Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Zephyr Cove Elementary School has a new website.

• Joann Eisenbrandt, sometimes freelancer for L*ake Tahoe News*, is now the fulltime operations manager for Sierra Nevada Alliance.

• Tickets are on sale for Warren Miller's latest movie, which will be shown at MontBleu and CalNeva in Tahoe as well as in Reno. Click here for regional listings.

• Richard McClellan is leaving the Resort at Squaw Creek to be managing director at Stowe Mountain Lodge in Vermont.

• Heavenly Ski and Snowboard Foundation is celebrating its 25th year.

Fortier: become a world-class, eco-resort and recreation destination

Publisher's note: ***Lake Tahoe News is profiling candidates for South Lake Tahoe City Council and Douglas County Commission. The stories are being published in the order they were received.***

Name: Claire Fortier

Age: 57

How long have you lived in South Lake Tahoe?: 17 years

Job/profession: A former newspaper editor and CEO of a local medical practice, I now operate Laren Communications, a network of project-based communications freelancers.



Claire Fortier

What would you build or tear down on the South Shore to make it great, as in what Whistler is like?:

Since I have never been to Whistler, I can't compare it to South Lake Tahoe. However, I would tear down the energy-inefficient, rundown buildings in strip shopping centers and replace them with carefully considered, energy efficient, beautifully designed little shopping clusters that draw people out of their cars and into small community nodes and pocket parks. I would make those nodes easily accessible by pedestrians and cyclists.

What form of recreation do you participate in? What recreation improvements would you strive to make in SLT?:

I hike, kayak, fish, camp, bike, garden, photograph and attend as many of the local events as I can afford, especially if they serve wine.

The South Shore should become a world-class, eco-resort and

recreation destination. We should strive to improve all of our recreational infrastructure from bike trails to ball fields. From AYSO to the Olympics to disc golf to sledding, South Lake Tahoe should be the place that the world comes to play.

Recreation tourism is expected to be the driving force of the South Shore economy in the coming years, and according to a decade-old study, the majority of the South Lake Tahoe residents would like to see cycling-type facilities and maintenance projects. So, what do you specifically plan to do to improve our substandard, dangerous bike paths and lanes and roads beyond hiring a consultant to tell us how bad they are?

I support the work already in progress through the TRPA's 2010 Lake Tahoe Region Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. A strong community network, that has included the Lake Tahoe Bicycle Coalition and Sustainable Tahoe, has worked hard to develop that plan. When on City Council, I will work closely with the California Tahoe Conservancy, the TRPA and other governmental entities to make sure that plan becomes a reality. I will also look for opportunities with new redevelopment and street projects, like the project to upgrade Highway 50, to make the bike plan a reality. I will see what funding mechanisms are available to us now and in the future to complete and maintain South Shore bike paths.

What are the three major issues facing South Lake Tahoe and how do you expect in four years to make it so they are not major issues when your tenure is through?

1. The most immediate issue facing our city is creating a transparent, accountable and innovative city government. With a new city manager and three new city councilmembers, that goal can be achieved immediately. And voters have an opportunity to make real changes. Voters must choose candidates who really understand the city's issues, who believe in cooperation as the only means to achieving measurable results and who have the courage make the tough

decisions when necessary. I am one of those candidates.

2. We need to draft and then implement a five-year strategic plan based on a sustainable city budget and three or four achievable objectives. I would like those objectives to address the difficulty of doing business in the city and the basin, our city's crumbling infrastructure and the need to rebuild community.

3. We must build stronger connections with entities in the city boundaries, such as LTUSD and STPUD. We need to develop common goals and mutual areas of support with neighboring jurisdictions. We need to become a regional leader in the TRPA Regional Plan process and the new Prosperity Plan. The city is at a tipping point. We can either make a commitment to living prosperously within the environmental constraints of our delicate ecosystem or we can do nothing and consequently become nothing but a fading 1950s ghost town.

What compelling idea have you read in the citizens' input of the revamped, in-progress update of the city's General Plan?:

I am a strong proponent of the building code section that raises the bar on green building. I also support the idea of nodes of denser development that include pocket parks and surrounding green zones. I believe the city's push for sustainability has been a positive development since we must live compatibly with our spectacular natural environment.

How do you plan to boost revenue in SLT?:

I plan to charge *Lake Tahoe News* a per-word content fee for the many questions they have asked me to answer. I pledge to donate that money back to the city.

Seriously, this is the biggest question facing our community, and there are no quick and easy answers. I would make the city friendlier to small businesses, because Mom and Pop are where to shop. I would encourage events, big and small, as ways of

generating tourist dollars. I would establish a sustainability plan that focuses on capturing federal and state grant money for creating a green community, including establishing a training program for green building at the college. I would get the Hole filled as soon as possible with something other than timeshare. I would work with the great minds who have already developed a Prosperity Plan to map our economic viability. For example, enhancing our health and wellness business sector is a natural direction we should go.

What stands out to you in the 2010-11 budget?

There are a number of things that stand out about the budget, but overall this is what I think:

• We should thank the past few city councils that have made fiscally prudent decisions during the good times to give us a buffer that is not enjoyed by so many cities today.

• Our luck is running out and we need to address a $12 million shortfall over the next five years. We need to look at 2010-11 budget not so much with how we scraped by this time, but how we will operate in five years.

• A new council needs to look at the budget with fresh eyes to reexamine all aspects of our city government. We need to consider what is necessary and what has become customary.

What needs to be done to allow businesses to thrive in SLT?

Again, this question requires more than a few sentences to answer. But even with unlimited space, I don’t think I have adequate answers without some real investigation. One of my first acts as a councilmember would be to develop a business advisory board to get just those answers. What I have heard from business owners is that lack of coordination between agencies on the regional level and the lack of follow-through on a city level.

The city seems to have no consolidated approach to the business community. More collaboration with local chambers of commerce and other business organizations is crucial. Improving the business climate in South Lake Tahoe is of paramount importance because it drives the financial health of community.

What have you done to help South Lake Tahoe be a better community?

I'm running for City Council because I want to move from the sidelines onto the field to actually improve our town. Currently, I chair the city's Sustainability Commission. But my involvement with the South Shore community goes back 17 years. I have done everything from volunteering at community events to picking up trash along our waterways. I have mentored high school students, sat on the St. Theresa's school board, establish the high school newspaper and coached Odyssey of the Mind teams. I helped organize a successful film festival with the American Film Institute and built an online issues forum on local concerns. I have hosted fundraisers for arts organizations and youth sports, and donated my time and resources to numerous other organizations. I have served up Christmas dinners to the hungry and marched for gay marriage. I have been involved in all manner of commissions, committees, coalitions and collaborations. In other words, I have been deeply involved with helping make South Lake Tahoe a better community since I claimed this city as my own in 1993.

What boards, commissions, or other experience do you have?

This seems a bit redundant after my previous answer but let me list a few:

• City of South Lake Tahoe Sustainability Commission

• Tahoe Transportation District Board

• Tahoe Douglas Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors

• Citizens Advisory Panel for the Upper Truckee River–California Tahoe Conservancy

• Lake Tahoe AIDS Task Force Board of Directors

• Lake Tahoe Film Festival Board of Directors

• St. Theresa's Catholic School Advisory Commission

• Adjunct professor at Lake Tahoe Community College

• Recent recipient of a master's degree in environmental journalism from the University of Nevada, Reno that focused on Lake Tahoe environmental issues

Why should voters vote for you over someone else?

I am a good listener and believe that hearing from the community is the first step to making good decisions. I am an independent thinker with a real understanding of all the issues facing the city and the Tahoe basin. I understand that blue can be green: We can reach a balance between our environmental and economic prosperity.

As the editor of the local newspaper and through my project work, I know the people, positions and posturing of various entities and am not afraid to stand up for what I believe is in the best interest of the city.

I have no hidden agenda, nor am I beholden to any special interest. I will not benefit financially from this position, nor will my family.

Quite simply, I am a 17-year resident of South Lake Tahoe who is passionate about rebuilding a thriving community and developing a first class eco-resort.

BlueGo, the public transit, is mired in lawsuits and bankruptcy. Do we need public transit on the South Shore? If so, how do you propose to make it functional?

Yes, we need some form of public transportation, but what form that takes really depends on what is economically viable. As most of the information on BlueGo has not been available for public inspection, I am not in a position to determine what is best for the organization. But I would consider this a high priority since many city residents rely on BlueGo for their daily transportation needs.

Do you support commercial air service at Lake Tahoe Airport? Why or why not?

Yes, I support commercial air service at Lake Tahoe in the manner that has been dictated by the litigation settlement agreement. That means no more than 10 flights a day, with around 125 passengers per flight and a noise level that is equivalent to a vacuum cleaner. Commercial air service could generate more than $50 million a year for our area with little impact on the environment. I don’t think we can afford to let that revenue just fly away.

Is there any individual, group or organization you would not take campaign money from? Why?

Not so far, so please send a check.

I would not take money from any organization or group that I felt operated illegally or expected that a check would trade for a vote. Otherwise, the public needs to understand that running a campaign is a costly endeavor.

Nepotism and favoritism runs rampant in the city when it comes to hiring preferences. The council sets policy. What type of policy would you write regarding nepotism and favoritism?

Again, that’s an issue that I can’t begin to address in a short paragraph. In general, I believe that nepotism can create a hostile work environment and create unnecessary alliances. But I have no real idea, and won’t until I am on council, the extent of the problem and how to fix it.

Certainly there can be no direct reports or inappropriate influences. Our citizens deserve a city organization with the highest ethical standards and I will work toward that end.

You and three other council candidates met with the Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce. Then you and two others were invited back for a follow-up meeting. Tell us about that meeting.

I welcome the opportunity to meet with any group in town. As for the chamber, I was not invited to meet with them. As a matter of fact, I attended my first chamber meeting [Sept. 16]. I was asked to address a group of business people, many of whom I didn't know, on where I stood on a number of local issues. It was the same type of invitation I received recently from the Carpenters Union. Hopefully, other groups will be inviting me as well.

What makes you more committed to this run for council than in 2002 when you dropped out and your name was left on the ballot?

My circumstances have changed in many ways. I am no longer running a busy local business. I am no longer raising two preteen boys who required dinner daily, rides to soccer and other sports, and help on their homework. And I have a spouse whose employment is not dependent on the decisions I make on behalf of the city.

Tell us something about yourself that voters don't already know:

At my first event as editor of the *Tahoe Daily Tribune*, I was asked to sing in front the joint event of the chambers of commerce. My song choice was "Please Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood." I am still taking requests.

Mt. Rose – Green energy power won't help in the Chutes

Publisher's note: ***Lake Tahoe News is providing a glimpse into what skiers and boarders can expect at Lake Tahoe area resorts for the 2010-11 season.***

Mt. Rose Ski Tahoe: Dropping in is easy; dropping in the chutes isn't

• Projected opening date: early November, weather permitting

• Daily adult lift ticket: $69 off-peak; $74 peak (Dec. 18-Jan. 2); last year's was $65



Bring your A-game for the Chutes at Mt. Rose.

• What's new?: Top-to-bottom snowmaking on the Silver Dollar Trail on the Slide Mountain side of the resort provides more access to a popular section that now includes the sun-baked Winters Creek Lodge from last year. Renewable energy makes Mt. Rose greener this year with three new wind spires to power the lodge.

Also, Mt. Rose is adding to its list of daily specials with

the third consecutive day free in the group package.

• What’s special about Mt. Rose?: The ski resort deemed closest to the Reno-Tahoe International Airport touts its chutes, with an unrivaled degree of difficulty from a 1,500-foot drop and 40- to 55-degree angle to the bottom. Hold on to your hat.

• Last year’s snow total: 281-plus inches

• Lift hours of operation: ranges from 8:30am to 4pm, depending on the lift

• Skiable terrain: 1,200 acres

• Number of lifts: 8

• Vertical feet: 1,800

• Directions: Take Highway 50 to Spooner Summit then head north on Highway 28 to Kings Beach and turn right on Mt. Rose Highway (Highway. 431) to resort driveway.

• Website

– Compiled by Susan Wood

Special El Dorodo County budget presentation

The El Dorado County Chief Administrative Office is inviting the public to a special budget presentation and discussion at the Main Library in Placerville.

Chief Administrative Officer Gayle Erbe-Hamlin and staff will

be presenting an overview of the county budget and be available to answer questions.

The meeting will be Oct. 14 from 6-8pm at the Main Library at 354 Fair Lane in Placerville.

Bijou thanks volunteers for working at the school

To the community,

Bijou Community School would like to thank the Rotary Club of South Lake Tahoe and the Rotaracts from LTCC for generously donating their time to help our parent volunteer group plant trees around Bijou’s new field.

We would also like to thank Aspen Hollow for their generous donation of these trees.



Volunteers work at Bijou Community School. Photo/Kathy Haven

It is wonderful to live in a community that is so giving.

Thank you Rotary Club of South LakeTahoe, Rotoracts, and Aspen Hollow for contributing to our school.

Kathy Haven, Bijou school parent volunteer coordinator

Carnivorous plants losing ground in U.S.

By Amina Khan, Los Angeles Times

QUINCY – "This is the easy part," says Barry Rice, half-sliding, half-falling down a ravine through a latticework of dead branches.

Decades ago, lush stands of Darlingtonia californica – emerald plants coiled like fanged cobras ready to pounce – grew at this spot in the northern reaches of the Sierra Nevada.

Deep in the ravine, the air is hot and dead. Pieces of bark that have sloughed off trees make every step a danger – nature's equivalent of a thousand forgotten skateboards cluttering a driveway. Slate tinkles underfoot, and the ground feels like stale angel-food cake: stiff yet porous.

Read the whole story

Boreal part of 2011 U.S.

Revolution Tour

By Elizabeth Karam, U.S. Ski Team

PARK CITY – The 2011 U.S. Revolution Tour is taking on a new look this winter showcasing freeride skiing as well as snowboarding events. The 2011 season marks the U.S. Revolution Tour's seventh year and first time including freeride.

The U.S. Revolution Tour, a qualifying event series for the U.S. Snowboarding Grand Prix, is known for featuring the up-and-coming stars of snowboarding and now will also include the future standouts of freeride skiing. The long success of the Tour was started by U.S. Snowboarding with the goal of progressing athletes to Junior Worlds, U.S. Open, Grand Prix and beyond. Past Tour stand-outs include U.S. Snowboarding's Halfpipe Pro Team Rider Kaitlyn Farrington (Sun Valley) and Rookie Team rider Zack Black (Breckenridge).

"It's fun to see the up-and-coming stars of snowboarding," said tour manager Nick Alexakos. "It's kind of the 'who's next' in snowboarding. It's fun to watch and see who will step up. It will be great to add freeride to the mix."

The 2010 summer kicked off the freeride and snowboarding pairing with U.S. Snowboarding's Project Gold Camp including both freeride and snowboarding athletes. More notably, the 2010 Snowboarding and Freestyle Junior World Championships marked the first FIS event where both sports were showcased at the same venue with the U.S taking home an impressive 11 medals from New Zealand in August.

The 2011 Revolution Tour is picking up where summer left off with four stops all including both freeride skiing and snowboard disciplines including halfpipe, slopestyle, and cross competitions. Following the positive response from the 2010 FIS Snowboard and Freestyle Junior World Championships in New Zealand, the Revolution Tour is moving with the

progression of the two sports.

“After six years building the U.S. Revolution Tour as the premier mid-level snowboard contest, we recognized the opportunity to grow the series as part of our development within freeride,” said Snowboard and Freeride Director Jeremy Forster. “With the possibility of slopestyle snowboarding and halfpipe skiing being included in the 2014 Olympic Games in Sochi, beginning to conduct these events together and share resources makes sense.

“The host resorts have been stoked on the direction along with positive feedback from the freeride community. Hopefully, the athletes will have fun competing together and it will be a great season for the Revolution Tour.”

The U.S. Revolution Tour is set to make its 2011 debut in mid December at Copper Mountain, Colo. The Tour leaves the Rockies, heading north to Mt. Hood Meadows, Ore., before moving to Boreal. Riders will make their final stop at Olympic medalists Kelly Clark’s (Mt. Snow, Vt) hometown.

“Expect to see continued progression in the sport for sure,” said Alexakos. “I’ve been involved with the Rev Tour for three years and every year I’m amazed at the level and progression of riding from winter to winter.”

For 2011 U.S. Revolution Tour event and registration information contact Tour Manager Nick Alexakos at nalexakos@ussa.org.

2011 U.S. Revolution Tour Schedule

Dec. 13-17 Copper Mountain (Halfpipe, Slopestyle)

Jan. 10-14 Mt. Hood Meadows (Halfpipe, Slopestyle, Cross)

Feb. 7-11 Boreal (Halfpipe, Slopestyle, Cross)

March 15-18 Mount Snow (Halfpipe, Slopesyle)

Experts to dissect Mother Nature’s snowy dangers

By Susan Wood

When author Jennifer Woodlief wrote acknowledgements in her book “A Wall of White” about the 1982 Alpine Meadows-area avalanche that killed seven, she thanked snow expert Jim Plehn for explaining the difference “between a snowflake and a pure stellar crystal.”

This kind of knowledge goes a long way in the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range, where a freak storm can mean the difference between living or dying, and a wet, heavy layer on top of ball-bearing soft flakes can turn a good time in the wilderness into a scary day.

Just ask the avalanche forecasters and controllers about the Lake Tahoe region. It is challenging terrain because the masses tend to show up on skis, boards and snowshoes for this world-renowned resort area – turned winter wonderland to ride the slippery surface.



The deadly 1982 Alpine Meadows avalanche will

be discussed at this month's snow science symposium.

And because more people who play in it test the backcountry each year, the masses of snow experts trained to protect and rescue them are booking reservations for the 2010 International Snow Science Symposium. More than 900 attendees are expected to turn out for the Oct. 17-22 workshop at Resort at Squaw Creek.

Woodlief will speak next Monday at 8:30pm in the resort's Grand Sierra Ballroom about her book's account of Alpine's monumental snowstorm and subsequent massive slab avalanche that roared over and buried buildings and people. The worst avalanche in Tahoe history occurred a few miles from the conference.

The public is invited to the talk, without registering for the conference. The conference costs $325 for five days. Attendees may also sign up for individual days.

A slew of subjects will be covered ranging from snow stability and thermal photography to snowpack properties and the state of the explosives industry. The lecture halls will give way each day to field observations and a social agenda. Product demonstrations will also be on hand.

One example: There's an avalanche airbag of sorts that can deploy like a parachute from a pack for a snow rider to float to the surface of a moving avalanche. Another featured device, which looks like a snorkel, allows a buried skier or hiker to breathe under snow.

"We think for the regular recreationalist, there is value," said Lel Tone, the event chairwoman and Squaw Valley ski

patroller.

While novices make not understand the subject matter, workers in the field may be joined by the growing number who venture into the conditions that command expert technology and information.

Mike Laney, event registration chairman and avalanche program director for the National Ski Patrol System, believes increased development in mountain towns with increased interest among people to tread into avalanche-prone areas makes these conferences necessary and crucial to risk managers, patrollers, search-and-rescue volunteers, land-use managers and scientists. Laney is a retired science teacher.

The mantra of the symposium, Laney explained, is “merging theory with practice.”

“I’ve had a few close calls in the wilderness, none of which would have been helped with modern technology, but almost all would have been avoided if I knew what I know now,” Laney told *Lake Tahoe News*.

North Shore bridal event designed to make weddings fun

Here’s a revolutionary idea: it’s possible for brides-to-be to not only have fun planning their nuptials, but they can also enjoy the actual day stress-free.

Not a believer?

Change your mindset and plan to attend Tahoe Unveiled on Oct. 16 at PlumpJack Squaw Valley Inn, Olympic Valley, where brides

will have an opportunity to meet with industry professionals to sharpen their vision of the perfect Tahoe wedding.

Tahoe Unveiled’s flowing floor plan will feature various design showcases and displays that are sure to inspire. Sipping Champagne and noshing on tastings from local caterers, it’s designed to make attendees feel relaxed and primed for addressing wedding details with the region’s wedding vendors.

Featured on the presentation roster is Scott Corridan, In-Style magazine celebrity wedding planner and couture wedding gown designer, whose seminar is irreverently dubbed “Boobs and Butts,” which promises to bust myths.

Also, on the agenda is photographer Catherine Hall whose award-winning images have been exhibited in galleries around the world and have appeared in a variety of prestigious publications including the New York Times, Grace Ormonde Wedding Style and Elegant Bride.

In addition to Catherine Hall, Tahoe Unveiled will also host A Day In Your Life, Johnstone Studios and Jessie LeMay Photography. Bellisima Floral, Diana’s Floral and Martha Bernyk Floral Design will share floral inspiration. Cortney Knudson, Kiss and Makeup and Kolor By Kori will be on hand for hair and make-up. Other top-shelf vendors include Tunnel Creek, Wild Goose, Moodys, NorthTahoe Catering, Paper Moon, Swoon Bridal, Crux Events and Party Rents, Hip Entertainment, We Aint Saints, Massage on the Lake, Doxa Studios, La Tavola and Aiko Designs.

Tickets include access to event, wine, Champagne, appetizers and gift bag. Tickets are $25 per person when purchased in advance at www.tahoeunveiled.com and $35 per person at the door.

Children’s discovery museum taking shape in Reno

By Susan Voyles, Reno Gazette-Journal

Reno’s old City Hall building on Center Street has been gutted, and out of the rubble will rise the city’s first children’s discovery museum.

“Carson City has a smaller children’s museum, but there’s never been anything like this,” said Melinda Lyons, the project manager.

With nearly $20 million already raised, a groundbreaking ceremony is scheduled to be held today and construction is set to begin this week on the museum, which is expected to open late next year.

And it can’t happen soon enough for some customers.

Clara Swobe, the daughter of Nevada Discovery Museum chairwoman Caryn Swobe, complains she’ll be 7 by the time the museum opens. That’s a long time for a 6-year-old.

“I want to go there every day,” said Clara, who was the first child to tour the building and view the architect’s renderings of the planned exhibits.

Read the whole story