Snow damage in Tahoe creates work for contractors

By Rob Sabo, Northern Nevada Business Weekly

Engineering and construction firms are scrambling to repair the damage to buildings caused by massive accumulation of snow in the Lake Tahoe Basin last winter.

Jared Krupa, principal engineer for K2 Engineering and Structural Design of Reno, has taken on repair work for a half-dozen structures in and around Lake Tahoe that were damaged by the weight of snowfall. In many cases, Krupa says, buildings were three or more decades old and were not built to today's standards.

However, Paul Laudenschlager, chief executive officer of Alpen Engineering of Truckee, says one of the structures he's repairing is just three years old. Though it was built properly, its roof was not engineered to withstand the weight of more than a dozen feet of snow, and a section of the roof ripped away from the main house under heavy snow.

Areas of failure, he says, typically include deck ledgers that tear away from buildings, or lower roofs that become detached under the extreme weight of water-laden snow building up over time.

"There have been some failures with code-conforming buildings on Echo Summit," Laudenschlager says. "Some of the failures were caused by inadequate engineering or construction. Others were caused by the snow situation itself and the failure of the engineer to take into account the actual situation with the building."

Laudenschlager says some problems arise when engineers fail to consider lateral snow issues, which may exceed seismic and

wind requirements. Walls can inadvertently act as a retaining wall for wind-driven snow, and many caved in this winter, particularly on Echo Summit in eastern El Dorado County.

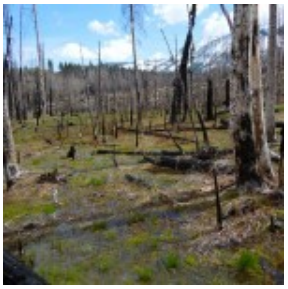
Read the whole story

USFS today begins defending desire to log Angora burn area

Reno Gazette-Journal

Responding for the first time to a lawsuit by conservationists, the U.S. Forest Service says the threat of another major wildfire like the one that destroyed about 250 homes at Lake Tahoe four years ago outweighs any concerns that its plans to log much of what's left of the burned forest would harm a rare woodpecker or other wildlife.

But environmentalists suing to block the post-fire salvage logging on Tahoe's south shore say the agency is exaggerating the fire danger and downplaying the anticipated impacts of logging about half of the 3,000 acres that burned in the Angora fire in June 2007.



Charred

remains of the Angora burn area in May 2011, nearly four years after the fire. Photo/LTN

Lawyers for both sides are scheduled to argue their cases in U.S. District Court in Sacramento today as the opponents try to persuade Judge Garland E. Burrell Jr. to find the logging plan illegal and order the agency to conduct another review of the potential impacts of the project that will cost taxpayers an estimated $3 million.

The Forest Service said in recent court filings that the lawsuit takes issue with "inconsequential, technical deficiencies" in its environmental assessment and formal determination last July that the logging will cause no significant harm to the black-backed woodpecker or anything else.

The critics' "sole interest in unlogged post-fire habitat is not paramount to the other public interests in forest restoration and the promotion of the diversity of wildlife," Justice Department lawyers representing the federal agency wrote in a legal brief filed June 13.

Read the whole story

Meyers next up for controlled burn by USFS

U.S. Forest Service fuels management crews may conduct prescribed fire operations on the south side of the intersection of Pioneer Trail and Highway 50 in Meyers early next week if weather conditions permit.

The project is approximately 30 acres and consists of piles of vegetation and woody materials remaining after fuels reduction efforts aimed at reducing wildfire risk to the community.

The Forest Service is considering staffing a prescribed fire information station during this project. If weather conditions are favorable and fuels management staff decide to proceed with the operation, additional details regarding hours and location for the station will follow. During prescribed fire operations, residents and travelers can expect to see smoke from the area. The Forest Service strives to reduce smoke impacts to the community from prescribed fire operations, while still completing this important wildfire risk reduction work.

Jazz pianist dazzles crowd; key to memorable weekend

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – Few entertainers are better live than recorded. Diana Krall is one of those musicians.

Though her voice ranges from purring sex kitten to raspy

lounge singer, it’s her fingers that are most magical. The way they glide across those ivory keys – lingering, pounding, subtle, but always with such purpose. Oh, the music she creates – at times getting off the bench to put more oomph into the keys.

Jazz really is about the music, with the lyrics secondary.



Diana Krall is all bundled up to ward off the night chill at Harveys on June 18, as Robert Hurst plays the bass. Photos/Kathryn Reed

It’s that free flowing jam session of sorts that makes for songs not always sounding the same each time they are played. They often seamlessly flow into one another without a clear ending or beginning.

Krall returned to Lake Tahoe on June 18 after a four-year break from being part of the Harveys Outdoor Concert Series.

Accompanied by Anthony Wilson, who on guitar seemed like a cross between Leo Kottke and Eric Clapton; Kareem Riggins on drums; and Robert Hurst on bass, the quartet made for a

formidable ensemble.

The most disappointing part was they only played for a little more than hour. A close second was having the carnival at Horizon as a backdrop for the audience. Besides the horrible visual, the noise from it was equally as irritating as the people in the row behind us talking loudly through most of the concert.

The 43-year-old Krall interacted a bit more with the audience compared to 2007.

“The amusement park screams remind me of my husband,” Krall said of husband Elvis Costello.

Krall and Costello have been inspired by a variety of musicians, but both have a fondness for the 83-year-old Mose Allison. They have recorded his songs, with Krall singing “Stop this World” on Friday night. It is on her “The Girl in the Other Room” album from 2004.

And it was the Mose Allison Trio that opened for Krall.

“He really is one of my heroes,” Krall said of Allison.

While many could be overheard asking who Allison was, one woman in the eighth row said, “I’ve been waiting to see him since the 1970s.”

The trio started with a classic syncopated jazz beat. This is what makes jazz so hard to do well – it’s off beat.

His lyrics are quirky, like, “Your mind is on vacation and your mouth is working overtime.”

Allison says his prime inspiration in high school was Nat Cole. Cole is also a big part of Krall’s music. She put out an album in 1996 dedicated to the Nat King Cole Trio.

At Harveys she performed a song inspired by Cole, as well one

of his originals.

As the sun turned a brilliant orange on this chilly night, the Allison trio wrapped up a nearly 40-minute performance to mixed appreciation from the audience.

After all, it was Krall they came to see. While the parking lot of a casino is not the ideal place to listen to any jazz artist, especially one of Krall's caliber, it works. Though I still think the South Shore Room would be a better venue for her.

On this mid-June night it was downright cold. Krall at times sat on her hands to warm her fingers. Dressed in black leather jacket and red scarf, her blonde hair blew in the gentle breeze.

For some of her more somber songs like "Abandoned Masquerade", the carnival behind her was an unfortunate juxtaposition, not to mention at times it drowned out Krall's vocals.

But, still, she held her own. She is clearly getting better with age.

And ideally as the concert series progresses, there won't be any more carnivals or cold nights.

Making a night of it

Staying at the hotel made for a quick getaway to a warm environment. Many others had the same idea as hundreds flowed inside to Harveys after the show.

We had arrived in the late afternoon to make it more than a crash pad. Lounging by the pool finally made it seem like summer had arrived.

Kids running by, telling mom they wanted to go to Sno-Flake made me wonder if these were other locals or tourists who had discovered the best place on the South Shore for French fries.

Having been on the convention center floor plenty of times before, I didn't know the pool and fitness center were there as well. A bar is poolside. I would have fired the bartender if he were my employee. A guest (not one of us – we just overheard it) asked him how he was doing, "I'm bored," he said. Not good. And he had no creative ideas for a fun summer drink, so we stuck with beer.

But it was a great place to relax in the comfy lounge chairs. The pool is warm, but we opted to be warmer by going in the hot tub.

We had dinner reservations in Round Hill at Capisce? – the first, and last, time I need to eat there. What is it with lousy service on the South Shore? The wine was poured so it chugged out of the bottle and splashed on the tablecloth, our glasses were never filled up, the olive oil-balsamic vinegar mixture was placed by me so Sue couldn't reach it, and the used forks from our salad (with mine tasting like a vat of vinaigrette was dumped on it) being put on the tablecloth instead of being given new ones.

I expect more out of all restaurants.

Sue liked her ravioli. My veggie pasta dish was OK.

Back at Harveys, being on the 11th floor meant having a great view of the lake from bed. Waking up to the sun hitting Mount Tallac was stunning. So much snow; it looks like the cross may last until next winter.

As the morning wears on, the clouds dissipate and a bluebird day takes hold.

Boats of all sizes slide across Lake Tahoe. It is mesmerizing to watch.

Out the window to the left below us is the pool. It's morning and a few guys are catching rays. Raising my eye the Heavenly

Village and the mountain beyond it are visible – still with lots of snow.

While the concrete and rebar from the stalled convention center project are obviously in view, the natural scenery from this vantage point distract me so I don't notice the hole.

It's check out time and my stomach is gurgling. It's also Father's Day. We head to the original Red Hut – my Dad's favorite breakfast place. He insisted going there every time he and Mom visited. We toast with coffee – wishing he were there. He died in April 2010.

The nearly 24-hour getaway ends on a great note. The Red Hut's service is impeccable (and is never anything less) and the food delicious.

Future Harveys Outdoor concerts:

July 10 – Alison Krauss and Union Station

July 16 – Lionel Ritchie

July 20 – Soundgarden with The Mars Volta

July 27 – Slightly Stoopid with Rebelution + Shwayze

July 29 – Lady Antebellum with Troy Olsen

July 30 – Steve Miller Band with Dave Mason

Aug. 9 – Phish

Aug. 10 – Phish

Aug. 13 – Big Four

Aug. 19 – Miranda Lambert with Little Big Town

Sept. 10 – Sammy Hagar & The Wabos.

Susan Wood contributed to this story.

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Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Northstar-at-Tahoe opened its mountain bike park June 17. The gondola also accesses hiking trails.

• Austin’s House, the only emergency children’s shelter in rural Northern Nevada, received a $5,000 donation from GE Energy.

• Alpine Meadows won the award for Outstanding Ski Industry Contribution at the Far West Ski Association convention this month.

• Invasive weed pull along the Truckee River in Tahoe City is June 30 from 5:30-7:30pm. Click on flyer for more information.

• *Via* magazine’s July-August issue has a short item on the Tahoe Rim Trail.

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets

in South Lake Tahoe

Shadow (aka Killer because she likes to ‘beat up’ dogs) – is a beautiful 4-year-old shorthair cat.



She is declawed on her front paws and has lived with children. She would like to be an only pet.

Shadow is spayed, microchipped, and vaccinated. She is at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many other dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes.

Call (530) 573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet.

For spay-neuter assistance for South Tahoe residents, go online.

– Karen Kuentz

Tahoe City transit center construction to impact roads

After several delays due to inclement weather, there will be a temporary closure of the River Access Road in Tahoe City as part of construction of the Tahoe City Transit Center. The closure will be on June 22 from 7am-6pm.

The closure will affect access to the adjacent Tahoe City

Public Utility District parking lot, and will be approximately halfway between Highway 89 and the parking area.

The parking area will be unavailable during the closure, but parking will be available on the shoulder of the River Access Road on the Highway 89 side.

The Transit Center is a $7.4 million intermodal transportation hub for residents and visitors to Lake Tahoe's west and north shores. Covering about 2.5 acres on a tract of public land west of Highway 89, the center will serve as a hub for Placer County's Tahoe Area Regional Transit buses. The center will be situated adjacent to hiking and bike paths and provide parking for commuters and visitors to utilize buses to get around on the north and west shores of Lake Tahoe as well as improve pedestrian and bicycle mobility in and around Tahoe City.

Opinion: State budget is more bitter than sweet

Publisher's note: ***This editorial is from the June 28, 2011, Sacramento Bee.***

Judged purely on the straitjacket they've been forced to wear, Democrats were on their way Tuesday toward making the best of some bad budget choices.

Yet judged on California's needs and ambitions, there isn't much to celebrate. Our standing as a state that invests in its future and protects its most vulnerable is about to take a horrible beating.

It could have turned out differently. Republicans and

Democrats could have found common ground on a combination of spending cuts, budget reforms and tax extensions. They could have acted like true public servants.

Yet all the posturing and no-tax pledges and pressure from vested interests poisoned whatever common ground might have existed. This week, Gov. Jerry Brown and his party decided there was no deal to be cut with GOP lawmakers, whose votes were needed for tax extensions. So Democrats came up with a Plan B that cut the minority out of the action. Republicans gained nothing – no pension reforms, no regulatory reforms, no spending cap – even though their constituents will share in the pain.

It is ugliness heaped upon ugliness. More cuts to higher education, driving up tuition costs. More cuts to Healthy Families. Less help for children whose parents are trying to find jobs. Less help for the developmentally disabled. More cuts to the judiciary. The list goes on and on.

Read the whole story

S. Tahoe officers turn attention to Bijou neighborhood

South Lake Tahoe police officers will deploy officers into the Bijou neighborhood June 23 and June 25 as part of the Residential Neighborhood Traffic Enforcement Program.

The areas of enforcement will be Glenwood Way, Herbert Avenue and Heather Lake Road.

“We have had a strong response from our community in the form of phone calls and emails just over the weekend. I cannot call everyone back, but your message was received,” Sgt. Shannon Laney said in a statement. “We are moving forward with this program and hope that it has a positive impact on our community.”

If you would like your street or neighborhood put on our list, call or email Sgt. Shannon Laney at (530) 542.6104 or slaney@cityofslt.us. Leave your name, number and a description of the problem in as much detail as possible, including times of days the problem is most prevalent.

Program aims to ramp up summer volunteerism

By Juan Lopez, Reno Gazette-Journal

Nevada’s volunteerism rate of 20.6 percent in 2009 ranked last in the United States, according to the Corporation for National and Community Service.

The “Summer of Service” program wants to change that.

The Summer of Service was launched in Northern Nevada this month. It is a program aimed at enhancing community service during summer months by serving as a base where people looking to volunteer can find opportunities to do so. The program, which is a branch of NPcatalyst, a local firm that connects potential volunteers with nonprofit organizations, ends Aug. 31.

“It’s been my goal for three or four years now to address the

low volunteerism rate in Nevada," said Pete Parker of NPcatalyst. "It's always bothered me because we live in a great, tight-knit community."

Parker said one of the underlying problems with volunteerism in Nevada is that the organizations offering opportunities fail to reach out to the community.

Read the whole story