Free jazz at Valhalla

The free Summer Jazz in the Park is July 3 from 11am-2pm at the Valhalla Grand Lawn on the South Shore.

This is the newest addition to the Valhalla Summer Festival program.

Bring a picnic basket, lawn chairs and sunscreen and relax near the shoreline of Lake Tahoe.

Carolyn Dolan and Friends will be providing the music.

Obama administration: Keep medicinal pot grows small, controlled

By Susan K. Livio, Star-Ledger

TRENTON – State medical marijuana programs and the people who work for them are not likely to run afoul of federal law if they keep their operations small and controlled, and don't allow growers to create "industrial marijuana cultivation centers," according to an eagerly-awaited letter from the Obama administration.

The letter, obtained by the Star-Ledger Thursday evening, comes more than two months after state Attorney General Paula Dow asked the Obama administration whether New Jersey's future medical marijuana program could violate federal law.

Gov. Chris Christie has said he would delay the program until

the federal government assures him it won’t prosecute anyone employed by the program. Possession and distribution of marijuana is a federal crime, even though 16 states have passed laws making it available to select patients.

In 2009, the Obama administration issued a memo saying it would not devote law enforcement time and money to arresting and prosecuting people involved in legitimate medical marijuana activities. But subsequent memos issued in April seemed to suggest federal law enforcement was not willing to give a blanket immunity to such programs.

U.S. Attorney Paul Fishman sent the letter to Dow Thursday evening. A spokesman for Dow could not immediately be reached for comment.

Read the whole story

Construction on Echo Summit stopped for holiday weekend

Updated: July 1 12:50pm

Construction crews are taking a break from working on Echo Summit from July 1-5 so locals and tourists can travel to and from the South Shore without delays.

Most of the work to replace the crumbling rock wall has been completed. When work resumes July 6 at 7am it will be to replace the guardrail. After the long weekend the hours for work on the guardrail are July 6 7am-5pm, July 7 7am-2pm and July 8 7-10am.



The rock wall on Echo Summit meets safety regulations. Photos/Kathryn Reed

On July 11 work will go on all week starting at 7am and ending no latter than 5pm; with the road open without controls by 10am that Friday.



Damaged guardrails on Highway 50 will be replaced next week.

The wall needs to be painted as well. This includes painting the grout lines.

“Each has to be hand painted. We want it to look good,” Deanna Shoopman, Caltrans spokeswoman, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The coloring will be like the color of the rock so it blends in. The painting is a protective coating.

The other component to the project is to install a weather station in an area that is not visible to drivers. The parts have been delayed and are not expected to arrive until Aug. 15.

– Kathryn Reed

California's poor getting poorer because of state budget

By Cynthia Hubert, Sacramento Bee

Things just got bleaker for California's poorest residents.

CalWORKs, the state's "welfare to work" program, took a major hit in the state budget deal that Gov. Jerry Brown signed into law Thursday, reducing grants to their lowest levels in more than 20 years.

Beginning today, monthly grants will be slashed by 8 percent, to an average of $460 for a family of three. That translates to an income that is less than 30 percent of the amount the federal government has determined is necessary to meet basic needs.

In addition, the new budget reduces the lifetime limit on CalWORKs cash assistance for adults from five years to four, and cuts funding for employment services and child care. Advocates also are lamenting the suspension of the Cal Learn program, which offers aid to pregnant and parenting teens in an effort to keep them in school.

Welfare officials said the cuts will make it more difficult to accomplish the CalWORKs mission of offering temporary cash aid, job training and other help to lift people from public assistance to independence. Some 1.5 million Californians get CalWORKs benefits.

“We are taking people who live on the bare minimum as it is, and they are going back to 1987 levels in funding,” said Nancy O’Hara, assistant director of Yolo County’s Department of Employment and Social Services. “Who can live on that?”

Read the whole story

NDOT to investigate safety of railroad crossings in Nevada

By Martha Bellisle, Reno Gazette-Journal

A state agency has launched a statewide investigation into all Nevada roads with high speed limits and railroad crossings after a *Reno Gazette-Journal* report found that nine months ago another truck almost crashed into an Amtrak passenger train at the site of last week’s deadly crash.

Scott Magruder, spokesman for the Nevada Department of Transportation, said they now plan to do an inventory on roads with speed limits above 60 mph to ensure they “provide the safest rail crossings and roads possible.”

The examination will focus on three Nevada roads that have rail crossings and 70 mph speed limits, and three roads with rail tracks and 65 mph speed limits, Magruder said.

Ron Kaminkow, the engineer on the Amtrak train that was hit

last Friday by a truck, leaving six dead, including the conductor from South Lake Tahoe, and dozens injured, said the Highway 95 site is a dangerous crossing and said he hopes changes are made so that crashes like the one he was in never occur again.

“Given what has happened twice in the last nine months, common sense should prevail,” Kaminkow said. “Simple cost-effective measures would appear to be available, including warning rumble stripes, flashing warning signs well in advance of the crossing and a reduction in the speed limit on the road.”

No one was injured in the near-miss on Sept. 14, 2010. The truck driver hit the intersection’s guard rails instead of the train. The driver was cited by Nevada Highway Patrol for “failure to use due care.”

Read the whole story

K’s Kitchen: Grilled cheese not just for kids

By Kathryn Reed

Grilled cheese might be a staple on children’s menus, but big kids like it, too. In fact, it’s even becoming trendy at some restaurants – though, that would be outside the Lake Tahoe Basin.



I love grilled cheese each summer in my backyard. (We don't fire up the bbq in winter.)

It probably all started as a kid when Mom would make what she called "cooked cheese". This was one slice of bread with cheese on it cooked under the broiler. The cheese would bubble and even get a little charred. That was super yummy.

The grilled cheese of my adult liking involves more of a sandwich – cheese between two slices of bread.

But it doesn't have to be bland like the kids' menu variety. Try different cheeses between those slices. Try different breads.

And then be creative by adding more than cheese. A staple for us is tomato with the cheese. I also like avocado – the three together.

Something we tried last month was Fuji apple slices with the cheese. When I first read about that combo (where I don't remember) I thought it didn't sound good. But then I thought how I often serve apples with cheese and crackers, so why not try this combo on the grill. And then there are people who put cheese on their apple pie – something I will never understand.

The apples added a crunch and sweetness to the grilled cheese that was fun and tasty. Sue said she doesn't need this combo again, but I liked it.

These sandwiches don't take long to cook on the barbecue; so don't walk away from the grill. They are done when the cheese is melted.

Make sure the whole piece of bread is covered with each

ingredient so every bite has everything on the sandwich.

Sue puts a little bit of olive oil on both sides of the bread before grilling. She puts the sandwiches on the main level of the gas grill for a few minutes, then onto the upper level so they don’t burn.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• On June 25 in the Duke Theatre at Lake Tahoe Community College 28 cadets (about 70 percent from Lake Tahoe) graduated from the fire academy.

• Do you have a mountain bike that has yet to hit the trails, a kayak that has never seen Lake Tahoe, a time-share or an in-kind gift your business would like to donate? If yes, contact contact Shannon Skarritt of the Tahoe Rim Trail Association at shannons@tahoerimtrail.org.

• July 25 at 10am is the groundbreaking at South Tahoe High for the student union/joint use project with South Lake Tahoe.

• The August art festival at Ski Run Boulevard in South Tahoe is not happening because not enough artists wanted to participate.

• Barton Memorial Hospital’s Mountain Café is hosting a Christmas in July food drive for Christmas Cheer all month. Drop off nonperishable food items to the café between 7am and 7pm.

Douglas County deputies gear up for July 4

With the 4th of July quickly approaching, Douglas County sheriff's deputies are reminding people the possession and discharge of fireworks in Douglas County are against the law.

Anyone found in violation of the fireworks ordinance face criminal penalties, including a fine of up to $1,000 and/or confinement in the county jail for a period of up to six months.

Additionally,the possession and/or consumption of alcoholic beverages on Nevada Beach on the 4th of July is unlawful. This ordinance came about to reduce the many acts of drunkenness and violence associated with alcohol consumption that were experienced on the beach in previous years. Any violation of this ordinance is an infraction, punishable by a fine up to $1,000.

The entrance to the beach, as well as the beach, will have a heavy presence of law enforcement personnel. Any cooler, backpack, bag, purse or other container that reasonably could carry a vessel containing an alcoholic beverage is subject to inspection and or seizure anywhere inside Nevada Beach Park.

Elks Point Road will be closed at the intersection of Highway 50 no later than 4:30pm. At that time, no vehicles will be allowed to enter lower Elks Point Road unless proof of residency or proof of campsite occupancy is established. Elks Point Road will remain closed until the completion of the fireworks display.

Heavy congestion in the areas of Nevada Beach, Round Hill,

Zephyr Cove, Lower Kingsbury Grade and the Stateline casino core are expected. Lower Lake Parkway may be closed to ingress traffic after the fireworks display should the volume of traffic dictate the need for such a closure. Motorists are cautioned to anticipate delays while traveling in these areas.

Opinion: The dos and don’ts for Fourth of July weekend

By Lisa Herron

With the busy Fourth of July weekend here, the U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit asks residents and visitors to help protect public safety and our environment.

We ask that the public keep wildfire prevention in mind during Fourth of July celebrations. Despite the fact that snow remains abundant in the backcountry and stream and river flow is high, it only takes one out of control campfire or careless individual to ignite a wildfire. Possession of fireworks of any kind, including sparklers, is illegal in the Lake Tahoe Basin. Campfires and charcoal barbecue grills are not permitted on Forest Service beaches or in the general forest.

This year, an additional safety concern is the volume of runoff from snowmelt causing rivers, creeks and waterfalls to run high, fast and cold. Water that you may have crossed easily at one point in the day may not be crossable when you’re ready to return.

The annual alcohol ban will be in effect on Nevada Beach, within Zephyr Cove Resort and Zephyr Shoals (the former

Dreyfus Estate). These areas will be patrolled by law enforcement personnel from the Forest Service, and Douglas County and Carson County sheriff's deputies, and by private security staff. County and state laws also ban the possession or consumption of alcohol on the Truckee River from Tahoe City to Alpine Meadows over the holiday weekend.

If you're parking on the side of the road to access Forest Service facilities, make sure you're parked completely on gravel or dirt, not on vegetation. Parking on vegetation may result in a citation for resource damage, plus there's a chance your car's catalytic converter could spark a fire. Even better, consider public transportation if you're going to the beach that day. The Nifty Fifty Trolley stops at Forest Service beaches along the South and West Shores.

Please keep in mind that in developed recreation sites, such as Kiva, Tallac and the Taylor Creek Visitor Center, parking is allowed only in designated parking spaces, not along the roadway. Do not park where you will block access or narrow lanes, which could impede response in an emergency.

Day-use fees for the Fourth of July at Pope, Baldwin, and Nevada beaches are again $20 this year to cover increased security and facility maintenance costs on the holiday. The beaches have become increasingly popular for Tahoe visitors and locals on the Fourth of July. Please note beaches close when the firework display is over.

Finally, please respect the rules on where dogs are allowed. Dogs are not allowed at designated swim beaches, including Nevada, Pope, Baldwin, Meeks and William Kent. If you are looking for a place to take your leashed dog, try Kiva Picnic Area from Valhalla Boathouse/Pier to Tallac Point in South Lake Tahoe, Echo Lakes on Echo Summit, Zephyr Shoals on the East Shore (the old Dreyfus Estate located north of Zephyr Cove Resort), Hidden and Chimney beaches on the East Shore, Coon Street Beach (at the boat launch) in King's Beach,

Kaspian and 64 Acres in Tahoe City.

For more information, visit the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit website or call (530) 543.2600.

Lisa Herron works for the USFS Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit.

‘Breaking Away’ actress will attend Placerville screening

By Carlos Alcalá, Sacramento Bee

Filmfare’s benefit screening of “Breaking Away” at the El Dorado County Main Library Saturday will include a special bonus: a chance to meet one of the key actors in the classic cycling movie.

Robyn Douglass, who played the love interest Katerina, lives in Placerville and offered to show up.

“I got a call from one of the stars and that was a big surprise,” said Lew Johnson, who has done the Filmfare series at the library for 11 years.

Read the whole story