Winds whip Lake Tahoe Basin, snow coming

By Kathryn Reed

A high wind warning remains in affect until 11pm Sunday, with a flood warning until 8:30pm for Alpine, El Dorado, Nevada, Placer, Douglas, Washoe, and Carson counties.

At 5:37pm radar showed heavy rain over the Lake Tahoe Basin south into Alpine County, according to the National Weather Service. Surface reports indicate as much as 4 inches of rain has fallen in the region, with an additional 1 to 1.5 inches expected through 8 pm.



Ducks think this is Lake Jeffery Street in South Lake Tahoe on Oct. 24. Photo/Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe as of 4:53pm Oct. 24 reported 2.92 inches of rain in the past 24 hours.

A wind gust of 132mph was recorded on top of Squaw Peak on Sunday.

The National Weather Service in Reno is forecasting a 20 percent chance of rain-snow in the basin for Monday and Tuesday. The high will be 49 degrees both days.

Sun will dominate Wednesday, with rain returning Thursday and Friday.

For those going to the World Series to see the Giants beat the Rangers, expect the low to be 54 degrees in San Francisco on Wednesday night and rainy with the same low on Thursday.

California parks feeling burden of funding cuts

By Marjie Lundstrom and Matt Weiser, Sacramento Bee

They were left to the people of California, gifts of natural beauty and magnificence to be passed through the generations.

For California's 278 state parks, that heritage is becoming an iffy proposition.

Amid a sagging economy and chronic state budget deficit, California's parks – like other state park systems across the nation – are at a critical financial crossroads.



Grover Hot

Springs in Markleeville is part of the State Parks system. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Years of budget cuts have produced a $1 billion backlog of crumbling buildings and eroding trails, according to a five-month examination by McClatchy newspapers in California. The vacancy rate among California park rangers stands at 30 percent. Reported crimes in state parks tripled over the past decade as the state added more parks – but not park rangers – a data analysis shows.

“We’re on the wrong end of a 30-year downward trend,” said California State Parks Director Ruth Coleman.

Read the whole story

Dorothy Gillemot leaves legacy of philanthropy

By Guy Clifton, Reno Gazette-Journal

Dorothy Gillemot never sought the spotlight, but when someone needed help, she was always the first to step up.

“She always had a smile, and she was always diving in to help everybody,” said Kathleen Kamille, a longtime Lake Tahoe neighbor.

Gillemot, a philanthropist who, along with her husband, George, pledged millions of dollars to the University of Nevada, Reno and other charities, died last week after a long battle with Alzheimer's disease.

She was 83.

Read the whole story

A Vermont dining experience worth repeating

By Kathryn Reed

WOODSTOCK, Vt. – As a vegetarian, I have a few simple ways to rate a good menu. No. 1, there is something on it I will eat. No. 2, the choices are not a veggie burger (unless it's a burger joint or something like that) or a portabella sandwich. Growing in importance is No. 3, using local ingredients.

The Woodstock Inn's Red Rooster restaurant did not disappoint. As the main restaurant in the upscale Vermont inn, the food was fantastic, the prices reasonable and the service lacking.

The spacious dining room had more booths than traditional tables. The lighting was dim, but not so terrible the menu couldn't be read. The only criticism of the night was our absent waitress. We let her know our displeasure with our tip.



Saffron
Toasted
Israeli
Couscous

The Saffron Toasted Israeli Couscous ($19) was outrageously delicious. It nearly pained me to give up a bite to let Sue try it.

“We have a lot of fun in the kitchen,” chef Jason Lawless said.

It shows in the food.

I started the night with a bowl of Sweet Potato and Apple Bisque ($8). It was a tad bit in the sweet side, but oh so flavorful. It made me wonder what type of apple was used.

Sue had the soup special, which was potato bacon. She liked it, saying it’s rare for the bacon flavor to be so distinct.

At the last-minute Sue switched her entrée choice from scallops to prime rib ($25). Based on there not being a morsel of meat left on the plate, she clearly was not disappointed in her selection.

Listed on the menu are the various local food suppliers. Eleven of the 12 were from Vermont, with one from Massachusetts.

Chef Lawless has been the master in the kitchen since July 2008, when he moved to the Green Mountain state after working in New York City for seven years.

“It’s definitely a change of pace with seasonal ups and downs. We rely on our golf and ski seasons,” Lawless said. He said the middle seasons – what Tahoe folk would call shoulder season – are hard to get used to. It means going from preparing 300 meals a night in peak season to 30 in the slow times.



Sweet Potato and Apple Bisque

One dish that is a favorite no matter the season, Lawless said, is the Seafood Stew. (Recipe below.)

“It’s really easy for the home cook to make. It’s not an elaborate recipe,” Lawless said.

He also said it has a real Vermont feel. The comments in the recipe are all from Lawless. I have not tried it.

Seafood Soup (Serves 2)

1 leek, small dice

1 bulb fennel, small dice

1 medium onion, small dice

4 cloves garlic, sliced thin

1 T chopped ginger

1 tsp saffron

1 tsp old bay

¼ tsp cayenne pepper

½ C Pernod

1 C white wine

1 can clam juice, 16 oz

1 8 oz can diced tomatoes

1 C water

¼ pound butter

Salt to taste

In a large pot, melt the butter over medium heat. Add the onion, fennel, and leeks, a pinch of salt, and sweat until they become tender, about 10 minutes. Add the garlic and ginger, and cook another 5 minutes. Deglaze with the white wine and Pernod and reduce by half. Add the remaining ingredients and simmer until the vegetables are soft and the tomatoes have broken down, about 90 minutes. You can finish the soup with any kind of seafood or shellfish that you would like. I like to use PEI mussels, shrimp, salmon, and cod. Just add the seafood to the finished soup in the pot and simmer until all the seafood is cooked.

I like to serve it with grilled sourdough bread and **saffron aioli**.

Tiny pinch saffron threads, about 20 strands

1½ T warm water

2 large egg yolks

1 large clove garlic, minced

¼ tsp salt

¾ C extra-virgin olive oil

2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice

Freshly ground black pepper

In a small bowl, soak the saffron threads in the warm water for 20 minutes. In a deep bowl, combine the egg yolks, garlic, and salt, and whisk to combine. Very slowly, dribble in the olive oil, whisking all the time. You can add the oil a bit more quickly after about half has been absorbed, but go very slowly at first or the mayonnaise may “break.”

Add the saffron and its soaking water, then use the lemon juice to swirl around in the saffron-soaking bowl to catch any remaining saffron essence. Whisk the lemon juice into the aioli. Add a few grinds of pepper. The aioli should be made at least 4 hours before using, and will keep, refrigerated, for up to 48 hours.

EDC seeks easement from Forest Service on Rubicon Trail

By Carlos Alcalá, Sacramento Bee

El Dorado County supervisors voted 5-0 Tuesday to approve a plan to apply for a U.S. Forest Service easement along the Rubicon Trail offroad vehicle route.

The county has had a road along the route for more than 100 years, but the U.S. Forest Service has demanded the easement request before allowing the county to build a bridge along the

route.

The county has balked at the request, saying it already had legal claim to the road as a so-called RS2477 road – a road under a long-standing federal statute.

Read the whole story

Tips for injury-free Halloween

By American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons

Every Halloween, kids across the country parade neighborhoods in search of the most glorious prize: candy. The build-up for Halloween is almost as exciting as the day itself with pre-Halloween festivities like pumpkin-picking, pumpkin carving and selecting the perfect costume for the big day.



And though the holiday calls for fun, the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS) stresses the importance of taking proper precautions to avoid injuries this Halloween.

A nine-year study examined holiday-related pediatric emergency room visits between 1997 and 2006. Results of this study show Halloween among the top three holidays producing the most ER visits:

• Finger/hand injuries accounted for the greatest proportion of injuries on Halloween (17.6 percent).

• Of the finger/hand injuries sustained on Halloween, 33.3 percent were lacerations and 20.1 percent were fractures.

• Children ages 10-14 sustained the greatest proportion of injuries (30.3 percent).

AAOS tips:

• Never let children carve pumpkins. Adults carving pumpkins should remember to use specifically designed carving knives, rather than kitchen knives, as they are less likely to get stuck in the thick pumpkin skin. Carve the pumpkin in small, controlled strokes, away from oneself on a strong, sturdy surface.

• Carving knives should be kept in a clean, dry, well-lighted area. Any moisture on the tools, hands, or table can cause the knife to slip, leading to injuries.

• Should a pumpkin carver cut a finger or hand, make sure the hand is elevated higher than the heart and apply direct pressure to the wound with a clean cloth to stop the bleeding. If continuous pressure does not slow or stop the bleeding after 15 minutes, an emergency room visit may be necessary. Additionally, it may be wise to follow-up with a hand surgeon to make sure everything is okay and nothing needs repair.

• Be considerate of fire hazards when lighting jack-o-lantern candles or use non-flammable light sources, like glow sticks or artificial pumpkin lights. Alternatively, try painting pumpkins for a fun, creative option and removes the risks of carving.

• Halloween costumes should be light and bright, so children are clearly visible to motorists and other pedestrians. Trim costumes and bags with reflective tape that glows in the dark.

• Costumes should be flame-resistant and fit properly. Be sure the child’s vision is unobstructed from masks, face paint or

hats. Costumes that are too long may cause kids to trip and fall, trim or hem their costumes as necessary.

• Children should wear sturdy, comfortable, slip-resistant shoes to avoid falls.

• It is important that children walk on sidewalks and never cut across yards or driveways. They should also obey all traffic signals and remain in designated crosswalks when crossing the street.

• Trick-or-treaters should only approach houses that are well lit. Both children and parents should carry flashlights to see and be seen.

• Be aware of neighborhood dogs when trick-or-treating and remember that these pets can impose a threat when you approach their home.

• It’s also a good idea to carry a cell phone while trick-or-treating in case of an emergency.

State water board wants to cut back on inspections

By Loretta Kalb, Sacramento Bee

California water quality regulators are considering a policy change that would end testing and cleanup of several thousand underground storage tanks that have leaked gasoline and other petroleum products.

In a draft policy circulating for comment, the staff of the State Water Resources Control Board proposes to end

groundwater monitoring, investigation and further costly cleanup at sites deemed “low risk” for spreading pollution.

By doing so, the agency is trying to free scarce funds for more pressing cleanup projects as part of a strategy the state water board authorized more than a year ago.

But some regional water quality regulators say the draft policy does not protect water quality, offers little scientific backing for deciding when to stop tracking cleanup cases, and is open to misinterpretation.

Read the whole story

Report: Nevada’s economic recovery will be slow

By Frank X. Mullen Jr., Reno Gazette-Journal

Nevada was first in and may be last out of the recession, according to a state economic report.

While the gaming industry has steadily declined over the last decade, businesses in other industries were relocating to Nevada and/or expanding to keep pace with the population growth at both ends of the state, according to the Reno2020 report by the Center for Regional Studies at the University of Nevada, Reno.

“The added diversity in the employment base may help Nevada recover from this recession, even as tourism lags behind,” the report noted.

The report outlines the grim cycle of the economic downturn in

the Silver State. With housing, construction and gaming revenues at a low ebb, more people are without jobs and fewer are spending money. That leads to more struggling businesses, increased layoffs, and less tax revenue for local governments.

Read the whole story

Wind warning Sunday for Lake Tahoe Basin

A high-wind warning has been issued for the Lake Tahoe Basin from 8am-11pm today.

The National Weather Service says to expect gusts of 45 to 55mph. Strong winds are likely to impact travel along highways 50, 95 and 395 and Interstate 80 on Sunday.

Winds will increase this morning with the strongest winds reaching the basin this afternoon. Sierra ridge gusts will exceed 100mph.

Wave heights could reach 5 feet. Boat owners should consider moving boats to a secure location off the water.

Woodstock Inn – A landmark

for the season and the ages

By Susan Wood

WOODSTOCK, Vt. – The red carpet Vermont throws out in fall lies beyond the ground beneath its world-renowned maple trees.

In the heart of central Vermont, Woodstock boasts a AAA four-diamond rated hotel as rich with history and iconic to the quaint, colonial-style village as the Rockefeller name and the origin of its agricultural and railroad traditions.

Service and style are all a part of the Woodstock Inn & Resort, which operates under the Laurance Rockefeller-spawned Woodstock Foundation. The inn's early beginnings date back as far as 1793. The Inn as it's known today was built a century later with $120,000 of the citizenry's money to keep up with the demand for the Vermont lifestyle.



Woodstock Inn

The Woodstock Inn has transformed to reflect the growing needs of local residents and tourists. In the early 1900s, each guest received a heavy fur coat in winter.

Recreation touches every season here – from alpine skiing at the nation's first rope tow on Clinton Gilbert's pasture in 1934 and cross country skiing in the hills behind the Inn's Racquet & Fitness Club to the early years of tennis and golf inspired by Boston resident D.B. Harrington. In 1895, the doctor brought his clubs on one stay to play in a cow pasture

behind the Inn. An 18-hole, Robert Trent Jones-designed golf course sits there now to entice summer and fall visitors.

But it’s the fall that prompts visitors to flock in droves to witness the splendor of the vivid red, pink, orange and yellow foliage. They’re welcomed by pure New England hospitality, and this year was no exception. Staffers greet guests with an open door and friendly hello. (Don’t be surprised if at least one doorman remembers what your plans are and asks you later how they were.)

A month ago, the 142-room grand hotel covering one square block celebrated the addition of a 10,000-square-foot, full service spa costing $10 million. It is next to the inn’s scenic back courtyard that is lined with maple trees. But no need for guests to walk outside; it’s also accessed via the Inn.

From the minute one arrives at the front entrance of the Inn, it’s easy to see the visual Rockefeller was going for after buying the property in 1967 and rebuilding a grander version farther off the Village Green. (Prior to 1967, an older inn sat next to the Green, as shown in artwork hung in one of the hotel’s hallways that this reporter’s uncle painted years ago.)

The Woodstock Inn spans more than 9 acres, embracing its history and incorporating it into modern times where tourists insist on amenities and the perfect blend of relaxation and things to do. It perfectly complements the town of Woodstock.

The front desk even prints an activity list if it’s a rainy day.

The hotel is an ideal launching pad to a hike through Faulkner Park and up Mount Tom, which “towers” over the village. Although only a few hundred feet up through a series of switchbacks, it’s steep in one section. But the nearly 360-degree view is well worth the jaunt.

At lower elevations, an easier stroll can be had around the village, which touts long-lasting retail establishments such as an independent bookstore that has stood since 1935.

For those who appreciate the historic, the interior of the hotel's library – one of several seating areas in the Inn – was built with barn wood.

Some rooms are equipped with wood stoves for a cozy atmosphere. A large stone fireplace sits square at the main entrance and looks inviting enough to tell stories around, but in the peace and quiet of the late hours of the evening the blaze represents mesmerizing comfort. Lamp stands resembling maple tree bark flank the fireplace, showing the importance of the region's sugarhouses.

For the modern-day guest, furnishings made of solid wood allow a guest to set up an office or lounge around in style to watch the high-definition flat-screen television or read in the comfy king-size bed adorned with a high wooden headboard. A half-dresser half-hutch includes a contemporary coffee maker with a plentiful stash of Vermont's own Green Mountain Coffee.

Instead of increasing the nightly room fee upfront, guests are greeted in their room with the news a $4 housekeeping fee will be added to the bill. No chance of opting out, unlike what we encountered at the Sheraton in Boston.

A marble floor uses Vermont's signature stone in the guest bathrooms. Wall tiles look so clean it appears the military came in to scrub the premises. Nice touches include a small oil candle on the counter. A vanity mirror assists in getting the guest ready for an evening out at one of the Inn's varied dining choices.

The Red Rooster is the fine dining option – with its entryway marked by a bar that even locals use to satisfy their appetites. The restaurant's food, in particular the prime rib, is excellent, but reservations come with a recommendation to

request your waiter. A server may be disengaged or slow as the tables fill up during the Inn's demanding peak season. (Another suggestion: If wanting to dine with a group in the alternative, less expensive Richardson's Tavern, stake out your sofa, booth or bar stools early. It may fill up faster and even if five in your gathering were born in Woodstock and two are guests, you may never get a place to sit. And waiters will not find the time or inclination to serve you in the outside seating area.)

Woodstock Inn dining options may change down the road. Marketing director and hospitality veteran Courtney Lowe wants to bring more special events to the hotel, including wine dinners and culinary demonstrations.

"This is only the tip of the iceberg. We'd like to not just offer them during the off season, but we'd also like to maximize on the peak seasons when the people are here," Lowe said earlier this month while lounging in one of the comfy chairs near the front desk with Chef Jason Lawless steps away hosting a cheese sampling.

Lowe has worked for the Inn since March and has grand plans to expand on its offerings for foodies and increase partnerships with local businesses. One example would be teaming up with a local winery for late-night dessert wine tastings.

The Inn gets the word out on its offerings through mostly electronic means such as email blasts to its feeder markets of New York City and Boston. Packages are provided, and Lowe expects to extend them. One has a romantic theme. Another includes the full breakfast buffet in the dining room's cheery, open-air environment.

Lowe said after a few years in a downturn for tourism, business has started to pick up.

"It's been a good year. We started to see the group business come back, and the wedding business went up while everything

else was down," Lowe said.

Of all the features of the Inn, none accomplishes its full service goal and comes as heralded as its spa and salon that opened in September. More than 300 people showed up for its grand opening.

Spa Director Michelle Adams told *Lake Tahoe News* the reception of it has exceeded "all expectations" – with a clientele ranging from 75 percent tourists to a quarter of the users being local residents.

According to Lowe, the spa answers the quest of entertaining guests who don't ski.

"Every day is good for a spa day," Adams said during a tour of the facilities, which are open from 10am to 7pm.

The treatment menu is extensive – from the standard Swedish massage to a "hot chocolate firming body wrap." Treatments in one of the 10 rooms can run more than $300 for a couple. For $25 guests may use the spa's tranquil and holistic-style facilities that include a Eucalyptus-scented steam room. A dip in the hot tub is an experience with a wood fire blazing in the pit steps away from the tub and an attentive staffer checking in with guests. A Japanese lilac growing nearby marks the passages of the seasons, a critical part of life for Vermonters.

Those attending weddings and other special occasions are apt to enjoy the VIP room for relaxation upstairs, along with a full salon for hair styling, pedicures and manicures. Polishes come under names like "Get Off My Cloud." Adams anticipates offering the spa's own line of bath products in the near future.

Even the soundproof, calming acoustics suggest a harmonious balance between complete relaxation and isolation. Design aficionados will also appreciate accent touches from the likes

of glassworks artist Simon Pearce and furniture maker Charles Shackleton, both local to central Vermont.

If you go:

The Woodstock Inn & Resort is located on South Street, taking up one square block of real estate in Woodstock where Routes 4 and 12 intersect at the town’s Village Green.

Call for reservations at 800.448.7900 or visit online. A Woodstock single with a king-size bed can run $317 a night for double occupancy in the fall.

ngg_shortcode_0_placeholder (Click on photos to enlarge.)