Design contest for Downtown Truckee Thursdays

Truckee Downtown Merchant Association's 2011 design contest invites local artists to get their creative juices flowing and submit a design that captures the popular weekly summer event series. The winning design will be printed on T-shirts that will be sold throughout the summer.

TDMA will accept entries through Sunday, May 15.

Quickly becoming a feel-good summer mainstay, Downtown Truckee Thursdays 2011 will kick off June 16 and continue through Aug. 19 from 5-9pm. The summer event was launched four years ago by the Truckee Downtown Merchants Association in an effort to highlight and revitalize the town and underscore a 'Think Local' mentality. It has a host of children's activities, live music, art, the Foothills Farmers Market, a beer garden and vendors of all ilk..

With free parking, folks stroll through the downtown district, popping into its interesting shops, sampling food and wine, listening to music at the train depot and catching up with friends and neighbors. Partnering with various nonprofit organizations each week, the TDMA provides attendees with entertaining themed events along with kid-friendly activities including a bounce house, arts and crafts and much more.

Last year the 10-week event garnered more than 7,000 attendees and event organizers expect a significant increase again this year. The summer-long event is organized and funded by the Truckee Downtown Merchants Association, through grants from local organizations Truckee Donner Chamber of Commerce and Tahoe Truckee Community Foundation, private sponsors, the Town of Truckee, and participating vendor fees.

To submit a contest entry, send the design by email to

info@truckeethursdays.com or drop it off at the California Welcome Center located in the downtown train depot.

USFS engaging mountain bikers in trail design

The U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit has hired professional trail and bike park designers Hilride to work with trail users to create a plan for improving the Corral Trail. The Corral Trail is a popular multi-use trail on Lake Tahoe's South Shore that is popular with mountain bikers and open to dirt bikes and all-terrain vehicles as well.

The first opportunity to participate in the redesign will be a workshop facilitated by Hilride on April 28, from 6-8pm at 35 College Drive, South Lake Tahoe. This meeting will be an information-gathering session at which trail users will be able to describe their interests and identify what types of experiences they are seeking.

On June 11, National Get Outdoors Day, Hilride will lead a design workshop on the trail after a brief session at the Forest Supervisor's Office. More details on the on-site workshop will follow.

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4 x 4 clinic in South Lake

Tahoe

There will be a hands-on 4-wheel drive clinic on June 4 from 9am-1pm on the Twin Peaks Trail on the South Shore. Register online.

Ski report: Weather is changing



Sun this morning, yucky weather later in the day – that's the forecast for Friday.

Here is the April 22 ski report from Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.

Carson City bike ride

Bike Habitat is putting on the 4th annual Tour of Carson City ride May 1. Meat at the Carson City at 9am, ride begins at 9:30.

It's a moderately paced nearly 30-mile ride.

Call (775) 267.5053 for more information.

Douglas County master plan meeting

Douglas County Community Development Department is having a workshop May 12 from 5:30-7pm to review the goals and policies of the master plan regional and community plans. The meeting is at Kahle Community Center, Stateline. More information is online.

Lack of trees in Angora burn area destroying county roads

By Kathryn Reed

Groundwater in the Angora burn area is so high it is creating impassable roads.

El Dorado County public works crews don’t anticipate being able to fix the crumbling roads until mid-June at the earliest. They must wait for the water to subside to be able to dig.



Mule Deer Drive in El Dorado County is a wet, crumbling mess. Photo/Kathryn Reed

“The ground is saturated 4 to 5 feet in there,” said Tom Celio, deputy director of maintenance and operations for the county’s transportation department. He was able to stick a shovel handle down 4 feet in the middle of Mule Deer Drive. “We will have to put in a drain system to carry the groundwater into the corner and tie it into a culvert.”

He is speaking of the mess on Mule Deer that has made the road impossible to drive on in one section. The good part is the decaying asphalt and flowing water are between driveways so residents can come and go. It’s just that no one can drive the length of the road because of the decay.

Celio said other roads in the burn area are bad, but not to the extent of Mule Deer.

He blames the unusual wetness to the lack of trees in the area since the 2007 fire. This means no roots to absorb the water. He also points to the abundance of snow this winter.

“The whole hillside is leaking water. There are places where it’s like boiling out of the ground,” Celio said.

He said things could get worse before they get better because as the sun comes out it pulls the water to the surface. But he also said once the snow is gone, the ground dries quickly.

“I wouldn’t call this routine. We have significant more pavement damage due to the saturated base than we have had in recent times. It’s probably been 15 or 20 years since we’ve

had this much saturation," Celio said.

Yosemite officials try to quash scalping of National Park reservations

By Marjie Lundstrom, Sacramento Bee

Ticket scalping is a crass reality for the Giants, the Lakers and Lady Gaga, but here's a wave of price-gouging you may have missed: Yosemite National Park.

Campsite reservations and permits to scale Half Dome have become such hot commodities that the National Park Service is scrambling to halt the auctioning of park access to the highest bidder.

The flipping of reservations and permits in Yosemite – the third-most-visited national park – is so rampant on Internet sites like Craigslist that park officials are "becoming more aggressive" in trying to shut down these operators, said Yosemite spokesman Scott Gediman.

"We want to stop it as much as we can," he said. "It's not fair. These (reservations and permits) aren't intended to go into the after-market. But it's becoming more sophisticated. … People are finding ways to abuse the system."

A review last week of all 29 Craigslist sites in California revealed dozens of ads peddling prime camp spots during the summer high season, including the coveted Yosemite Valley floor.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Indifference to wrongheadedness

By Garry Bowen

An earlier column, “Indifference a Threat to Our Existence”, written several years ago, describes the difference between environmentalism and sustainability, both as a refrain and review of our current world situation, and as a beacon to a more contemporary look at the local situation, in light of the global.

It is now no longer indifference that’s our main threat – it is wrongheadedness. At least due to movements like LOHAS (Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability), 70 million strong, there is growing awareness across a number of levels of the necessity for fundamental changes in the way we produce and consume things that are no longer beneficial to anything other than corporate bottom lines. Sustainability is at essence a top-line issue, to which major corporate entities (WalMart, McDonald’s, Dow Chemical, Fairmont Hotels, on and on) are now tuning in, to the increasing betterment of communities they serve, although by no means overnight.



Garry Bowen

Great top-line awareness results in great bottom lines as well, enjoyed by all. Tahoe can thus benefit greatly.

Locally, on both sides of the issue, we have awareness like Ray Nutting of the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors, on a recent presentation on the Lake Tahoe Basin Prosperity Plan: “You guys have nothing but beauty. Everything else has been taken away. There’s no logging, no grazing, and no mining. And without government money, you’d be gone.” And, along with the introduction of SB271 in the Nevada Legislature, sponsoring the demise of Nevada from the TRPA Compact, one of the local sponsors, James Settlemeyer, says, he “believes the Compact should be changed completely” to one with a “focus on those areas where you can make the most environmental gains.”.

There is only one answer.

That brings the circle back around to the difference between environmentalism and sustainability. Even the League to Save Lake Tahoe has, at various times, thought of their work as “getting the lake ready for sustainability”. From all these perspectives dancing around the issue of sustainability, isn’t it about time for an appropriate mid-course correction in light of where the globe is heading? As Mark Hertsgard, author of “Hot: Living through the Next 50 Years on Earth” says, “At this point, all that’s clear is that our civilization is entering a storm. There is no way around it.” And, “As a journalist, you are supposed to be a watchdog. Now I’m a father. I know how dire the outlook is.”

Denial is no longer an option, and denial is but a form of wrongheadedness – another is our current politics.

At each end, we have Mr. Settlemeyer and others calling once again for dropping out of the TRPA Compact (purportedly the seventh time), and at the other, county supervisors with their

own opinion still out of touch with the realities of the Lake Tahoe Basin, whether calling back the representative who doesn't toe their line, to those who think that the macho industries will somehow save the day. They won't.

In the middle of this, we have Norma Santiago, with dual functions as both a county supervisor and board chair of TRPA, saying in defense, "It's more of a planning entity … that recognizes the importance of economic development to reverse degradation."

Joanne Marchetta, TRPA executive director, thinks her agency is "caught in the middle" of two opposing state philosophies. Think instead about the opposing views of the TRPA and the League, and a third issue exists very much in the middle, yet is still not acknowledged by those mainly preoccupied with the co-dependent need to counteract each others' work.

Marchetta described the agency change since she took over as "redefin(ing) the intent of the agency from lake police to regional planner." Problem is, this may be too little, too late, as there appears to be a disconnection among parties as to how to accommodate today's realities, moving as fast as they are.

The key to a quicker fix is the third, structural, issue.

In 1995, when Steve Wynn was on the board, he commissioned his aide Monique Laxalt (yes, of that family) to do a needed review of the societal issues that justified the creation of an agency like the TRPA. The title of her white paper, "The Need for A Core Statement of Policy at the TRPA," alludes to the famous Alice B. Toklas quote, "There is no there, there" with regards to the existing TRPA structure under which they are not functioning. An infrastructure that essentially allows each entity within to operate with the weakness of thresholds, however strong they think they were at the outset, will be eaten alive in today's realities. The League and others are

easily given the ammunition they use to counter or confront, in the earlier definition, the structured confusion.

I now apologize for not seeing earlier that when sustainability is sometimes mentioned in the company of those who still think of it as some sort of buzzword, even though I work with a strong global framework, I recently realized that it is a positioning problem for Tahoe, given their ongoing distraction.

Sustainability is not on the outer fringe of environmentalism, making it much more daunting to absorb; it is actually the correct purifying filter between confrontational efforts and needed global realignment.

Confrontation is actually a last resort, when not enough attention is paid to important environmental issues.

Sustainability is in fact very simple, elegant, and scientifically profound enough to answer most of man's need to realign himself with the world around him; Tahoe is certainly no exception.

Tahoe's main problem at this time is that most of the TRPA solutions presented are hubristic in nature that automatically places them in defensive positions, when a lot of what they do is not defensible, especially if it alienates the very people and region they are charged to serve.

This is not only wrong-headed it is unsustainable. Sustainability can correct the course, easily – now.

Garry Bowen has a 50-year connection to the South Shore, with an immediate past devoted to global sustainability, on most of its current fronts: green building, energy and water efficiencies, and public health. He's also in the process of planning with his classmates their 50-year South Tahoe High reunion. He may be reached at tahoefuture@gmail.com or (775) 690.6900.

Whitesnake’s latest project a Tahoe affair

By Forrest Hartman, Reno Gazette-Journal

Whitesnake may not be the commercial juggernaut it was in the late 1980s, but the band still has legions of fans who buy albums and line up for concert dates, and singer David Coverdale is as appreciative as anyone.

“I’m sitting doing interviews with people in a year that I’m going to be 60 years old, talking about a new album and a tour,” Coverdale said during a telephone interview from his Lake Tahoe home. “It’s astonishing to me because when I started, the life expectancy of a commercial musician in a professional enterprise, you were lucky to do three years. It was less than a frickin’ tennis player. It’s almost 40 years since I joined Deep Purple. It’s astonishing to me.”

Coverdale, who formed Whitesnake after leaving Deep Purple in mid-’70s, has long had a home in the Lake Tahoe area. He isn’t the road warrior he used to be and, in fact, considers himself semi-retired. But that hasn’t stopped him from recording a new Whitesnake album, making a Tahoe-shot video for the album’s first single, “Love Will Set You Free,” and laying the groundwork for a world tour that kicks off in New York in early May. The album, “Forevermore,” was released in late March, and Coverdale is pleased by the response from fans.

Read the whole story