Squaw Valley hosts kite competition

Squaw Valley celebrates the art and sport of kite flying as host to the nation’s highest altitude organized kiting festival at High Camp, elevation 8,200 feet.

Gigantic flying creatures, professional kite flyers, kite-making and face painting for the kids, and the live music are all part of the high-flying enjoyment of the 10th Annual Soaring Kites & Music Festival on July 9.

The festival brings members of regional and national kite organizations to Squaw Valley’s mountaintop to launch dozens of elaborate and colorful kites. The Soaring Kites & Music Festival also includes live music, kite-making workshop for kids and professional kite flying demonstrations.

Kite flying, which originated in 5th century BC in China, is a popular pastime and a competitive sport.

The Soaring Kites & Music Festival is from noon to 5pm and the kite-making workshop will run from 1-3pm.

Guests are invited to bring their own kites or purchase kites at the festival.

For more information about the Soaring Kites & Music Festival, call (530) 452.4000.

Woman dies falling from Stateline casino balcony

Investigators are trying to figure out if the death of a Placerville woman at the Horizon casino in Stateline was intentional or accidental.

The body of Loretta Sangara, 68, was found July 1 at 10am. Douglas County sheriff's officials say she fell from a 14th floor balcony.

Deputies are not releasing further details.

The investigation is continuing.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Chris Proctor has been named director of Tahoe Center for Orthopedics.

• Michael Munoz, 60, of Placerville has been appointed to the California State Athletic Commission.

• The second annual Tahoe Trail Skills College is July 29-31. Click here for more information.

• Truckee-based Van Dyke Law Group has a new website with information on their area of practice and their recent cases.

• The Washoe County Sheriff’s Office celebrates 150 years of service and community partnership this year.

• Here is Caltrans’ roadwork schedule for next week in El Dorado and Placer counties. This is the Sierra roadwork schedule.

Plastic found in fish could end up in food chain

By Tony Barboza, Los Angeles Times

Southern California researchers found plastic in nearly 1 in 10 small fish collected in the Pacific Ocean in the latest study to call attention to floating marine debris entering the food chain.

The study published this week by scientists at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego estimated that fish in the middle depths of the northern Pacific Ocean are ingesting as much as 24,000 tons of plastic each year.

Although the research found a lower percentage of plastic-fouled fish than previous studies, it is the latest to quantify how many fish are eating marine garbage — most of it confetti-sized flecks of discarded plastic — that has accumulated in vast, slow-moving ocean currents known as gyres.

The results came from a 2009 voyage a group of graduate students made to the so-called Pacific Garbage Patch, an area with a high concentration of fragments of floating garbage about 1,000 miles off the California coast. Researchers cast

nets into the water and collected 141 fish, mostly lanternfish measuring just a few inches, and took them to a laboratory in San Diego to dissect.

Scientists found plastic debris in 9.2 percent of their stomachs, much of it broken down into multicolored fragments smaller than a human fingernail. However, they believe the actual proportion of fish that have consumed plastic is significantly higher.

Read the whole story

Opinion: House should pull the plug on water grab

Publisher's note: ***This editorial is from the June 24, 2011, Sacramento Bee.***

The first daunting fact about California water is that 75 percent of the state's water supply comes from north of Sacramento while 75 percent of the demand comes from south of the region.

The other daunting fact is that the water system is dramatically oversubscribed – paper allocations of water are larger than actual availability in most years.

As a result, water-thirsty interests are constantly seeking to secure supplies from others, through proper means (such as water marketing) or less savory methods. The latter is at play with House Resolution 1837, proposed by Reps. Devin Nunes of Tulare, Kevin McCarthy of Bakersfield and Jeff Denham of Atwater. It would explicitly favor one set of water users –

farmers on the west side of the southern San Joaquin Valley – over all the others.

So what has been the reaction of Northern California members of Congress?

Oddly, Rep. Tom McClintock, R-Elk Grove, has promoted the bill as chairman of the House Water and Power Subcommittee.

But every other Northern California member of Congress opposes it.

Read the whole story

$141,000 in grants doled out to 18 Truckee-Tahoe groups

Tahoe Mountain Resorts Foundation recently bestowed $141,000 in grants to 18 organizations throughout Truckee and North Lake Tahoe.

Adventure Risk Challenge was this year's top recipient, receiving $30,000.

TMRF presents a number of grants and scholarships annually to organizations aiding environmental, educational, athletic, and cultural endeavors. Adventure Risk Challenge spearheads a unique 40-day program designed to support youth to gain essential leadership and academic skills. The Boys and Girls Club of North Lake Tahoe, Girls on the Run, and the Truckee Trails Foundation also received grants.

Additional grant recipients included Disabled Sports USA of Far West; Gateway Mountain Center; Get in the Act! Arts in

Action; Jazz Artist in Residence; Northstar XC-Snowshoe Series; Project Mana; Sierra Senior Services; Tahoe Family Solutions; Tahoe Rim Trail Association; Tahoe Women's Services; Trails and Vistas; Truckee River Watershed Council; Kidzone; and the Northstar Concert Series & Autumn Food and Wine Festival.

The mission of Tahoe Mountain Resorts Foundation is to serve as a catalyst for community enhancement by providing leadership and funding which will enrich the quality of life in the Truckee–North Tahoe region through cultural, environmental, educational and charitable pursuits.

Newsom leading effort to bring Olympics to Tahoe

Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom has been named chairman of the committee trying to bring the Winter Olympics back to Lake Tahoe.

The California Winter Games Committee is working with Nevada to have the Tahoe-Reno area host the games in 2022.

California has been a little late to join the effort, having done so just earlier this year. Whereas, Nevada has been in the game for years.

State Sen. Ted Gaines, R-Roseville, is one of several honorary chairmen.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Airline owner wants to put Lake Tahoe back on flight map

By Kathryn Reed

In less than a year, commercial air service is planned for Lake Tahoe Airport.

Mike Zeid, who runs Tahoe Air Express, resumed business operations at the South Lake Tahoe airport Friday with the first charter flight arriving about 9am. He is in the process of filling out the paperwork for the FAA and National Transportation Safety Board to be certified to carry more than the current limit of nine passengers. The airport also must work with the feds to make this a reality.

Zeid wants 30-seat planes to fly to the South Shore.



Mike Zeid directs his pilot July 1 where to stop on the tarmac at Lake Tahoe Airport. Photos/Kathryn Reed

This airport once had commercial service and Zeid was involved then. In the 1970s he operated Ram Airlines, which had flights in and out of South Lake Tahoe.

His business is based in Henderson, where many of the flights are scenic tours to the Grand Canyon out of McCarran International Airport in Las Vegas.

City Manager Tony O'Rourke wants to see how Zeid's service works, saying, if they can't fill a plane with nine seats, a larger plane has little chance for success.

The Beechcraft Premier that landed July 1 on the inaugural flight is sleek and quiet. The six-seater has plenty of legroom. Cargo space is ample for skis and golf clubs.

The glass cockpit is mostly digital, with few gauges that most people would be accustomed to seeing.

New, this plane would cost about $6 million.

In the fleet are two prop jets that seat nine people, with two more coming. Zeid said, "We'll add as we go."

What needs to be done

"Once they get the certificate upgraded and we bring in 30 passengers, they will redo the terminal building and have space for us," Zeid told *Lake Tahoe News*.

At that time the planes will access the main terminal, which today is mostly used as a pseudo city hall. For now, the charter customers will use the fixed base operations that everyone else uses.

"Before we seriously discuss commercial flights we need improvements (at the airport)," O'Rourke said.

Reinstalling the baggage carousel and ticket counter space are two things on the to-do list.

“If they wanted their passengers to connect to another flight, then we would start looking at other screening and TSA,” airport Director Sherry Miller said.

Zeid is talking about having packages for Europeans who would fly into Las Vegas or San Francisco and then be flown to Tahoe via his airline.

Economic factors

O’Rourke has been talking to Stateline gaming interests, who have lost a large share of travelers who can’t fly here directly, to gauge their desire in having the city bring in air service. He said they are completely behind this endeavor.

The city is already making money off Tahoe Air Express. The plane had to pay a landing fee and then the fuel truck came over.

Once people are here, they inevitably have to spend money. Airplanes also gets people off the roads – which on a weekend like this when the South Shore population is likely to swell to 100,000, is a good thing not only for the environmental, but people’s mental health.

For now, Zeid will fly essentially anywhere as a charter. Price is dependent on how many people are on the plane.

Once scheduled flights are in place, he expects to fly between Tahoe and John Wayne Airport in Newport Beach, Hollywood/Burbank, and one or more of the three main Bay Area airports.

Having lived here before, Zeid knows how economically depressed the area is. He believes providing an easier way for people to get here is one way of generating income for the town. He plans to provide a discount to locals who want to get out of town for a bit.

Gary Air has been providing charter service since last fall

via a smaller aircraft. Trish and Dave Guerrieri had their plane on the tarmac as well Friday. Trish Guerrieri said they have a good working relationship with Zeid and that they are not in direct competition.

Airport Director Miller said about 90 percent of the calls she receives are people in the San Jose area looking for a way to fly to South Lake Tahoe.

Michael Golden, who runs the fixed based operation Mountain West Aviation, said he gets calls weekly if not daily from people in Southern California wanting to fly to South Tahoe.

“I know they will be successful,” Golden said of Tahoe Air Express.

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Leave No Trace Family Hike out of Tahoe City

The Tahoe Rim Trail Association, the Leave No Trace Center for Ethics and Tahoe Mountain Sports is teaming up for an interactive Evening Leave No Trace Family Hike on July 6 from 4–6pm from the Tahoe City North Trailhead. (Directions to the trailhead will be provided upon registration for the hike).

Registration for this hike is available on the Tahoe Rim Trail Association website. This short hike will be full of Leave No Trace activities for all ages led by the Leave No Trace Traveling Trainers.

All three organizations will provide prizes for drawings and take-home gifts.

Bring water, a bagged dinner for your family, and wear comfortable hiking clothes. This hike will not be longer than four miles.

Snow may hamper weekend fun in Eldorado National Forest

The U.S. Forest Service is preparing for the usual Fourth of July crowds that come to the Eldorado National Forest, despite the unusual amount of snow in the higher elevations.

“Many of the popular campgrounds are open and ready for campers,” Eldorado National Forest Recreation Officer Lester Lubetkin said in a statement. “However, the following campgrounds remain closed due to snow or reconstruction: Wrights Lake, Wentworth Springs, Loon Lake, North Shore, Gerle Creek, Pleasant, Red Fir, Woods Lake, and Kirkwood Lake.

The Forest Service is preparing as many campgrounds as possible for holiday use. Current campground and road status is available on the Eldorado National Forest website. Lubetkin says a few more campgrounds may be opened before the weekend and that the Eldorado National Forest website will be updated with any changes.

Snow drifts continue to linger on some popular higher elevation forest roads. The most notable of these is the Mormon Emigrant Trail that’s located between Sly Park and Highway 88. Three feet of snow remains on portions of the road near Highway 88. Expect this road to be closed over the holiday weekend.

If you have fireworks, plan to leave at home. Lubetkin says

you are never allowed to possess or use fireworks in a National Forest, regardless of how wet or dry the conditions are.

Hiking in the Desolation and Mokelumne Wilderness Areas will be more difficult this year due to snow. Snow drifts continue to cover many popular hiking trails and snow is prevalent in many areas of the wilderness.

Camping outside of campgrounds is allowed in many areas of the National Forest. Visitors should keep two things in mind if this is their camping style: 1) they will need to obtain an annual campfire permit before building a campfire and 2) to park their vehicle no more than one car length off a designated road.