Mix of open-closed schools in Lake Tahoe

Schools in Lake Tahoe Unified and Douglas County schools at the lake are closed today for a snow day. Morning classes at Lake Tahoe Community College are canceled. Check with the college at 11am to know if afternoon classes will be held. Tahoe Truckee Unified is open.

LTUSD is out for the remainder of the week for the Thanksgiving holiday.

DCSD has a half day Wednesday before being out for the week.

Ron Christino said visibility is too poor on Kingsbury Grade to have buses hauling students to class.

“The roads are not too bad, there’s not a lot of accumulation, but it’s going to be coming in heavier during the day,” Christino said. “We had maybe 4 inches, but you can’t see anything.”

– Kathryn Reed

Cantilever walk to be built at S. Tahoe’s ‘convention center’

By Kathryn Reed

Normally before construction projects that impact pedestrians

begin the first thing to be built is walkways for them. That didn’t happen in 2007 when ground was broken at the would-be convention center in South Lake Tahoe. Instead, walkers and cyclists are next to traffic without any barrier.

City Manager Tony O’Rourke is appalled this was allowed to happen.

With the project stalled in bankruptcy court and projections construction will not begin until 2013 at the soonest, he wants to improve the area even if the bankrupt developer won’t. The City Council this month approved the expenditure of nearly $200,000 to build a cantilever walkway at the site next building season.



This time next year people won't have to walk in the street next to the fenced bankrupt convention center project. Photo/Kathryn Reed

The council on a 3-1 vote went along with this $183,000 idea presented to them by Jim Marino, the city’s assistant engineer. Councilman Bruce Grego was absent from the Nov. 16

meeting. Mayor Kathay Lovell voted no without explanation.

The money to pay for the project comes from taxes being collected by the city's Redevelopment Agency from the site via property tax dollars.

"We need the cantilever because of the elevation change," Marino explained.

Marino said if the same project the city and Tahoe Regional Planning Agency approved for the 11-plus acre site at the state line were built, the new sidewalk would be taken out to bring the first floor decking to street level.

"It solves two problems," Councilman Bill Crawford said. "We get a little bit better physical appearance and it's a safer place for pedestrians, and we possibly avoid trouble down the road."

Lovell questioned whether the cantilever design would put the city more at-risk in terms of liability.

"The cantilever should not increase liability. We can get design immunity," City Attorney Patrick Enright told her.

Staff will have to work with Caltrans to get the necessary right-of-way issues worked out. With the cantilever plan, it means getting rid of the concrete barriers now dividing the fence and highway.

The schedule is have the design and engineering done by mid-January, Caltrans permits in hand by mid-April, bids open in May, project awarded June 6, and construction done July 26.

Truckee police chief helps bring stability to Sudan

Truckee Police Chief Nicholas Sensley led an international team to Juba, Sudan, earlier this month to initiate a national anti-corruption development program. At relative peace since 2005, Southern Sudan had been at civil war with Northern Sudan for 39 of the 54 years of the nation's independence from England.

PLI Global is a nonprofit leadership development institute based in Colorado that Sensley is involved in. His team was primarily sponsored through benefactors in Truckee.

Sensley said his team had "an exceptionally successful journey." He reported that in his final meeting with the government of Southern Sudan's Minister of Internal Affairs Maj. Gen. Gier Chuang Aloung committed to convening a meeting between Sensley and his team with the president of Southern Sudan and his Cabinet to comprehensively address the issue of corruption in the country. The meeting will take place after Southern Sudan's Jan. 9 referendum on succession from Northern Sudan.



Truckee Police Chief Nicholas Sensley, right, with Sudan police. Photo/Provided

During this November visit, Sensley and his team conducted anti-corruption and leadership development training for the highest level leadership of the police force, fire brigade, prison system, wildlife protection service, and officials of GOSS political party Sudan People's Liberation Movement).

Sensley, like all of PLI Global's 85 consultants from nearly a dozen countries, is a volunteer who uses his personal time to serve the people of developing and transitioning nations around the world. Since 1994, PLI Global has served in 57 nations and trained and provided development assistance to over 60,000 leaders. Chief Sensley has been a PLI senior consultant since 1998.

Visit PLI Global, for more information about the institute's work.

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CHP collecting food, toys for Tahoe kids

The California Highway Patrol is once again partnering with KCRA 3 in Sacramento for the 12th Annual CHiPs for Kids Toy Drive.

Now through Dec. 20 the CHP will be collecting new, unwrapped

toys for hospitalized and disadvantaged children. Also being collected are on-perishable foods, and new or lightly used jackets, hats and gloves.

The collected items will stay within our community and will be delivered just before the holidays.

You can follow the drive on Facebook.

There are collection barrels at the CHP – South Lake Tahoe Office and the Lake Tahoe Environmental Science Magnet School.

If your business would like to be a collection site, contact Officer Jeff Gartner at (530) 577.1001.

Hundreds gather to break bread at early Thankgiving

By Kathryn Reed

Oh, the aromas. There is something so incredibly distinctive about the flavors of Thanksgiving dinner melding together. It should be bottled to be experienced more than once a year.

Spilling onto the sidewalk was a line Monday night to get this meal.

With expectations of serving more than 300 people, the Bread & Broth crew arrived at the kitchen of St. Theresa Church in South Lake Tahoe at 10am Nov. 22. About 25 hours of prep time had gone into the meal before the nearly four-dozen volunteers started work Monday.



Richard Carpenter says a lot of people are in dire need, but pride doesn't allow them to admit it. Photos/Kathryn Reed

This was Michael Giordano's first year in the kitchen. Friday was all about spending seven hours chopping 47 loaves of bread for stuffing. (See recipe below.) He wanted to help make a difference in the lives of people who don't necessarily know where their next meal will come from.

"You see it in their face, they say thank you," Giordano said from the kitchen as he watched the line of people fill their plates with all the traditional fixings.

Richard Carpenter can't say enough good things about his first Thanksgiving dinner at Bread & Broth.

"This was awesome," he said scraping leftovers into a container to take home to those who couldn't make it to the meal. "It couldn't have gotten better if you made it yourself at home."

Carpenter has been coming to the Monday night dinners for about six months. He's out of work. He's being evicted. He has no money to put gas in his truck. And yet, his brown eyes are

warm and soft, seeming to contradict the harsh reality of his current state of affairs.

He’s lived in South Lake Tahoe for 22 years, first coming here from San Jose to help build Embassy Suites.

Carpenter is sitting with friends – a father with his 18-year-old son. They are quiet. The teen wants to work but can’t find any. The father needs meds from having had hernia surgery. He doesn’t have the $40 for the pills.

But their stomachs are full. At least this one night.

John Tussey has been in the area for 16 years. He comes every Monday for this hot meal that is served free by this nonprofit that relies on food and monetary donations from the community to keep it going.

Last year about 250 people came for the Thanksgiving meal. The need keeps growing. Not just this night, but most Mondays.

“We are seeing some new faces and some familiar faces,” said Diane Weidinger, ringleader of Bread & Broth and head chef.

Dinner rolls donated from Sugar Pine Bakery sit on a baking sheet next to a massive container of homemade cranberries. Apple and pumpkin pies have arrived at a bargain price from the Barton Café. Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care has donated fruit and vegetables. Raley’s had a big delivery Monday.

Weidinger only has one complaint about the dinner – the use of instant mashed potatoes.

Still, those seated at the long dining tables don’t mind. Not a morsel is left on their plates.

The following is from Diane Weidinger, the force behind Bread & Broth.

I make stuffing once a year, for 300 people. This recipe is

for 12 cups, a normal size amount for a family meal. Naturally, I use my Heart Rock Herb & Spice Poultry/Dressing spice blend.

Classic American Bread Stuffing Bread & Broth Style

24 slices of bread (white, wheat, multi grain mixture is the best)

1 lb. sweet Italian or sage pork sausage (a combo is nice) cooked

2 C celery ribs, finely chopped

1 C large onion, finely chopped

½ C carrots, finely chopped

½ C chopped fresh parsley

1½ T poultry seasoning

1 tsp salt

½ tsp pepper

½ C dried cranberries

2 large eggs, beaten

¼ lb. (1 stick) unsalted butter, melted

½ C warm chicken broth and water

Cut bread into 1-inch pieces (it cuts easier if slightly frozen), toast on a cookie sheet pan in a 300 degree until dry, take care not to burn them. Sauté, using some of the sausage fat along with butter, the onions, celery and carrots until soft, starting with the celery and carrots first as they take a bit longer than the onions. Mix the bread, cooked sausage and vegetables, poultry seasoning, salt/pepper, and cranberries in a large bowl. Tossing with clean hands works

the best. Drizzle the eggs over the bread mixture and toss again. Mix the butter and chicken broth together and drizzle over the bread mixture. Continue to add warm water, a little at a time, until the stuffing is moist and just holds together when lightly pressed between the palms of your hands. Turn into a buttered baking dish, cover and bake for 45 minutes or until hot through (325 degree oven). Take off foil the last five minutes for a slightly crusty top.

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Putting perspective on holiday shopping

By Lou Scatigna

Boy, how time flies when the economy is in the toilet.

With Black Friday upon us, the tension of the holiday shopping season is here – and consumers with low confidence and retailers with low expectations will soon begin limping into the happiest time of the year.

But it doesn't have to be that way..

The holidays can either be the happiest time of the year or the most stressful time of the year. The truth is, it can be easier. We all have high expectations for ourselves when the holidays come around, but by simply taking a step back to look at our situations realistically, we can actually plan a joyous holiday without taking ourselves to the poorhouse to do it.

My ideas on holiday budget planning can help save consumers grief:

* Honestly evaluate your current financial situation and determine how much you can spend without going into significant debt;

* Decide the maximum amount of spending that will be done on credit cards;

* Discuss with your children that during tough times, holiday expenses will be lower than when are good;

* Start shopping now. This will give you the time to search for sales and bargains, many retailers have already discounted prices. Another reason to start now is you will wind up using more cash and less credit cards because your spreading your buying over several weeks instead of three or four;

* Use the Internet. Great bargains can be found because online stores don't have the traditional brick and mortar overhead of retail stores. Also, it helps you beat the crowds, the parking and the long checkout lines;

* Instead of buying three or four expensive gifts, buy a larger number of inexpensive ones;

* Start a holiday club bank account so next year you will have the cash saved;

* Restrict gift buying to your immediate family. Those nieces, nephews, aunts and uncles can add up, I'm sure they will understand, because they are likely doing the same thing.

By simply expecting less of ourselves – and teaching our families to accept those limitations – not only are we teaching them valuable lessons about how to manage money, but we are also reducing the stress of the season so everyone can enjoy themselves. Because, at the end of the day, holiday presents are just things. The time we spend with our families during the holidays, however, is the true gift of the season.

Louis Scatigna is a financial advisor and a licensed

investment broker and since 1987 a tax accountant.

Storm keeps some from Harveys World Series of Poker

By Eric Ramsey, Poker News

Lake Tahoe is in the midst of it's heartiest November storm in nearly a decade, but that hasn't kept the players away from the poker room this weekend. A very respectable 246 runners plodded through blizzard conditions (or walked downstairs from their suites) to get themselves registered for Day 1 of of the World Series of Poker Circuit Main Event. After 16 short levels, just 51 of them survived to bag up chips and return for tomorrow's moving day. It's the cowboy-hatted Dan Black who'll take the big stack into Day 2 with his count of 329,500 leading the pack as they round the first stretch.



If the weather and road conditions did dampen anything, they may have kept some of the more notable pros from making the trip up the mountain to put up their $1,500 buy-in. Chris Ferguson, for instance, is still the face of this event after taking the title in 2007, but "Jesus" clearly left home without his snow chains this weekend, rendering him unable to return for a second go at this Circuit ring. Still, there were plenty of familiar faces interspersed with the locals and the satellite winners in the field. Andrew Malott, Jason DeWitt, Aaron Kanter, "Captain" Tom Franklin, two-time Circuit winner John "Cowboy" Land, and two-time WSOP bracelet winner Howard "Tahoe" Andrew all came out to play today, though all of them

had fallen out of contention by the time the bags came out just after the bewitching hour on the West Coast.

Read the whole story

Avalanche kills ski patrol director in Colorado

By KDVR

MINERAL COUNTY, Colo. – A ski patrol supervisor was killed in an avalanche at Wolf Creek Ski Area Monday morning, authorities said.

The avalanche happened inside the boundaries of the ski area, which is located near Pagosa Springs in southern Colorado, at about 10:30 a.m.

The area had received more than a foot of new snow over 24-hours.

“Wolf Creek Ski Area will closed today, November 22nd, due to the fatality of a staff member,” said a message on the ski area’s web site. “Lifts will begin operating tomorrow at 8:30 a.m.”

Postings on Wolf Creek’s Facebook page identified the victim as Scott Kay.

Read the whole story

Sierra open for half day Tuesday, top-bottom on Wednesday

Thanks to a generous La Niña storm over the weekend, Sierra-at-Tahoe Resort is looking forward to Tuesday – the earliest opening in six years.

More than 6 feet of snow fell at Sierra.

Easy Rider Express, Nob Hill and Rock Garden will begin turning at noon on Tuesday, accessing beginner, intermediate, and expert terrain and a medium-sized terrain park on Broadway.

Lift tickets will be $5 for kids, $20 for adults, with all proceeds going to local sports teams.

Sierra Resort will open top to bottom on Wednesday morning.

Beginner group and private lessons will be available for children and adults. Easy Street, Sierra Resort's new beginner terrain featuring two carpet conveyor lifts and 11 acres of sculpted Smart Terrain, is projected to open Thursday for ski and snowboard lessons.

Meetings about Martis Creek Dam scheduled

By Barbara Barte Osborn, Sacramento Bee

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has scheduled public meetings Dec. 1 and 2 to discuss Martis Creek Dam with Truckee and Reno residents.

The Truckee meeting is scheduled from 6 to 8pm Dec. 1 at Tahoe-Truckee High School, 11723 Donner Pass Road.

The Reno meeting is planned from 6 to 8pm Dec. 2 at Horseman’s Park Clubhouse, 2800 Pioneer Drive.

A draft baseline risk assessment for the dam, in the Martis Valley near Truckee, is expected to be completed Nov. 30.

Read the whole story