Tahoe poverty forum to tackle stemming the downward slide

By Kathryn Reed

Poverty with a view has never been more accurate than now.

Though the powers that be would like to remove the phrase from the vernacular of South Shore locals, the truth is the phrase cannot be disputed. Tahoe has gorgeous views and the people living among the pines at 6,200 feet are poorer today than anytime in recent memory.

When organizers and others gather Oct. 8 in South Lake Tahoe for an all-day summit dubbed Poverty to Prosperity, they will be tasked with coping with the reality of a city whose unemployment rate is at nearly 18 percent, whose permanent residency is stagnant with 70 percent of housing belonging to second homeowners, and a school district with nearly 70 percent of its elementary students qualifying for free or reduced lunches.



Scott Lukas, LTCC professor, is the keynote speaker Oct. 8 at the S. Tahoe poverty forum.

Homelessness in Tahoe isn't unusual. It's just a bit invisible. Lake Tahoe Unified School District reports of its 3,993 students 250 are homeless. Some live in motels. Some in cars. Some couch surf. Those 250 don't live in a traditional home and therefore are considered homeless.

Wendy David, one of the forum's organizers, sees the increasing destituteness of those living in South Lake Tahoe through a variety of volunteer efforts mostly involving children, as well as being president of the LTUSD school board. That is why she wants to bring people together to begin a dialog of what can be done to reverse the poverty trend.

Alissa Nourse, Carl Ribaudo, Arturo Rangel, Cindy Hannah and Michael Ward (who will be the facilitator) have been instrumental in making next Friday's event a reality.

South Lake Tahoe is not unique in its financial struggles.

In data just released by the U.S. Census Bureau from 2009 stats, not the ones taken earlier this year, it shows the income gap between the richest and poorest in the United States grew last year by the widest amount on record. Children were a large segment of that number.

The figures show most people taking a hit during the recession last year, but the poor being the worst off.

Some stats from the report:

• U.S. residents below half the poverty line – $10,977 for a family of four – rose from 5.7 percent in 2008 to 6.3 percent in 2009. This is the highest level since 1975 when this statistic was first recorded. The 2009 poverty level was $21,954 for a family of four.

• The 2009 poverty rate in the U.S. was at 14.3 percent – the highest since 1994. (It was at 13.2 percent in 2008.) That's 43.6 million people or nearly 1 in 7. This is the highest

since poverty figures began being kept in 1959.

• In the four county region of El Dorado, Placer, Yolo and Sacramento counties the poverty rate in 2009 was 13.4 percent in 2009, 12.1 percent in 2008 and 11.1 percent on 2007.

• Child poverty is at 20.7 percent, up from 19 percent in 2008.

• People with employer-provided health plans declined from 176.3 million to 169.7 million in 2009.

• 2009 was the largest single-year increase in U.S. residents without health insurance since the government began tracking the figures in 1987.

At the forum in South Tahoe, which is open to the public, the day will begin with El Dorado County Superior Court Judge Suzanne Kingsbury providing opening comments at 9am. In her work she has seen plenty of changes and is in constant contact with those considered impoverished.

Scott Lukas, a cultural anthropologist at Lake Tahoe Community College, will provide the keynote address. He will delve into the differences of generational and situational poverty – both of which exist locally.

After lunch a panel discussion with representatives from the business community, education, health care and others will take on the poverty topic. The public will be able to weigh-in before the day wraps up at 4pm.

“Why it’s important to have a community forum is it’s not one sector that will change things. It will take all sectors of the community,” David said.

The simple goals are for this to begin a dialog, for forum attendees to take it upon themselves to derive achievable goals, and for collaboration among concerned parties to be realized.

David anticipates tourism will be a component of the discussion because it is the chief employment sector.

If people are not coming to the area, it means businesses have fewer hours to give to workers, which means they have less money to spend, which in turn puts them on or past the brink of being able to pay their bills. This means downstream the businesses the tourism workers go to are being frequented less or not at all, and potentially service oriented businesses are not getting paid. It also means social agencies being tapped when resources to give are dwindling because fewer have the means to give.

“We need leaders to say it is a concern that so many are on the edge, that we are losing families, that we want kids to have jobs,” David said.

Poverty to Prosperity Forum details:

• Oct. 8

• 9am-4pm

• Embassy Suites Lake Tahoe, 4130 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe

• RSVP to Lori Blackburn at (530) 295.2403

• Sponsors – Child Abuse Prevention Council, El Dorado Community Foundation, Lake Tahoe Gaming Alliance, First 5 El Dorado, Tahoe Youth & Family Services, El Dorado County Office of Education

Tahoe Creamery ceases operations

By Reno Gazette Journal

Tahoe Creamery, which operated ice cream shops in Sparks and the University of Nevada, Reno and a manufacturing site in Minden, has ceased operations.

Tahoe Creamery owners could not be reached for comment Thursday, but a recorded voice at the Minden plant informed callers, “We are no longer manufacturing ice cream due to the stressful economic climate.”

Launched eight years ago, Tahoe Creamery operated on Galleria Parkway in Spanish Springs and inside the Joe Crowley Student Union on the UNR campus.

The company’s ice cream products also were sold at Northern Nevada grocery retailers.

TRPA, USGS pay for high resolution GIS imaging of basin

By GISCafe

eMap International was contracted by a consortium of regional and federal agencies which included the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) and US Geological Service (USGS) to provide 8-band multispectral high-resolution WorldView-2

satellite imagery over the Lake Tahoe Basin. Given the short growing and cloud-free season in the Tahoe Lake Basin, the specifications of the project required that the high-resolution imagery covering 1,100 square kilometer of coastlines, forested valleys and jagged mountain peaks be collected inside a 45-day window with less than 10% cloud cover.

By working closely with DigitalGlobe, the owner and operator of WorldView-2, eMap delivered the specified 2-meter 8-band multispectral and 50-cm panchromatic satellite imagery to the Consortium ahead of schedule and with nearly no cloud-cover (less than 1% across the Basin). Upon receipt and review of the WorldView-2 data, Toby Welborn, a geographer at the USGS Carson City, NV office, said, “This is going to be a fantastic dataset to work with and will provide incredible insight into all types of issues and interests in the Tahoe Basin.”

Read the whole story

Nevada pioneers to come to life on Minden stage

Nevada State Parks is presenting a free Chautauqua-style show Oct. 2 at 10am at the Dangberg Home Ranch Historic Park in Minden. Nevada State Park Ranger Mike Dinauer and community organizer Linda Conlin, will give a Chautauqua presentation on Nevada pioneers Samuel and Eliza Buckland.

In 1859, Samuel Buckland established a ranch and a trading post along the Carson River next to the California Trail in what is now Lyon County. He met his wife, Eliza Prentice, when the wagon train she and her sister were traveling with stopped

at his trading post. As Fort Churchill was dismantled in 1870, the Bucklands salvaged materials to build a two-story house for what became an important stop for travelers as they supplied goods to immigrants, travelers and ranchers. The Overland Stage Company kept horses there and Pony Express riders stopped to change mounts. Today, Buckland Station is open to the public as part of Fort Churchill State Historic Park.

Where: The park is located at 1450 Highway 88, one-half mile south of the Carson Valley Swim Center. For further information, call (775) 783.9417.

Other: Chairs and shade shelters are provided by the park.Visitors are welcome to bring lawn chairs, and encouraged to bring drinking water. Dress according to the weather for this outdoor program. Pets should be left at home.

Comic Giraldo’s death leaves a void

By Howie Nave

I first got the message from New York comic Joe Starr on his Facebook page this past Monday that comedian Greg Giraldo was in the hospital after an accidental overdose at a New Jersey hotel Saturday.

On Tuesday, I heard that Greg was breathing on his own and sent him a text and a Facebook message joking that if he wanted to cancel his gig in Jersey there was probably an easier way to get out of it.

By Wednesday he was dead.



Greg Giraldo
and Howie Nave

I was at home sleeping when Nancy called to tell me that Greg had passed away. I'm still stunned.

Barely a month ago comedian Robert Schimmel passed away at the age of 60 from injuries sustained in a car accident.

Greg was 44.

The comedy circle is a very small one so word spread very quickly. I posted on FB that this sort of thing isn't supposed to happen until one is in their 70s when friends close to you are expected to pass. Not now and not at age 44.

I wasn't as close to Schimmel as I was to Greg, mainly because Greg at the time I first met him was still doing clubs while Schimmel was doing theaters. I knew Schimmel, but was introduced to him through other comedians.

I knew of Greg when I first started doing stand-up in the late '90s but didn't get to work with him until I moved up to Tahoe in 2001 when The Improv first opened at Harrah's. Greg was booked shortly after and came up here four times. When he started doing those roasts on Comedy Central his career really started to take off. And then this year when he was a judge on NBC's "Last Comic Standing" he was introduced to a whole new audience.

But comedian Jon Stewart said it best when he said Greg was

one of those guys you looked forward to hanging out with at the comedy club. You knew you were going to have a fun week when Greg was booked with you. And that was so true because it was offstage where Greg really cracked me up.

But he did more – helping to perfect my craft by giving me pointers and some tag lines for my jokes to give them more of a punch. The coolest thing however was that he said if I gave him a tape, he would get it over to Conan (O'Brien) to get on his show (back when he was on NBC pre-Tonight Show). He was truly one if the good guys.

Greg liked to gamble and one week did so much that when he returned home to New York City he called and asked me to please tell Harrah's to quit sending him free room reservations because his wife would wonder why he was getting these free offers. I told him that Harrah's had installed a miniature slot machine over at Harvey's Arcade just for his kids so they too could start gambling.

I have so many memories of Greg, but mainly that he was always a great guy to just hang with and that when he was booked up here I knew it was going to be a fun week. Today I played clips from some of my favorite Greg Giraldo bits on the radio and all I kept thinking to myself was I wonder what nuggets of genius the world will never get to hear now because he's gone.

Howie Nave is host/emcee/manager of The Improv at Harveys. You can hear him Monday-Friday 6 to 10am on KRLT FM-93.9.

Music part of Outdoor Expo in

Placerville

By Kristi Buffo

PLACERVILLE -– What’s the perfect cap to a day spent celebrating the abundant opportunities for outdoor recreation in El Dorado County? How about music, dancing and food.

On Oct. 2 as part of the first Gateway to the Sierra Sportsman’s & Outdoor Expo, regional band Hired Guns will perform a concert on the green at the fairgrounds in Placerville. Those attending the expo receive free admission. Or, attend the concert only for $5. Food and spirits will be available for purchase.

Hired Guns, based out of Sacramento and featuring vocalist Shawna Lea of Shingle Springs, primarily covers country band but also features a danceable blend of music ranging from new country (think Jason Aldean) to the Southern rock of Lynyrd Skynyrd. Don’t be surprised to find the music of the Rolling Stones and Pat Benatar showing up on the set list either.

With recent concerts at the El Dorado Hills Town Center weekly music series and the center’s inaugural July Fourth fireworks celebration, Hired Guns is quickly making a name for itself and gaining fans in El Dorado County.

Who/What: Concert on the Green featuring Hired Guns

Where: El Dorado County Fairgrounds, 100 Placerville Drive in Placerville

When: Oct. 2 beginning at 7pm

Tickets: $5 concert only; free with admission to Saturday’s Sportsman’s & Outdoor Expo.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Tahoe Resource Conservation District folks will continue to work at the Meyers location to decontaminate vessels before they enter Lake Tahoe. A different type of solution is being tried. Permanent signs may be erected in the future to direct people to the location on Highway 89.

• Placer County Department of Public Works is constructing four TART bus shelters along highways 28 and 89. Last winter Placer County approved the North Lake Tahoe Resort Association request to spend infrastructure funds on shelters, 24 informational map signs, along 19 miles of trails and 13-bear proof trash cans located at transit shelters.

• Tahoe Arts Project is no longer going to have the Oscar night fundraiser.

• Ski Lake Tahoe has redesigned its website.

• Tahoe Transportation District is going after a $20 million federal grant to fund a 75-mile bike path around Lake Tahoe.

• El Dorado County sheriff’s officials reported four vehicles being broken into this month at Big Meadows off Luther Path.

West Slope trail along American River leads to Folsom Lake

By Sam McManis, Sacramento Bee

Starting Friday, it will be possible to enjoy the American River's south fork from Folsom Lake to near Coloma and stay dry doing so.

The scenic stretch of (mostly) untouched nature has long been among the West's premier locations for whitewater rafting and kayaking. But for those on foot, horse or mountain bike, there hasn't been a way to traverse the full length of the winding south fork stretch that many say puts the "gorge" in gorgeous.

This morning, a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Salmon Falls trailhead will trumpet the opening of the 25-mile South Fork American River Trail, a multiuse path featuring seasonally wildflower-saturated grasslands, oak woodlands, riparian habitats, sage-covered ridges and views of the river below.

The trail's opening Friday morning for use by hikers, runners, mountain bikers and (for most of its length) equestrians will be the culmination of decades of grant-writing, fundraising, property negotiations, trail cutting and bridge building by the American River Conservancy and the federal Bureau of Land Management.

Read the whole story

Time for voters to do their job – learn about candidates

Lake Tahoe News on Oct. 1 will begin profiling candidates for South Lake Tahoe City Council and Douglas County Commission.

Ten people are running for three council seats. No incumbents are running. Two of the candidates did not answer the questions. A phone message was left for each to ensure they had received the emailed questions.

Four people are running for two commission seats. The incumbents each face a challenger. (Howell v. McDermid and Bonner v. Brady.)

Candidate responses will run in the order they were returned to *Lake Tahoe News*. None of the candidates knew this until now. One will run each day for 12 days.

Lake Tahoe News gave the candidates 10 days to answer the questions. The idea was this would give them ample time to think about their answers and do any necessary research. They were allowed to write as much as they wanted to. Ignore any reference to being limited to a paragraph or two. They were only limited by waiting until the last minute, not by space constraints put on them by *LTN*.

As some have said, the South Shore is at a tipping point. Sink or soar is how *Lake Tahoe News* likes to look at the immediate future for the area. It does matter who is elected on both sides of the state line. This election may prove more critical than many in recent history.

Who best understands the tourism-based economy of the South Shore? Who best understands financial issues? Who can work best together with others and build consensus? Who has vision?

These are the questions *Lake Tahoe News* poses to the electorate.

Read the answers – all of them. Compare them. Who best reflects what you want the South Shore to look like when their four-year term is up? Who best seems to understand the issues? Who has provided substance and not rhetoric? Who can answer the questions now and not wait until they are in office? Who can hit the road running and not need a learning curve?

For four council candidates, pay attention to the response to this question: *You and three other council candidates met with the Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce. Tell us about that meeting.* Not everyone agrees this was a chamber meeting. Odd. We think prospective councilmembers should know where they are going and whom they are speaking with.

And, yes, they should talk to all chambers and all other groups. It's important to hear what business groups, other special segments of town and individuals want and believe are concerns. We don't want people elected who only listen to their inner circle. But we do want councilmembers to know whom they are talking to and taking advice from.

These people will represent all of us. That's a bit of the quirkiness about living next to another state. What the council does affects people in Douglas County. What the commission does affects people in South Lake Tahoe. Although we only get to vote in one location, both bodies impact all of our lives on the South Shore.

To that end, it is imperative as citizens we get involved. It starts with registering to vote. Read the answers the candidates gave *Lake Tahoe News*. If your question wasn't asked, ask the candidates yourself.

Most of them are doing their job by familiarizing themselves with the issues. Now it's time to do yours by getting educated about whom to vote for.

There will be a City Council candidates forum on Oct. 14 at 9:30am at Inn by the Lake's conference center. This is sponsored by *Lake Tahoe News*, South Lake Tahoe Lodging Association, and South Tahoe Association of Realtors. Everyone is invited to attend.

TRCD board looking for members

South Lake Tahoe-based not-for-profit environmental organization Tahoe Resource Conservation District is seeking two board members to serve on its five-person board of directors.

New board members, appointed by the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors, will serve voluntary, four-year terms from Nov. 30, 2010 through Nov. 30, 2014. Interested applicants are required to reside and own property in the Lake Tahoe Basin in either Placer or El Dorado counties and are asked to submit a letter of interest along with a county committee application (available online) to the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors by Nov. 1.

Decisions regarding new board members are expected to be announced the week of Nov. 15.

Current board members have a diverse set of backgrounds, with experience in not-for-profit management, private business, education, resource management and real estate. New applicants or anyone from the general public is invited to attend Tahoe RCD board meetings, the next one is Oct. 12.

Tahoe RCD's mission is to promote the conservation and

improvement of the Lake Tahoe Basin’s soil, water, and related natural resources by providing leadership, information, programs, and technical assistance to all land managers, owners, organizations, and residents. Tahoe RCD is a non-regulatory, grant funded, not-for-profit agency that works with a variety of partner agencies to implement programs and outreach, which currently focus on erosion control, runoff infiltration, terrestrial and aquatic invasive species control, and conservation landscaping.