Harvesting cray fish may improve Tahoe's clarity

By Jeff Delong, Reno Gazette-Journal

The millions of crayfish skittering along the bottom of Lake Tahoe offer a promising economic opportunity and, if reduced in number, a possible chance to help improve the lake's threatened clarity.

That's the central message from a Yerington man who proposes a commercial venture to harvest crayfish on the lake's Nevada side.

If successful in changing state law and obtaining permission from all necessary regulatory agencies, Fred Jackson could begin pulling crayfish from Tahoe and selling them to restaurants and food wholesalers sometime next year.

"We want to see if we can make a difference for the lake's clarity and make a little money on the side," said Jackson, 47.

Crayfish, also known as crawdads, are not native to Lake Tahoe. The Tahoe area's first crayfish, believed to have come from the Klamath River, were introduced into Marlette Lake in 1895, according to a study prepared by scientists at University of Nevada, Reno and University of California, Davis.

Other introductions followed, and by 1932, crayfish were "thriving in the lake and its tributaries," the study said.

Their numbers quickly skyrocketed. In 1967, an estimated 55 million crayfish lived in Tahoe. Today, the number is estimated at 220 million or more.

Catching and selling crayfish – a Cajun delicacy – just sounds

like a good idea, Jackson said.

Read the whole story

Wine event combines drinking and learning

Winemaker Stephen Tebb from Robert Craig Winery will discuss the science and art of winemaking from the soil to the glass on June 16 at 6pm at the Tahoe Center for Environmental Sciences, 291 Country Club Drive, Incline Village (on the campus of Sierra Nevada College).

With an emphasis on mountain-grown fruit, he will discuss how the geology, geography and climate affect the type and style of wine produced. Tebb will go through the various stages of wine production from harvest parameters to fermentation dynamics to cooperage determinations and ultimately bottling considerations.

Guests will also learn how to taste wine like an expert.

Cost is $30. Seating limited to first 80.

To reserve a seat, call (775) 881.7560, ext. 7474 or email lkburns@ucdavis.edu.

Opinion: Partnerships may backfire for South Tahoe

To the community,

Now that redevelopment, except for the gigantic debt, is dead, the city has a new mantra, partnership. It is routine for the word to pass from the lips of the city manager, Mr. (Tony) O'Rourke.

He supports giving $250,000 to the school district. Why? Will there be a contract between the parties?



Bill Crawford

And he supports exporting a large number of TAUs out of the city to a hotel project at Edgewood. In exchange for the TAUs, Edgewood promises to build a park playground on 1 acre in the city. Again, is there a contract between the parties? When will the park be built? What are the specs for the park? What about parking?

The export of TAUs to Nevada could have serious blow back for the city down the road. Perhaps a project in the city would need the TAUs. And it is a question mark how building an upscale hotel at Edgewood will influence what will be done with the convention center site, and what affect on the city's TOT revenue.

Also we've heard all the rhetoric before. Such as a world-

class destination will bring the rich to town. Hence, the city will reap millions in sales taxes, etc. That is nonsense, pure bunkum. The hotel will be in Nevada and if it truly is world class, it will house fine shops, cafes and so on. It will be self-contained. The proposal is a transparent political deal. It is not a business partnership. As such, it is “business” as usual. Nothing new, nothing new. The city has been a push over time and time again.

Bill Crawford, South Lake Tahoe

Ordinance change brings S. Tahoe apartments to code

By Kathryn Reed

Starting July 1 more people in South Lake Tahoe will have a better chance of living in an apartment that meets some basic criteria.

This is because the City Council in December revised the multi-family dewelling ordinance to include complexes with eight or more units. Fifteen-unit complexes had been the minimum at the start, which was then reduced to 12 and now eight. One day it’s likely to include properties with four units.

All owners have been sent a letter saying the city is coming for a visit.

Health and safety issues were the impetus for the city to pass the original ordinance in 2004, with inspections staring in November 2005.

“The ordinance is intended to protect the occupant,” explained Bill Potts, senior housing inspector for South Lake Tahoe.



Mold at Bart's Apartments. Photo/South Lake Tahoe

Some nasty places have been condemned or overhauled in recent years. Bart’s Tahoe apartments on Ski Run Boulevard had five apartments closed on its initial inspection in February 2006.

“Cockroaches were so bad they jumped all over you,” Potts said of those 15 units. Mold was so thick it was like a layer of fur. Water damage was forcing ceilings to collapse.

The apartments reopened the next year after the owner practically started from scratch.

The city has the authority to close a structure for health and safety reasons. The landlord must pay for relocation costs and rent/utilities for two months.

The nearby Tahoe Forest Apartments at 1232 Ski Run Blvd. (formerly Heavenly Valley Apartments) also experienced partially collapsed ceilings and signs saying “uninhabitable” on about half the units. The owner has since fixed up the place.

Obviously tenants know they are living in substandard units, but some fear rocking the boat, and language barriers and lack of knowledge about their rights contribute to people staying

mum. Plus, South Tahoe renters are more transient in nature, and are often on a month-to-month lease.

“There is a clear link between local property managers – the quality is better compared to absentee owners,” Potts said.

With the city inspecting the units each year, problems are going to be found out without anyone having to complain.

The other change with the revised ordinance is exemplary complexes will not have to be inspected annually, but instead on a three-year rotation if they are up to snuff.

The first apartment complex to qualify for the three-year inspection is at 3999 Cedar Ave. Owners Paul and Sharon Sterling will also receive a 50 percent reduction in the fees.

To achieve this classification properties must have three consecutive years of MFD certification, defensible space, TRPA’s erosion control (aka BMP) certificate and a few other items.

“We think it’s a great program,” Sharon Sterling said. The Sterlings hope the ordinance changes will inspire other landlords to make necessary improvements, especially considering the number of children who reside in South Lake Tahoe apartments.



Tahoe Village Apartments on Cedar Avenue are the first

to be on the three-year inspection cycle. Photo/LTN

The Sterlings bought the complex in 2000.

“I’ve been on hand for his inspections. He literally goes unit by unit,” Sterling said of Potts. “Ours was a 40-year-old old building when we bought it and it didn’t have a certain type of exit sign. It was small improvements like that he called out.”

It also helps that the Sterlings live at the complex.

“They have actually done many things at their building that go well beyond the basic requirements of the MFD program, including a couple of years ago full window change out to dual pane, installation of a radon reduction system, secured coded building entry and many other things,” Potts said. “They serve as a great example of how to do it right.”

Potts anticipates a handful more properties may qualify in the next year for the three-year inspection cycle.

He has a list of 59 items he looks for on the inside of a unit and 55 items on the outside. They range from making sure windows don’t have cracks to proper ventilation to plumbing and electrical issues. Exterior items include landscaping, fire alarms, handrails on stairs, and fences.

Potts has been in charge of the program since being hired by the city in September 2005. Part of what makes him qualified is having graduated from the Butte College Building Inspection Technology Program. He also is a certified property maintenance and housing inspector.

Property owners pay $50 per unit each year. With the new units

coming online next month, it will bring the total to 1,335 in 75 complexes that fall into the city's jurisdiction. This equates to $66,750 in annual fees.

The money is used to cover the cost of the program.

Owners pay for the fee when their annual business license fee is due in July.

Sierra Vista is the largest complex in the city at 94 units.

Potts said six properties from the beginning have never been certified.

"They are not willing to do all the things we are asking, but they all have made progress," he said.

Landlords are supposed to make interior improvements 60 days after being notified of infractions and have 90 days for exterior issues. However, for the imminent violations, the problem must be rectified between 24 and 72 hours depending on what's wrong.

For now, hotels that operate as long-term housing are exempt from the inspections.

"If hotels are incorporated into the program, they would have to meet a different standard because they are not built to be used as an apartment," Potts said.

Sugar pine planting

The Sugar Pine Foundation is planting sugar pine seedlings in Truckee June 11 from 10am-noon.

Where: From the intersection of Alder Creek Drive and

Schussing Way, drive south on Schussing to a dirt Forest Service road on the left. Park and meet along the dirt road.

What: Bring a shovel or a trowel. Seedlings, some tools, planting instructions and light refreshments will be provided.

For more information, go online or call (650) 814.9565.

Opinion: Art to negotiating your salary

By Bill Humbert

As the job market recovers, a unique phenomenon is beginning to happen, and one expert warns it could cost you money.

As people who have been looking for work a long time start to get back into the workforce, many of them are so happy just to get a job that they sometimes accept a lower salary than they have to. Some employers feel that they can probably get away with a lowball offer, and many job hunters will grab it just so they can have a job. The truth is there are ways to get the job and still get what you want.

Advice for job hunters includes:

· **Don’t Offer Salary Requirements** – When you are asked to include salary requirements with your resume, that is typically a company’s first screen, and it can be used against you. I’ve seen people agonize over what to reveal, because they are afraid of pricing themselves out of a good job. My advice is to simply put “Open” in that spot. If your qualifications are on target, they’ll call you. If in the interview you’re asked what you made at your last job, reply

by asking about the range for the one you are applying. You'd be surprised how managers or human resource representatives will tell you.

· **Don't Give Away Too Much** – In many job applications, an employer will ask for your salary history. It is perfectly acceptable to write "Willing to discuss at appropriate time during interview process" and leave those numbers blank. Writing down those numbers pigeonholes you, and reduces your negotiation power.

· **Don't Negotiate Salary** – That's right. Don't negotiate salary in the interviews. Instead, negotiate when you'll give them your salary requirements. When they ask you for that figure, tell them you don't know what you'd require until you have a clear picture of the job requirements and potential for advancement over the next five years. After you have that information, and you're asked again for that number, respond by asking to go through what I call your "impacts" – areas of your job that directly impact the company's bottom line. This discussion will allow you to demonstrate what you bring to the table. At the end of that discussion, simply tell them that you are very interested in the position, and that you'd seriously consider any offer they'd like to make.

· **Keep Networking** – Once you have a job offer, it's not a done deal until you accept it. Until that happens, keep networking and looking for jobs. It may give you valuable market-worth data about the position you've been offered. It may also be a safety net in case something goes awry between the time you receive an offer and the time you accept it.

· **Accepting the Offer** – Once an offer is given, you have the right to ask for a clarification on it. Asking "Is there any flexibility in this offer?" may help to open a discussion of increasing the offer. If it does, don't expect a large boost in base pay, but rather, an extra week of paid vacation, a signing bonus or other such perks.

Keep in mind that salary negotiation is more art than science, so these tips may not always apply. Many hourly workers don't have as much flexibility on pay, and some companies have policies that would require you to adjust the script a little to fit those situations. The key thing to remember is that you don't have to give them a salary range that would jeopardize your earning potential, and that you don't have to accept their first offer most of the time.

Remember that they are interviewing you because they need to fill that position. It's important to the company to have someone in that job, and while they are considering you, they aren't doing you a favor. They need what you have to offer, so you should get the best offer out of them that is possible.

Bill Humbert, also known as RecruiterGuy, is a Washington, D.C., native and a graduate of Assumption College in Worcester, Mass. He has been a professional recruiter since 1981.

Pro wrestlers to bring their muscle to El Dorado fair

Monstertruckin' Otis and "The Russian Wolf" – two hulking guys with a long and storied past – face off in round No. 3 as the Sacramento Wresting Federation brings "Hangtown Showdown" to the El Dorado County Fair.

It'll be a two-hour high adrenaline rush with eight intense matches featuring 20 wrestlers.



A trailer park superstar from Branson, Mo., Monstertruckin' sees himself as a defender of truth, justice and truckin'. Insult the "U.S. of A." and Otis is likely to call it an act of war. So, you can only imagine how Otis felt when "The Russian Wolf" Alexis Darevko rudely interrupted the ring announcer during a match in February by blasting the Russian National Anthem. The stage was set for mayhem.

The Russian Wolf, who is vehemently opposed to all things American, was met by a chorus of boos as he walked to the ring with a chain in hand. He launched into verbal assault on the crowd and delivered a drop kick to Otis's knee. Darevko worked the knee for most of the match, ultimately slapping on a figure-four leg lock. As the crowd got into it with chants of "U.S.A…U.S.A.," Otis mounted a comeback, hitting the Russian with two Truckin' splashes and the Monster drop for the win at the eight minute mark.

Now, Darevko realizes that Otis is one big stone (more like a boulder really) in his path to Russian dominance in the Sacramento Wresting Federation. And, it's something he plans to undo with a vengeance in Placerville.

Sacramento native Josh Edlow spearheads the Sacramento Wrestling Federation. Often featured on local radio and television, Edlow is well known in the community as an award-winning business manager, lifelong student, and committed family man.

The Sacramento Wresting Federation's "Hangtown Showdown" comes to the El Dorado County Fair on June 16 at 7pm in the Grandstands.

Tickets are $15 for adults and $9 juniors, fair admission is included.

The 2011 El Dorado County Fair is June 16 to 19 in

Placerville. For more information, call (530) 621.5860.

Sugar pine planting in Truckee

The Sugar Pine Foundation is planting sugar pine seedlings in Truckee June 11 from 10am-noon.

Where: From the intersection of Alder Creek Drive and Schussing Way, drive south on Schussing to a dirt Forest Service road on the left. Park and meet along the dirt road.

What: Bring a shovel or a trowel. Seedlings, some tools, planting instructions and light refreshments will be provided.

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ZCES students recognized for reading expertise

ZEPHYR COVE – On Your Way Awards were presented June 3 at Zephyr Cove Elementary School by Laurie Brazil, who was representing Soroptimist International of Tahoe Sierra.

One third- fourth- and fifth-grader was chosen by their teachers as deserving recognition for their efforts put forth to excel in reading. This year’s recipients were third-grader Jesse Preciado, fourth-grader Alexis Gonzales, and fifth-

grader Jonathan Duffy.



Jesse Preciado, third-grader in Brenda Capshaw's class, receives an award from Laurie Brazil. Photo/Provided

Each child received a certificate, a gift card to Borders books and the school library was presented with three popular novels to add to their collection.

Jonathan stated, “The Lightning Thief series helps me to think and imagine what people might look like.”

Alexis added, “I like interesting facts, and excitement because you don’t know what is going to happen next.”

In addition to the awards, students in grades K-8 received individual books on their reading level to take home for the summer to enjoy.

These awards and books for the schools in California and Nevada are one of the many programs promoted by the Soroptimist International of Tahoe Sierra in their support of children and their education.

– Soroptimist International Tahoe Sierra

South Shore counselors get firsthand look at fire academy

MEYERS – South Lake Tahoe counselors came together June 4 to discuss various career paths available to students through local academic programs.

Lake Valley Fire Protection District Station 7 in Meyers was the site for the informational workshop hosted by Virginia Boyar, director of Career and Technical Education at Lake Tahoe Community College.

The workshop focused on all career and technical education programs available at the college, with a special emphasis on the Lake Tahoe Basin Fire Academy.



Lake Tahoe Community College Fire Academy cadets put on a demonstration.

Photos/Tracy
Owen Chapman

Counselors from the middle school, high school and LTCC discussed the career paths and CTE programs that are most inquired about by students, and the differences they experience when counseling students who are interested in receiving training that will lead immediately to a career as opposed to transferring to a four-year university.

Attendees learned about the new physical therapy aide program that will launch this fall at LTCC, as well as updates on collaborative efforts with the high school in the areas of dental assistance, culinary arts and digital media arts.

With South Tahoe High School able to construct a slew of buildings from the voter approved $64.5 million bond and subsequent matches from the state, it has also meant an expansion in programs. The Theater Arts and Design Academy will be open for the 2011-12 school year. This will enable the school to offer more classes in the digital arts, which in turn will prepare them for classes at LTCC.

One of the most successful CTE programs at the college has been the fire academy. The next crop of cadets graduates at the end of the month.

Leona Allen, fire academy administrative coordinator, briefed the counselors on the ins and outs of the Lake Tahoe Basin Fire Academy.

Students from various backgrounds (a recent female high school graduate, 40-year-old local businessman with a family, and a student who self-identified himself as being at “high-risk” in high school) spoke to the counselors about the challenges and growth opportunities they have experienced while participating in the academy.

A former cadet and current instructional aide for the academy

talked about his time in the program and subsequent professional experiences, including being “first in” at a recent Kirkwood structure fire.



Tere Tibbets of LTCC finds out what it's like to be a firefighter.

Counselors were then able to observe the academy in action. Students demonstrated skills related to donning breathing aparatuses and personal protective equipment, tying knots, raising ladders, and charging hoses. Three counselors (Pete Dixon and Tere Tibbets from LTCC, and Bob Sullivan from STHS) went a step further and learned how to put on SCBAs.

Other workshop participants included JoAnn Hernandez (South Tahoe Middle School), Michelle Riley (South Tahoe High School), and Aaron Barnett, Norine Hegy, Esta Lewin, Tracy Owen Chapman, Janice Tait, and Tracy Thomas (Lake Tahoe Community College). Tom Greene (vice president of Academic Affairs and Student Services at LTCC) and Jamie Rhone (CTE technician at LTCC) also attended.

This activity was funded through the Folsom Lake College Collaborative SB70 grant.

– Lake Tahoe Community College staff