Measureable snow in forecast for Tahoe

A winter weather advisory is in effect in the Lake Tahoe Basin from 11 this evening to 5am Thursday.

The National Weather Service in Reno is calling for the heaviest snow during the day Wednesday. There could be 3 to 8 inches at the lake and 12 to 18 inches above 7,000 feet.

As the storm rolls in, expect wind gusts up to 45 mph in valley locations and stronger on ridges. Blowing dust and snow could make driving a bit dangerous. A lake wind advisory has been issued for the 12-hour period starting at 11am March 25. Waves could be 2 to 4 feet high on Lake Tahoe.

Roads are going to be slick. For road information, click on one of the state icons on the home page of *Lake Tahoe News*.

Snow or rain is in the forecast for the basin through Saturday.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Summer camp devoted to performing arts

Camp Star Bound offers a six-night, seven-day performing arts experience combined with all the fun of a traditional summer camp at Lake Tahoe.

This is the third year.

Campers will have the opportunity to learn from professional dance instructors, choreographers, theater teachers, professional actors and vocal coaches.

Performers entering grades 5-12 with any level of experience, from beginner to advanced, are invited. There will be a performance at the end of the week that parents and family are invited to attend.

For more info or to register, call Stefanie McKnight at 775.250.0464.

Grego: 'I listen more than I speak'



Gerri Grego

Publisher's note: ***Lake Tahoe News asked the six El Dorado County supervisor candidates a series of questions. All are the same except for one that is specific to each candidate. The responses are being run in the order they were received by LTN. One candidate chose not to answer the questions.***

Name: “Gerri” Geraldine Grego

Age: 61

Occupation: Resort manager

Education: Associates degree in management, leadership and facilities training

What elected, civic, nonprofit boards or groups are or have you been affiliated with an in what capacity?: There are too many to list, but will give an overview. Currently I am the city appointee to the El Dorado County Commission on Aging. I also serve as an advisor to the Lake Tahoe Sustainability Collaborative, specifically the Human, Health and Social Well Being Workgroup working on community gardens and growing domes. I am co-chair of Gardens for a Healthy Tahoe, and am treasurer of South Lake Tahoe Republican Women Federated. I served on the General Plan Committee for the city, and as a planning commissioner I had the privilege of working on the Aspens Project providing workforce housing. On a more personal note, in the past I have participated in many organizations including Bread & Broth, parent teacher groups at Bijou Elementary and South Tahoe Middle School, been an officer of a dance club, and have served in many different church appointments. I am also a notary public, and my background has been checked by the FBI.

Traffic is horrible on Fridays and Sundays throughout the county. Will you commit to not voting for any big subdivisions unless there is a plan to widen Highway 50? Why or why not?: Infrastructure to support any project should be required before approval. We cannot overextend our resources without damaging the rest of the community. However, the last person to buy a movie ticket shouldn’t have to buy all the popcorn. Laws should be passed to improve our community without punishing those who provide new jobs. They should pay for reasonable improvements that are not so onerous that we get no

improvements because no one can afford to do business here.

What is your opinion on a proposed November initiative to control growth?: Tahoe is a prime example of no growth scenarios. South Lake Tahoe has been frozen into a museum of the ’60s. Just as in the previous question improvements happen as a result of progress, it also follows that reasonable growth means economic and environmental improvements. What inspires me most about these initiatives is that the people of this county are standing up for what they believe. They feel that their leaders have not been listening to them, or that they are making “sweetheart deals” with developers. Rural Communities United, the Shingle Springs Community Alliance, Save Our County, and Residents Involved in Positive Planning are all trying to save a rural lifestyle by closing “gaps” where they feel their leaders have taken advantage. Those initiatives leave out the Tahoe basin as it is under the jurisdiction of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

What are your thoughts on making Lake Tahoe its own county?: If we were to become a county, then the residents of Meyers would not feel disenfranchised, as they do now. I am not against the idea. It would have to be seriously considered — and all of its implications. There was a time when South Lake Tahoe produced a large portion of the county revenue. The advent of agri-tourism and the wineries as well as the growth in El Dorado Hills has evened that out. If that trend continues, then what was once a disparity one way could be reversed. I certainly haven’t forgotten how much business dropped in Placerville when the mudslides closed Highway 50 at Kyburz. A county is much more than roads, police and fire. The county has 59 different departments ranging from libraries and elections to fish and game and the court system. I would be concerned that we would not have the resources to support all of these services. On the other hand, it would create good year-round jobs for people in our community.

What entities would you not take money from?: Any person or

entity that would expect special consideration for their donation.

What would you do to boost the economy?: First, we need less government regulations over business. Government should provide for roads, safety and equal rights – then stay out of the way of the American entrepreneur. Second, our senior sector is growing rapidly and will have many needs for which we are currently unprepared. This could become an "industry" providing many year round jobs in our communities. I would also promote eco-tourism and the amazing outdoor opportunities that our county has in spades. Paddleboarding, sailing, fishing, kayaking, hiking, camping, golfing, skiing, the Rubicon and extreme sports which creates Olympic athletes. Marketing is what we pay for, publicity from things like the Olympics is what we pray for. Casinos can be built anywhere now, but there is only one Lake Tahoe.

What is the No. 1 issue facing District 5 and how do you propose to resolve it?: The inability of districts, agencies, groups and people to work together for the greater good rather than for personal agendas. I work well with others – whether I agree with them or not I will listen to them and provide my own thoughts on the matter. If we are ever going to get beyond our differences, we need to search out common ground and then work together for common goals. Any of those who witnessed my style when I was a planning commissioner would attest that I am a proponent of seeking the truth and the right thing, and then building consensus to get it done. One does not have to have enmity just because they disagree with someone else. I have the ability to disagree without being disagreeable.

Supervisors meet only once a year in Lake Tahoe. Do you believe this is fair representation? Why or why not?: By the numbers it would seem that several times a year would be better, especially when the agenda item particularly affect our constituents. I would imagine that the cost/time of the supervisors and staff coming to Tahoe is a major

consideration. The supervisors would also not have easy access to the resources that they might require. With that being said, with today's technology, I don't see why it is not possible for the county to set up a meeting room in South Lake Tahoe and have the public participate in supervisor meetings by Skype.

Would you have voted for Red Hawk to be built and to divert Caltrans funds for interchanges? Those decisions are still negatively affecting the South Shore. Is there anything you would do to change the status quo?: Red Hawk should have never been approved. If you think of our districts as children in need, when a family has five children they do not starve one child so the rest have more. Everyone knew what the impact on the Tahoe area would be. There is a fund that the casino has to support improvements in the county. However, South Lake Tahoe and El Dorado Hills is excluded from being able to apply for the monies. I would like to change that exclusion.

Would you support having more tax dollars from the county coming to the South Shore? Currently more dollars leave the basin than come back.: Yes, I would. If the county invested more into infrastructure and supported the promotion of tourism, it would also benefit the West Slope. Currently, businesses in Pollock Pines are also affected by the lack of snow and tourism in Tahoe.

The county and city of South Lake Tahoe have a long history of not getting along. How would you propose to improve the relationship?: I would improve the relationship with the rest of the county by working well with others, by taking the time to appreciate their position and work together for a better economy. There certainly is a need for more joint meetings. By looking each other in the eye instead of trading barbs from afar a better relationship can be formed. Also, I would travel the entire county to understand the problems of other districts and to better relate with the problems the other supervisors need to address. I think this kind of effort would

create bridges of cooperation between the supervisors.

What is your vision for Meyers and how will you make it a reality?: The people of Meyers want their community to remain rural for the most part, with emphasis on its natural resources by focusing on recreation. I would like to see new types of recreational opportunities in the area – from indoor rock climbing, shooting range, fishing derbies, to a roller rink. There are a lot of possibilities. What is important is that we listen to the people who live there, and then work with them to bring new opportunities to improve their community. Our county has simply left Tahoe planning to TRPA. The county General Plan has a blank spot where it comes to Tahoe. They have just given it all over to TRPA. In the final analysis the vision should be the people of Meyers vision, not mine. My job is to represent the people to the county government, not represent the government vision to the people of Meyers.

Why should someone vote for you over someone else?: I am a bridge builder, with broad range involvement. I am not tied to any special interest. I will look at all the issues objectively. When on the Planning Commission I gained a reputation as someone who thoroughly studied the issue, asked questions and made practical decisions based on the facts. As a manager, I report to both a board of directors and the owners. I have proven that I have the ability to achieve optimal results among often competing interests. Some might see the county as another political stepping stone or as a place to push their political agendas and beliefs. I am the one person who sees the supervisor as a public servant versus a ruler. It is not about me. It is about you, the citizens.

Your husband is running for South Lake Tahoe City Council. If you are both elected, how will you work to avoid conflicts?: To start, if we are both elected, we will not be seeing much of each other, and I imagine our precious time together will be spent not talking business. All relationships have

conflicts, it is how you work to resolve them that matters. Active listening and forgiveness are major necessities. Both of us have worked in industries where we were unable to talk about specifics of our work – he as an attorney and me as a police dispatcher. We both understand the necessary confidential boundaries. The city and county are two different entities, autonomous from each other. Both Sen. Ted Gaines and Assemblywoman Beth Gaines have served our area with integrity. When you consider equal rights, why should one partner in a marriage exclude the other from serving?

What do you do for fun?: Gardening and spending time with my grandchildren. In the past I have also enjoyed dancing – but it's been a while.

Tell us something about yourself that people might not know.: I am not a typical politician because I listen more than I speak.

Opinion: Explaining reasons to file fireworks suit

By Joan and Joe Truxler

In November, we made the difficult decision to file a lawsuit under the federal Clean Water Act. We do not want to stop the fireworks; and if the lawsuit is successful, we cannot gain financially. Our only motivation is to protect the lake.

On July 5, 2013, our neighbors in Marla Bay collected over two trash barrels full of fireworks debris that had washed ashore. The next day, more debris appeared. Our 3-year-old grandson found a fuse and brought it to us in his hand. Since then, we

have collected over 8,000 pieces of fireworks pollution. It is composed of hard plastic and fuses that are cobbled together with cardboard, paper, string and various types of adhesives. Some pieces were ingested and passed through dogs and coyotes. Many were tangled with dead crayfish. To date, the debris continues to wash ashore eight months after the Fourth. We continue to comb PineWild, Marla Bay and Nevada beaches to pick up the debris by hand.

We never wanted a lawsuit. When the debris began accumulating in July, we contacted several agencies. But the companies responsible for the pollution never responded. Then, it occurred all over again after the Labor Day 2013 fireworks. Again, the responsible companies failed to respond even though they had been aware of the problem since they were contacted by the TRPA on July 8, 2013. Since then, they have declined our invitations to walk the beach, view the debris, and work together to solve this problem, despite the fact that much of the pollution has their name ("Pyro Spectaculars") printed clearly on it.

Under the Clean Water Act, private citizens like ourselves cannot gain a cent if we win in court. We hope to stop or minimize the pollution washing up on our beaches, protect the lake, and begin a public discussion about the strong protection that an enforceable Clean Water Act permit will provide. If we are successful, decisions on how to clean up after fireworks shows will be public—not something left to private parties or us.

The beauty of Tahoe's water is vitally important to our community, to our businesses, and to our visitors. Because we value these things so highly, we filed suit to protect the lake from needless pollution and assure a public process to address pollution from future fireworks shows.

Joan and Joe Truxler live in Zephyr Cove and have filed a lawsuit against the Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority.

Online business reputations subject of workshop

Build a better reputation online with help from Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce and Peak 1 Group at Tech Tuesday on April 1 at 8am.

This workshop focuses on the importance of reputation marketing. Participants will learn how to proactively manage their online reputations while increasing their websites' visibility, traffic and engagement.

Tech Tuesday is a monthly series about the latest trends, tools and opportunities in technology, marketing and social media. Participants are encouraged to bring their computers. They are at the chamber conference room at 169 Highway 50, Stateline.

This workshop is free for chamber members and $15 for non-members. Register online.

South Shore fireworks shows in jeopardy



Fireworks may not light up the sky this summer on the South Shore. Photo/Howie Nave

By Kathryn Reed

It's likely the South Shore will not have a sanctioned fireworks display this Fourth of July, or even Labor Day weekend.

It all has to do with a lawsuit that was filed last year because of the trash that continues to this day to spill forth on beaches in Nevada – more than eight months after the pyrotechnic display – and the fact that the sponsoring agency refuses to seek a permit for the show.

The Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority board has scheduled a special meeting for March 27 at 4pm. The agenda calls for first talking about the July 4 and Labor Day fireworks in open session and then going into closed session to do the same. The meeting is at 169 Highway 50, Stateline.

"At that time, we will be commenting on the severely harmful economic and environmental ramifications of the Truxler's action," LTVA Executive Director Carol Chaplin said in a statement.

Joan and Joseph Truxler filed a lawsuit last year against LTVA and Pyro Spectaculars, the company that puts on the show.

“We do not want the fireworks show discontinued. We want to protect the lake. And we do not get any money from this,” Joan Truxler told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The two sides had been mediating until this week when it was clear a resolution could not be found.

“We felt that the settlement didn’t occur because what was presented wasn’t really in the best interest of protecting the lake,” Truxler said. “And it wasn’t really in line with our principles that we think are important to protect the lake. We want a legally, enforceable permit.”

The LTVA has until Thursday to respond to the original lawsuit. The board could ask for a motion to dismiss or file a response that leads to discovery, depositions, and all the legal dealings – potentially ending with a trial.

Chaplin said all of this is “unfortunate” but said she could not add more than the official statement.

“There is middle ground. They don’t have to stop the show, but they should be getting a permit and they have not applied for a permit,” Mike Lozeau, attorney for the Truxlers, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

He added that even if the permit were not in hand, but that the process had started, it would show good faith on the LTVA’s part.

The Truxlers want an agency to be regulating what is put into Lake Tahoe – including fireworks. Their goal is to have this done via the Environmental Protection Agency regulations under the Clean Water Act. It issues NPDES, or National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System, permits to control water pollution.

The lawsuit claims the Clean Water Act is being violated. Court documents state, “Both the state of California and the

state of Nevada have established water quality standards strictly prohibiting floating debris on Lake Tahoe and other waters. California's water quality standards provide that '[w]aters shall not contain floating material, including solids, liquids, foams, and scum, in concentrations that cause nuisance or adversely affect the water for beneficial uses.'"

Truxler said she finds debris multiple times a week. It comes in the form of paper or cardboard, hard plastic and fuses. Some has writing in Chinese, some has the name of the company that launches the fireworks.

She first started calling agencies July 8. She said TRPA is the only one to return the call. But they don't regulate fireworks.

"None of the agencies have walked the beach or discussed what we have found," Truxler said.

The lawsuit does not impact the other fireworks shows around the lake.

The South Shore show has been going on for 30 years. Fourth of July, next to New Year's Eve, is the busiest time in the area. The economic impact of losing the $100,000 pyrotechnic show would remain to be seen, but in the past tourism officials have said it brings in millions of dollars. The question is whether people would still come if the fireworks show were canceled.

Neither the July 4 nor the Labor Day fireworks shows is not on the LTVA's website.

S. Tahoe woman hurt in motorcycle accident



This motorcycle was destroyed March 22 when it hit a pickup. Photo/Provided

Two people on a motorcycle were seriously injured Saturday when the bike they were on collided with a pickup.

Nevada Highway Patrol troopers said Andrey L. Gallegos, 20, of Sparks was traveling at a high rate of speed when he want through the intersection of Fairview and Roop streets in Carson City on March 22 at 10:45pm. Gallegos and his passenger, Audrey G. Rugamas, 21, of South Lake Tahoe were taken to Renown Medical Center in Reno.

They were both ejected when the vehicles hit each other.

The truck driver, Donald McKean, 60, of Gardnerville, was not injured.

Anyone with information about the accident is asked to call 775.689.4661 or email ckelly@dps.state.nv.us.

Study: Sunshine lowers blood pressure

By Amanda McMillan, Outside

Scientists have known for years that rates of hypertension are higher in the winter and in countries farther from the equator, but they haven't known why—until now. A new study from the universities of Southampton and Edinburgh suggests that exposure to sunlight plays a large role, by causing nitric oxide in the skin to be absorbed into the blood stream. Blood vessels widen as a result, causing a modest—but potentially life-saving—drop in blood pressure.

To study the sun's effect on blood pressure, researchers exposed 24 healthy volunteers to ultraviolet light, mimicking the amount of exposure a person might get wearing short sleeves and shorts outside for 30 minutes on sunny day. In a second session, they were exposed to the same amount of light and heat, but no UV rays.

The UV exposure triggered a small decline in blood pressure—about two to five points—while the "sham" exposure did not. While that may not seem like a lot, the authors write that a even tiny drop can go a long way: A 10-point change in diastolic pressure, for example, can slash your risk of cardiovascular disease and stroke in half.

Read the whole story

Book clubs engage incarcerated youth

Teens at the Juvenile Treatment Center in South Lake Tahoe are doing more than sitting around.

Lynne Brosch and Rich Fischer of Friends of the South Lake Tahoe Public Library have been doing book groups on Monday nights with incarcerate youth.

This program began in September for the girls with the reading of “The House on Mango Street”. Next it was “Age of Miracles”.

Some of the other books include “The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime”, “Miss Peregrine’s Home for Peculiar Children”, “The Sweetness at the Bottom of the Pie”, “So.B.It” and “Perilous”.

Brosch wants to provide a variety of genres to cater to the girls’ interests. The biggest challenge has been to find used books in paperback for a reasonable price.

Books read in book group must be limited in violence, sexually explicit material, promotion of drug or alcohol abuse, and vampire stories are also frowned upon.

A boys’ reading group led by Fischer has just begun.

Friends of the Library has donated funds to the purchase of books for the reading group as well as many other titles requested for free reading, along with dictionaries and other reference materials for the school classrooms in the center.

Information about making a donation of either books or financial assistance is available at the library, 1000 Rufus Allen Blvd., South Lake Tahoe. Look for the Wishing Tree and choose a book title to donate or write a check or leave cash.

Placer County supes contemplate pay raise

By Richard Chang, Sacramento Bee

Placer County supervisors are weighing whether to ask voters for a raise after a county panel suggested pay hikes are long overdue in the fast-growing region.

Placer supervisors have made $30,000 a year ever since voters passed a ballot initiative in 1992 to cap salaries. Unlike their counterparts in other counties, Placer supervisors don’t receive any retirement or health benefits. And they don’t receive any other perks like a vehicle allowance or a discretionary fund.

As Placer County’s population has nearly doubled to 361,682 residents in the last two decades, supervisor compensation remained unchanged. Today, Placer’s salaries are the lowest in the four-county region that also includes Sacramento, Yolo and El Dorado.

Read the whole story