specified, written out and agreed upon in the Resolution and Commitment?

The language of the resolution itself creates a commitment and an obligation with specific terms and conditions. It authorizes and directs the city manager to act on it.

The resolution says, “The city manager or his/her designee(s) are hereby authorized and directed, to execute, in the name of the applicant, the Loan Agreement, the Regulatory Agreement, and such other documentation reasonably necessary to document the loan between the Agency and Pacific West (PacWest) Communities, Inc.”