Paddling community asked to weigh-in on Tahoe experience

By Kathryn Reed

Poles may have been exchanged for paddles with snow on the ground, but that isn't stopping the non-motorized boat community from gathering information from people.

A blog has been developed to seek input from paddlers about what they want Lake Tahoe to be like when it comes to having access and information. The blog will be taken down Dec. 15.

The comments will be incorporated into the Lake Tahoe Non-Motorized Boat Framework that is being developed by a working group of mostly public agencies that own lakefront property. However, homeowners are represented, as is the Lake Tahoe Water Trail Committee. (The business rep has never attended the meeting and the Washoe Tribe designee stopped going.)



Group trying to make paddling on Lake Tahoe a better experience. Photo/Kathryn Reed

"In addition to the framework that is on the blog, there is a

study report that will be published that documents all the data collected," said Sue Rae Irelan, the California Tahoe Conservancy representative on the task force.

That will come out the first quarter of 2011.

It's intended to be a resource for agencies, but not something that any group would adopt. Part of the document is the user survey of paddlers what was done in 2008.

The information will be given to applicable agencies early in 2011 so anything that could be addressed would be before the summer season begins.

"A lot of what is in the framework is geared toward managing the beaches for beach access, looking at if parking is acceptable, looking at how people get in in the winter," Irelan said.

Part of the education component for paddlers involves letting them know the differences between California and Nevada in regards to what is public v. private. The other component is knowing when private property can be accessed and responsibilities of being on that property.

One thing Irelan said that was discovered early on is how kayakers, canoeists and paddlboarders don't usually use traditional boat launches. They are getting on the lake from a beach. This means needing info about aquatic invasive species and other information being distributed at non-traditional locations.

Comments about paddling on Lake Tahoe may be posted on the blog until Dec. 15 or sent to Sue Rae Irelan at sirelan@tahoe.ca.gov.

Truckee artist opens show at Dragonfly

Truckee artist and designer Sara Zimmerman will be celebrating her newest artworks at the opening of her “Fall to Winter” exhibit on Dec. 16 from 4:30 to 6pm at Dragonfly Restaurant in downtown Truckee.



The public is welcome to join in the festivities, where appetizers will be served and a free drawing will take place for a Sara Zimmerman print.

These unique landscapes will be on display now through March 2011.

Zimmerman’s newest works in her “Fall to Winter” exhibit depict the late seasonal change in the Sierra from a unique perspective.

For more information, call (530) 587.7492 or email sara@sarazimmerman.net.

South Tahoe choirs to perform at MontBleu

The 16th annual MontBleu Holiday Extravaganza is Dec. 9 and 10 at the MontBleu Theater in Stateline.

Doors open at 6pm and the show begins at 7pm.

Admission is $8 for adults and $5 for students and seniors (under 5 is free).

The South Lake Tahoe Children’s Choral Society will present an evening of holiday music, featuring the Tahoe Elementary Honor Choir, the Tahoe Intermediate Honor Choir, the Tahoe Belles and the Blue Ribbon Choir, with special appearance by the South Tahoe High School Choir, the Faculty/Parent Choir and the Marcia Sarosik Shining Stars.

Tahoe Arts Project will be conducting a raffle to help raise money for its performing arts in the schools programs.

For more information, call (530) 542.3632.

Tips for a safe holiday season

To the community,

The holiday season is always a special time of year. It is also a time when thieves and con artists prey on innocent victims caught up in the hustle and bustle of the season. We can never be too careful, too prepared or too aware. So keep these tips in mind for a safe and happy holiday season.

Around the house:

* Be extra cautious about locking doors and windows when you leave the house, even for a few minutes or just going down the block.

* We all want our homes to reflect the joy of the season, but avoid displaying gifts where they can be seen from a window or

doorway.

* Inside and outside decorations should not impede a clear vision of your property.

* Set your indoor and outdoor lights on an automatic timer.

* Leave a radio or television on so the house looks and sounds occupied.

* When leaving town, have a trusted friend or neighbor take care of your home by picking up the newspaper and mail.

* If you’re planning an extended absence and want extra patrol/vacation check contact the Sheriff’s Office STAR program (530) 621.7545.

Shopping:

* If you can shop with someone else and stay alert to your surroundings.

* Carry your purses closed and snugly against your body; carry wallets in front pants pocket or coat pocket.

* Avoid carrying large amounts of cash.

* Take your time when making purchase. Be sure to collect your license, credit cards or check book and your receipt.

* If you must use and ATM, choose one in a safe well-lighted area.

* Take care in protecting your PIN, by shielding the ATM keypad.

Home shopping and package delivery:

* Request a signature confirmation of delivery. By doing this, the deliverer will have to wait until you’re available or deliver the package to a neighbor.

* If you have an understanding boss, have your packages delivered to you at work.

* Track packages online to see exactly when they’re sent to your house for delivery. If you’re out of town at the time, phone a neighbor to pick up the package for you.

* Leave special instructions for where to deliver the packages. A good place is on the side or back of the house, so that the package is out of site from the road

Vehicle safety:

* Keep all car doors locked and windows closed while in or out of your car. Set your alarm or use and anti-theft device.

* Park as close to your destination as possible and take notice to where you have parked.

* Do not leave packages or valuables on the seat of your car. This creates a temptation for thieves. If you must leave items in your vehicle place them in the trunk or cover them.

* Look inside your car and around it as you approach. Do not approach your car alone if there are suspicious people in the area.

* Park in well lighted areas.

Operation identification:

* The idea behind Operation Identification is to deter property related crime and to assist the El Dorado County Sheriff’s Office in identifying stolen property and returning it to its lawful owners

* Mark gifts with your California driver’s ;icense number. Do not use your Social Security number.

* On items that cannot be engraved, photograph them.

Although this is a large list, most of the tips are relatively easy to apply and by doing so you could reduce the chances of being a victim. If you find yourself a victim of a criminal act, report it immediately to your local law enforcement agency. The El Dorado Sheriff's Office wishes you a safe and joyful holiday season.

Lt. Bryan Golmitz, El Dorado County Sheriff's Office

Reno hotel tax collections increase despite lower room rates

By Bill O'Driscoll, Reno Gazette-Journal

The average charge for a night's lodging in the Reno-Tahoe region over the first nine months of this year rose 1.4 percent from 2009, according to the region's tourism agency.

But as temperatures fall with the advent of another winter of recession, downward pressure on room rates is coming to bear. And area properties are facing the challenge of filling rooms – but at what cost?

Discounts of up to 60 percent were posted recently on Expedia.com for one area property, Grand Sierra Resort, which for a time in November also was offering two nights free without an additional booking. GSR officials declined to comment.

The head of the Reno-Sparks Convention and Visitors Authority downplayed her concern even though two-thirds of the agency's budget is financed through taxes of up to 13.5 percent,

depending on locale, on room receipts.

Read the whole story

Snow village building contest in South Tahoe

Snow villages are ready for creation at the corner of Ski Run Boulevard and Highway 50 and at the Y in South Lake Tahoe.

Any individual, family, group, business, or other organization can stake their claim and build the snow creation of their imagination. The Snow Villages will be open to public vote, and photos will be posted on Facebook.

Voting will be online during December and the winner will receive a certificate to keep and a trophy that will be passed on to the winner of the 2011-12 SnowTown ShowDown.

To register, contact Brian Des Rochers bd_etc@hotmail.com or (530) 545.2939 or JoAnn Conner ctahoewriter@hotmail.com or (530) 544.7412.

Budget gift: Hard to go wrong with wine

Publisher's note: ***Lake Tahoe News is publishing idea for gifts costing less than $20. Click here for information.***



Wine is favorite gift. But it doesn't have to break the bank. Check out the deals Apres Wine Co. in South Lake Tahoe has. And if you aren't sure what to buy, then go to one of their tastings to sample before buying.

Tree lighting makes it official – holiday season has arrived

By Kathryn Reed

It's definitely the holiday season in South Lake Tahoe now that Santa has turned on the lights on the community tree and the menorah has been lighted.

With nearly 200 people gathered in the center of town by the Lake Tahoe Visitors Center satellite office, student choir groups sang carols. Paul Kushner led the ensemble, with some participation from the crowd gathered in the chilly night air Dec. 3.



Dillon Breckenridge,

5, of South Lake Tahoe tells Santa his Christmas wish. Photos/Kathryn Reed

Breaking with tradition just a bit, Dwight Borges led his two Belgian draft horses to the front of the building to drop off Santa. This led the younger ones in the crowd to cheer and ask for hugs from the man in red and white. He obliged a bit before being escorted to his duties to light the tree.

Sydney Morris was standing out back waiting for Santa's arrival. The sixth-grader has been coming out for the festivities since she was in third grade. Her favorite part of the night is the tree lighting.

New LED lights eliminated the threat of a strand not lighting – like last year. Oversized wreaths, candy canes and balls adorn the large pine.

Santa made his way inside the center where Ethan Niven was his helper – handing out little items to all those who spoke to Santa.

One of the first to sit on the big guy's lap was Dillon Breckenridge. The 5-year-old is hoping his stocking is filled with a Woody doll from "Toy Story."

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Nevada board votes to make substitute pot illegal

By Jessica Cramer, Daily Sparks Tribune

RENO – Products sold as legal substitutes for marijuana will soon be illegal after a vote Thursday by the Nevada State Board of Pharmacy.

The vote means head shops, which specialize in articles of interest to drug users, will soon have to remove products containing certain synthetic cannabinoids from their shelves.

The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administra-tion (DEA) on Nov. 24 announced it will use its emergency scheduling authority to temporarily make five chemicals used to make synthetic marijuana products illegal. Products including chemicals JWH-018, JWH-073, JWH-200, CP-47, 497 and cannabicyclohexanol will be illegal in the United States after Dec. 24. The DEA then has one year, with the possibility of a six-month extension, to determine whether the chemicals should remain illegal.

Read the whole story

Winter arts workshops at Sierra Nevada College

Sierra Nevada College is expanding its renowned summer art workshops – now in their 26th year – to include winter workshop sessions.

For a second year in a row, Fine Arts Department Chair Sheri Leigh O’Connor has organized an opportunity for individuals to gather in Tahoe alongside nationally-known artists to focus on their creativity. Workshops begin the week of Jan. 3 and feature Josh DeWeese’s “Pots as Expression” and Emily Silver’s “Paper for Light: Focus on the Whites in Watercolor.”

Each year, SNC at Incline Village offers a variety of summer workshops given by nationally known ceramists, glass artists, painters, sculptors, printmakers, digital artists, musicians, photographers, papermakers, jewelers, and more.

For more information or bios about the individual artists go here, or contact Sheri Leigh O’Connor at (775) 881.7588 or sleigh@sierranevada.edu.