South Tahoe to celebrate Earth Day

South Lake Tahoe is celebrating Earth Day on April 26 at Bijou Community Park from 10am to 4pm.

There will be live music and opportunities to learn about ways to counteract global climate change through recycling and composting, alternative energy, water conservation, sustainability, and reducing our ecological footprint.

The event is free.

Trove of trails to explore above Genoa



Plenty of views abound around nearly every bend of the Genoa Loop Trail. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

GENOA – People pay to go on hiking excursions all the time. Usually it's for a guide or a permit. Last week it was for a vet bill.

AJ and Cody thought it would be a great idea to go about 100 feet off the trail. The worst we thought is they would end up at the bottom of the canyon. Wrong. AJ came back with a gash that the next day required surgery. (She is doing fine, despite the cone and not being allowed to play for two weeks.)

It's just one of those things when you go off into the woods. There are sharp items. Was it a rock, a tree limb, part of a stump or something else? We'll never know.

But what it showed the seven of us is the necessity to have a well-stocked first aide kit. Between those who brought survival supplies we were able to come up with multiple items

to cover the wound of my four-legged daughter. Of course she wanted nothing to do with it so she ended up walking out without the torn skin being covered. She was on leash by this time.

Rosemary and I had attended a wilderness survival lecture last summer. Last weekend's experience got me thinking that maybe on all hikes or snowshoes I should carry my poles. We could have made a litter to carry AJ out of the woods. And it would be easy to put duct tape on the poles – because duct tape can be used in so many ways.

The hike

Carson Valley is becoming a hiking Mecca, with new trails being created all the time. Another route is being dedicated this weekend.

A week ago seven people – me, Sue, Suzy, Rosemary, Brenda, Danielle and Frank – and two dogs set off to do the 8.2-mile Genoa Loop. It has about 2,500-feet of elevation gain, which seemed to all be at the get-go starting from Carson Street.

The entire route is single-track. Luckily we all talk loud enough to allow for conversation with at least the person behind or in front of us.

It doesn't take long for expansive views of the Carson Valley to unfold. The land below looks fertile.

There are spots along the way where the trail splits, but they meet up again at the same point. Our guess is these are good passing opportunities for equestrians or mountain bikers. However, we only saw other hikers and some runners on the trail. And a sign along the way says the terrain is challenging and not recommended for horses or cyclists.

A short section is shale. Most of it is hardpack dirt. Portions are layered with pine needles. As it gets warmer and

drier, this trail is likely to be dusty, and definitely hot in the summer. Even on the first Sunday of April it was rather warm and nice to have as much shade as we did.

What surprised most of us was the abundance of water in various sections. This was perfect for the dogs.

Two other big surprises greeted us. One was Genoa Falls, which is about 12- to 15-feet high. It fell from a sheer rock face. Moss covered the lower rocks as bamboo sprung up along the creek.

Around a corner we came across a “Star Wars” pillowcase and a hard copy of “Field Guide to Trees and Shrubs” by George A. Petrides. What they were doing there we don’t know.

Rosemary added a compass to the collection and Suzy a pink flamingo keychain from Tampa.

“Lush” was the word Rosemary used to describe some areas of the route. And it’s not a word usually associated with the Carson Valley.

We scampered through Genoa, Schoolhouse and Sierra canyons along this trek. One misstep and it could be a long hike back to the trail.

While plenty of pine trees remind us we are still in the Sierra, the terrain was still much different than being in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

In a normal winter this trail would still have snow on it. A few patches remained on the side. There are other routes off this trail to explore on another day when my four-legged hiking buddy is able to explore again.

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Getting there:

• From South Lake Tahoe, take Highway 50 east. Turn right onto Kingsbury Grade. Turn left on Foothill Road. Park near the Snowshoe Thompson statue – on the right – in Genoa.

Trail is across the street, up Carson Street.

• Park on Carson Street or on Centennial Drive for out and back hikes.

Other:

• Carson Valley Trails Association is online.

• Not all trails are recommended for mountain bikes or equestrians.

• Dogs are allowed.

• Clear Creek Trail grand opening is April 13 – 10am-3pm, 14-mile equestrian led tour to Knob Point and back. From 3-6pm is a 14-mile mountain bike led tour to Knob Point and back. Events start at Jacks Valley Trailhead on the west side of Jack Valley Elementary School.

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Opinion: Developing raw land would harm North Shore

By Ann Nichols

East West Partners, you remember them, the Colorado developers that bought Truckee when no one was looking? Think Ritz

Carlton, Old Greenwood and the Grey's Crossing bankruptcies filed in 2010.

Just when you thought it was safe, now in partnership with Sierra Pacific Industries who owns the land, they are back currently calling themselves Crew. An application has been filed with Placer County to begin the process to build clustered development (whatever that means) on top of the ridge on 112 acres inside the Lake Tahoe Basin. It's called the Martis Valley West project. You know Highway 267 at the top of Brockway Summit? Take a left on Mt. Watson Road (aka Fiberboard Freeway), go in about a mile and you are there. The development will spill over the ridge into Martis Valley with a total of 760 units and 6.6 acres of commercial.

Currently the acreage is zoned forest, but East West wants to change that zoning to allow residential development. They aren't saying how many units will be inside the basin. We've heard 200. How much land will be covered, how many trees will be cut down, how much commercial will be located there or how tall the buildings will be? East West says they will give us the details at a later date, but they want the zoning changed now. Wrong. Tahoe deserves a standalone detailed application first.

This expansion of the urban boundary at Tahoe could be allowed thanks to TRPA's Regional Plan update. Remember TRPA's no growth guarantees? The justification is a conservation easement on 6,000 acres outside the Lake Tahoe Basin on the east side of Highway 267. I guess if you save land in New York City you get to build at Tahoe. Talk about a dangerous precedent?

In 2011, East West Partners announced a partnership with KSL Capital Partners, the owners of Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows. We can certainly look forward to more bad ideas in the future unless we stop this now. We only have until April 28 to comment on the Notice of Preparation for the

environmental report. There will be other opportunities to comment and save an important North Shore recreation area between Kings Beach and Tahoe City. Save Mt. Watson Road. Let's get on it.

Check it out the project online.

Here is evidence of my previous statements.

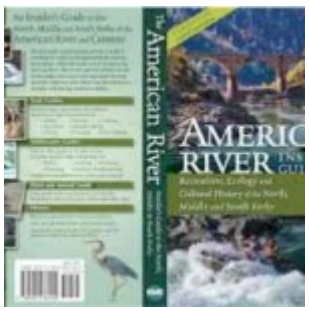
Ann Nichols is president of the North Tahoe Preservation Alliance, a 44-year resident and California-Nevada Realtor.

American River guidebook full of information

By Sam McManis, Sacramento Bee

A ceramist by profession, and by passion, Eric Peach often leaves his home studio in Auburn, to venture down into the American River Canyon, looking for inspiration in the rushing white water, the winding trails, the abundant wildlife and bountiful flora of a thriving ecosystem.

You can see the result in his works, ranging from playful river otters to fish sculptures to those psychedelically hued fire belly newts.



But you can also see Peach's love for California's American River and its foothills in bookstores and at outdoor retailers. The third edition of "The American River: Insider's Guide to Recreation, Ecology and Cultural History of the North, Middle and South Forks" ($24.95, Protect American River

Canyons, 416 pages) recently was released, all proceeds going to the nonprofit Protect American River Canyons, the organization that sponsors the American River Confluence Festival and other fundraising events.

Peach, 64, and wife Paula enlisted no fewer than 44 writers and editors, and 30 photo and graphics contributors, to completely revamp the second edition, published a decade ago. This time around, 15 trails were added, as were scores of new and updated rafting routes, including a new stretch from the confluence down to Rattlesnake Bar. There's also a complete digest of plants and trees, birds, reptiles and mammals, as well as an exhaustive history of the area, from the Indian settlements up to the now-revived attempts to dam the river.

Read the whole story

Study: Women not interested in investing

By Debbie Carlson, Chicago Tribune

Whether it's relying on a spouse to handle household finances, being afraid of doing something risky with their money or just not feeling confident, women are less likely to take an active role in investing their savings.

It's not just older women who have taken a hands-off approach; studies by investment firms and anecdotal evidence from financial advisers said women of all ages are less likely to invest.

A study last fall from Fidelity Investments showed that only

19 percent of women said they hold primary responsibility for long-term retirement decisions, but this is up from 9 percent in 2011. Twenty-four percent of boomer women said they make primary decisions on day-to-day finance, but only 12 percent of Generation Y women said they are in charge.

This is despite another study last year from insurance firm Allianz Life, saying that “bag lady” fears – that is, ending up broke and homeless – persist whether the woman is single, married or divorced, or whether she is low-income or wealthy. According to the survey, 57 percent of women said the thought of running out of money in retirement keeps them up at night.

Read the whole story

Mixed outlook on jobs if Nev. margin tax passes

By Ryan Frank, Las Vegas Sun

If Nevada voters approve a new business tax in November, the state would lose nearly 9,000 private sector jobs and $413 million in employee wages, according to new research funded by the Coalition to Defeat the Margin Tax Initiative.

But those losses of jobs and wages could be offset, partially or entirely, by growth in public sector employment paid for by the tax measure. The growth in public sector jobs depends on how the Legislature decides to spend the money, said Jeremy Aguero, principal analyst at Applied Analysis who conducted the research.

Read the whole story

Soroptimist hands out $25,000 in grants

Eight local organizations are sharing $25,000 thanks to Soroptimist International of South Lake Tahoe.

The organizations and associated projects receiving money include:

Tahoe Youth & Family Services, The Girls Project and the Drug Store Project; Tahoe Arts Project, Performing Arts in our Schools; Tahoe Tallac Association, Valhalla 2014 Music on the Lawn; El Dorado County, Ag in the Classroom; Girls on the Run, South Lake Tahoe Program; El Dorado County Search & Rescue, Arizona Vortex Tripod; Live Violence Free; Christmas Cheer, Christmas Toy and Food Distribution Project 2014.

Soroptimist raises money for these grants through its annual wine tasting event in November.

Study: Coffee linked to lower risk of liver cancer

By Karen Kaplan, Los Angeles Times

In their continuing quest to prove that coffee is indeed a health food, medical researchers analyzed the health records of nearly 180,000 Americans and determined that the ones with a daily java habit were less likely to get a common type of

liver cancer than their less-caffeinated counterparts.

The study, presented this week at the American Association for Cancer Research's annual meeting in San Diego, may not be enough to get your coffee break covered by your health insurance, but the results were striking.

Compared with people who drank no more than six cups of coffee per week, those who drank one to three cups per day were 29% less likely to develop hepatocellular carcinoma, or HCC, which is the most common form of liver cancer. Serious coffee drinkers – those who downed four or more cups per day – were 42 percent less likely to be diagnosed with the disease.

Read the whole story

Judge: Treatment of Calif. mentally ill inmates 'horrific'

By Sam Stanton and Denny Walsh, Sacramento Bee

Following weeks of graphic court testimony and chilling videos of inmates writhing in pain as they were blasted with pepper spray, a federal judge has found that the use of force against mentally ill inmates in California prisons is unconstitutionally harsh.

Citing the "horrific" videos he viewed during hearings last fall and a wealth of other evidence, U.S. District Judge Lawrence K. Karlton on Thursday ordered state officials to continue revising the use-of-force procedures deployed against the state's 33,000 mentally ill prisoners and to limit the use

of solitary confinement as a means of disciplining such inmates.

The 74-page order cites the “overall significant progress” that the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation has made in modifying its use-of-force policies, especially new limits on how and when pepper spray can be used against mentally ill inmates.

Read the whole story

Driving service caters to locals, tourists

Shanen and Dale Ruppel have opened Alpine Sierra Tours & Shuttle Service to provide locals and tourists an alternative to driving themselves to various places in the Lake Tahoe region and beyond.

The charter service is provided 24/7, while tours usually start at 8am. Vehicles include a Honda Pilot EXLthat seats seven, Lincoln Navigator Ultimate seating six, and an ADA compliant shuttle bus for 13.

Trips include the entire basin, going to Sacramento and Reno – including the airports, Carson City and the Bay Area. (The company is licensed in California and Nevada.) Service is also available for groups, such as wedding parties.

“If you need to get somewhere, we will take you. We can be your designated driver and your private driver. We also provide concierge services,” Shanen Ruppel told *Lake Tahoe News*. “We can pick up mail, beer, whatever you need, referrals

to restaurants and entertainment. We provide car seats for kids, phone chargers, and iPod connectors.”

Pricing depends on the number of hours, number of people and extent of the service.

For more info, call 530.544.4646, email alpinesierratours@gmail.com or go online.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report