Clinical setting prepares nurses for real world scenarios

By Lenita Powers, Reno Gazette-Journal

A newly renovated nursing wing dedicated at Truckee Meadows Community College will better prepare students to deal with real life hospital situations, said Karen Fontaine, director of TMCC's nursing program.

She said it is a boon to nursing students because of increased pressure from potential employers to hire graduates who have been exposed to clinical settings.

"A student might not see a diabetic with low blood pressure, but we can create that situation by simulating a hospital experience," she said. "One of the best things about simulations is students do get to learn the skills they need; but the best thing is it really helps them develop their critical thinking skills."

The $550,000 renovation of the nursing wing at the college's main Dandini Campus north of Reno includes a simulation laboratory and medication dispensing system as well as an electronic medical record-keeping system.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Swanson will move South Tahoe forward

To the community,

This letter will provide insight into Angela Swanson's leadership skills and what she will bring to the SLT council. Her day job is to write and assist with the administration of major infrastructure grants. While on the school board she was able to acquire over $10,000,000 in state funding for facilities at the LTUSD.

She has the acumen to work with local, state, and federal leaders.

During her tenure at LTUSD, the board relied on Angela to provide us with both the legal and the practical information that we required.

Now, more than ever, South Lake Tahoe needs Angela Swanson's background and communication skills that will help repair many of the troubles that our city is going through. She understands the legal processes that are required to avoid having construction stop abruptly and leave our town with long stalled projects.

Angela Swanson is right the person to move our city forward.

Larry Green, South Lake Tahoe

Senior meals, law-justice, library – on EDC hit list

By Kathryn Reed

If the $5.5 million in budget cuts El Dorado County plans to make before the new year are approved as presented Tuesday by CAO Gayle Erbe-Hamlin, say goodbye to the senior nutrition program throughout the county, look for library hours to be reduced, roads to not be repaired, and $1 million eliminated from the sheriff's department budget.

The Board of Supervisors on Oct. 19 was given the grim news. Erbe-Hamlin called it "ugly."

It's been well documented the county is facing an $11 million deficit for fiscal year 2011-12, which begins July 1.

Click on proposal to see what was presented Tuesday in Placerville.

If the $400,000 for the senior nutrition program were cut, that would wipeout the five centers the county operates. This includes the food program at the South Lake Tahoe Senior Center and meals-on-wheels. These programs can be the only meals seniors receive.

Daniel Nielson, who runs the Department of Social Services, was not available to talk about the food program late Tuesday.

At the South Lake Tahoe branch library, the half position that has not been filled is scheduled to be cut. Expect hours to be slashed, too. A Sept. 20 PowerPoint presentation to the board

outlines ways to trim the library budget.

The goal of the supervisors is to tackle half the deficit in the coming weeks. A special board meeting is scheduled for Nov. 3 to solely talk about the budget. Next week county staff will be in South Lake Tahoe to brief basin residents about the financial woes.

If the board doesn't resolve the issue the day after Election Day, it has regular meetings Dec. 7 and Dec. 14, but is dark the previous two weeks and last two weeks of December. Another special meeting could be called.

The remaining $5.5 million is likely to be dealt with right after the first of the year.

"We'll have a more clear picture for the 2011-12 year once the first $5.5 million is addressed. Then we have to do it again. This is a difficult conversation now and in February it will be harder, I think," said Jim Mitrisin, assistant to Chief Administrative Officer Erbe-Hamlin.

Mitrisin cautioned the proposed cuts are "very preliminary."

Still, with the time line the supes want to follow combined with the cuts in services and staff that have been made in recent years, the low hanging fruit was plucked long ago.

Some say the financial abyss the county finds itself in is a result of the state trying to balance its budget on the back of local jurisdictions.

El Dorado County can also point to a significant drop in property valuations decreasing the amount of property tax it collects, along with sales tax dropping during the recession.

There was a time when construction was robust on the West Slope. Now it's practically at a standstill.

Although supervisors have said law and justice were sacred,

that’s not entirely so with Erbe-Hamlin’s proposal on Tuesday. Her idea is to find more than $1.6 million in savings by mandating a 2.7 percent cut each for sheriff, probation, district attorney, and public defender.

Sheriff Fred Kollar did not return a call Tuesday.

Perhaps the diminishing flow of cash is why the CAO has said the economic coordinator position can be scrapped. However, the nearly half million dollars in promotional funds – which is discretionary income from the hotel tax – is not slated to be touched.

Follow what the county is doing via the Board of Supervisors’ webpage.

SLTFD thanks community for help with extrication training

To the community,

The South Lake Tahoe Fire Department hosted a regional extrication training over the week of Sept. 15-17, 2010. This training was attended by fire units from South Lake Tahoe Fire, Lake Valley Fire, Fallen Leaf Fire, Tahoe Douglas Fire, and CalFire.

The training “extravaganza” simulated vehicle accidents in realistic situations, such as unstable cars on boulders, on concrete barriers, on top of each other and even under a bus. The crews were able to hone their skills and actually

cut the cars up with the “jaws of life” and simulate removing patients while stabilizing the scene. This kind of training is essential to swift and safe removable of victims from vehicles that have crashed and received major damage. The sooner a victim can be removed “safely” from the vehicle with medical treatment and stabilization, the greater chance of survival and receipt to a trauma center within the “Golden Hour”.

The newer car models have many dangers for responders and victims that require education and practice such as undeployed airbags, energy absorbing bumpers and extensive electrical systems. There are specialized techniques utilized to remove injured occupants to keep their injuries from getting worse or causing death. The public needs to realize that pulling victims out of a car by the untrained citizen can make the injuries worse, cause paralysis, or death.

This training was made possible by the support of our community here at Lake Tahoe. We would like to thank all of them:

Welcomes Auto Body

Emerald Bay Tow

Jack Construction Co.

Meeks Lumber

Tahoe Sand and Gravel

Scotty’s Big Rig Towing

Caltrans

City of South Lake Tahoe

Community vehicle donations.

Marty Scheuerman, SLTFD division chief

El Dorado County budget session in Tahoe

El Dorado County is having a special budget briefing and discussion on Oct. 25 in South Lake Tahoe.

Staff from the Chief Administrative Office will be at the South Lake Tahoe branch library to present an overview of the county budget and answer questions.

“The county’s budget is currently balanced, but we know there are hard decisions on the horizon to maintain that balance,” Chief Administrative Officer Gayle Erbe-Hamlin said. “We want to provide a convenient opportunity for people to learn about their county’s budget, understand the challenges and offer constructive feedback.”

El Dorado County’s general fund budget is approximately $200 million. The county is projecting an $11 million shortfall for 2011-11.

Similar budget briefings were in Placerville earlier this month.

The meeting will be from 6-8pm, Oct. 25, county library, 1000 Rufus Allen Blvd., South Lake Tahoe.

SLT council defers pot cultivation ordinance until after Nov. 2

With the room full, the South Lake Tahoe City Council surprised most everyone in attendance this morning when on a 5-0 vote they decided to postpone all discussion of the medical marijuana cultivation ordinance until after the Nov. 2 election.

Councilman Bill Crawford made the motion Oct. 19. His reasons were to see whom California elects as attorney general, see if Proposition 19 – the marijuana initiative – passes, and to gather more information about how the feds intend to handle California laws.

– Kathryn Reed

Lukins Water Co. takes issue with SLT-STPUD agreement

To the community,

Lukins Brothers Water Company has been working with the city of South Lake Tahoe to secure funding for their system upgrades. Unbeknownst to them, the city was working with South Tahoe Public Utility District to take the system.



Since July 2009, the city on behalf of Lukins has been applying for grants. Lukins has also been researching various ways to fund this project.

Meanwhile, on Aug. 4, 2010, the city of South Lake Tahoe and South Tahoe Public Utility District entered into an agreement stating that any improvements done to Lukins system with public redevelopment dollars would be owned by South Tahoe Public Utility District, not by Lukins.

Also stated in this agreement is that the opinion of the city and South Tahoe PUD is, that it is in the best interest of current Lukins customers to have water provided to them by South Tahoe PUD.

This agreement was made without the knowledge or support of Lukins. An agreement like this is counterproductive to the collaborative partnership between the city, the California Public Utility Commission and Lukins that was established as part of the joint Stipulation from last year.

The joint Stipulation between Lukins Brothers Water Company, the city of South Lake Tahoe and the California Public Utilities Commission, gives the commission authority over the city of South Lake Tahoe in matters regarding Lukins Brothers Water Company.

For more information, visit www.lukinswater.com or contact the office at (530)541.2606.

Jennifer Lukins, operations manager for Lukins Brothers Water Company

Veterans Day

Take a moment to remember today is Veterans Day. It’s a day to honor all the men and women who have served in the Armed Forces.

Turn back your clock

Turn back your clock an hour at 2am Nov. 7 to return to standard time.

‘EDGE’ contributors bring out their dark side

By Kathryn Reed

From the cover I should have known I was not in for light, happy reading. For some reason the toy outlined in chalk as though one of the two standing wooden figurines shot the other didn’t deter me – or rather, it didn’t occur to me what might loom inside.



“EDGE – 2010” is more dark than it is edgy. Finishing it on a gloomy New England day while on vacation earlier this month seemed like a perfect setting.

Published by Tahoe Writers Works, it is a compilation of fiction, poetry and artwork from people throughout the United States. Their brief biographies in the back of the 125-page paperback are impressive.

The overwhelming feeling I was left with is the ominous cloud that seems to hover over Lake Tahoe apparently has been visiting much of the country. Perhaps these bleak economic times have put these writers in a dark mood. It’s not that their stories are about finances. Most are relationships.

But happy they are not.

Armine Iknadossian’s “Color Theory” paints a bleak picture in poetic form of love gone awry. It’s a glimpse into how the simplest of words and definitions wreak havoc on a relationship.

Dave Murcar’s “I Was Destroyed by God” grabbed me the most. The short story is about what happens when God allows the main character to take a bite of Adam and Eve’s apple.

It’s well written, gripping and a bit thought provoking.

“Lights Out” by Donald Levering reads like a true story of a parent concerned about his daughter’s obsession with animal bones.

Some entries I didn’t want to read, and one I just couldn’t for personal reasons. That was Paria Kooklan’s “Burial” which starts, “Today is my father’s funeral …”

It was the reprints of the original oil on canvas by Kit Night that were the brightest spots in the book. A bit of happiness and color among the dark, black letters.

Perhaps if I had read “EDGE” at a time when I was immersed in the chaos of my every day life instead of escaping on vacation to a land of marvelous beauty with its fall foliage, I would have connected more with the book. Or maybe it’s just that poetry and fiction are not what I usually pick up to read.

Still, the work is good, and those who prefer this genre are apt to find the selections captivating.

“EDGE” is available online through Tahoe Writers Works.