Ski helmets remain a matter of choice for kids in Calif.

By Jim Sanders, Sacramento Bee

Kids will not have to wear helmets when they ski or snowboard in California after all.



Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger applauded a proposed mandatory helmet law for minors Friday but took action that shelved it.

The Legislature, in passing the helmet law, stipulated that it would take effect only if a separate bill targeting ski resort signage and safety plans also was signed by the governor. Schwarzenegger said no.

Read the whole story

Amgen cycling tour eliminating cities; Tahoe still in running

By John Schumacher, Sacramento Bee

Sacramento remains in, but Nevada City is out, and several other changes are likely coming to the 2011 Amgen Tour of California pro cycling race.

City Manager Gene Albaugh said Friday he hopes Nevada City, which hosted the start of the 2010 first stage in May, can return to the race's lineup in the future.

"I think we'll get it back," said Albaugh, whose city hosts the annual Nevada City Bicycle Classic in June.

"Disappointed? Yes and no. It was probably good timing for us to get a little break from all that work."

John McCasey, executive director of the Sacramento Sports Commission, said the capital city would be in the race lineup for the fifth time in six years.

Read the whole story

Garage sales bring out all sorts of people

By Kathryn Reed

Sociologists, psychologists, psychiatrists and several other professional ists could probably have a field day analyzing people who have garage sales and the people who go to them.

I fell into the former category last Saturday.

I'm still baffled why people on vacation go to garage sales. I find them to be the strangest breed of garage sale-goer. I realize people shop on vacation. But why for other people's stuff and not some cool souvenir instead?



What didn't sell Sept. 18 is now at the Attic thrift store. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Maybe I’m too critical of what I had out in the driveway. Obviously, several people thought there was something special because each of those 50-cent sales added up to $127.35 by the end of the day.

What didn’t sell was thrown into the back of the Jeep to be hauled to Barton’s thrift store. It wasn’t coming back into the house.

With the interior of the house about to be painted, it was time to start going through things. Drawers were unloaded, the underneath of beds sorted through (though still in need of vacuuming), closets thinned, wine glasses tossed, an entire book shelf cleared and sold, and knickknacks dumped, um, sold.

Putting out signs on fluorescent colored poster board the night before did the trick in luring would-be buyers to our street. One of our neighbors was getting rid of stuff too, so people scored on our street last Saturday.

This was the most traffic I have had at a garage. (I always just do one-dayers – there are too many other things to do in Tahoe on a weekend.) The six or so hours spent selling my wares also allowed me to engage in conversation with people I

probably would not otherwise have met. A couple people I knew also stopped by.

And doing nothing is a bit of a foreign concept to me. So the garage sale got me off my computer – OK I was on it the first hour, but then I put it in the house. I brought out reading material to fill the few gaps of time.

I'm not sure if it is the economy or lack of garage sales in September, but the number of people coming by was astounding.

What I don't understand is a person who asks the price of something but doesn't bother to haggle. Some do. But plenty of others don't. Really, that $2 rug could have gone for $1. Oh well, I eventually got the two bucks I wanted.

I didn't sell anything for more than $20. I asked $25 for the bookcase and got $20. It's hard to stay firm when neighbors are doing the bidding.

What are people thinking when they walk onto private property with a cigarette or cigar. My hacking didn't faze any of them. Isn't there some sort of garage sale etiquette out there?

And the people who bring their kids and let them step on stuff. Unbelievable. Yes, I want to get rid of the stuff, but it doesn't need to be trampled on and broken.

And people – slow down. Nothing at any of these garage sales is that valuable that you must speed through residential neighborhoods. I apologize to my neighbors for bringing so much traffic to our little street last week.

What has amazed me at most garage sales I've had is how the stuff I got for free sells better than the stuff I paid good money for. I'm not sure what that says about my spending choices or other people's buying habits. I don't think I want to know.

I don't go to garage sales. But I know good things can be had

from them – like our $10 gas lawnmower. (Though it did cost $15 to sharpen the blades.) And we have a set of cool cordial glasses I would have never bought in a store, but sure are fun to sip libations from.

And, yes, I'll tell my accountant about the earned income in case I need to pay taxes on it.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

• The nomination deadline for Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce's 3rd Annual Blue Ribbon Awards is Oct. 1.

• Roadrunner gas station in Meyers is having a birthday party Oct. 1. Check out the website to learn about its pricing program to entice locals to buy local.

• Dan Spano, who owns Paradise Real Estate in South Tahoe, sold the Paradise Timeshare Resale business to Carl and Jean Thoms of Reno.

• About 40 marijuana growers in California joined the Teamsters this month; the first growers in the nation to be in a union.

• Lakefront Wedding Chapel in South Tahoe was the site of the wedding of Bernie Salazar, a participant in 'The Biggest Loser" – season five.

• In recognition of their dedication to service and safety, the Squaw Valley National Ski Patrol, the volunteer arm of the ski patrol, was selected as the winner of the 2009-10 National Outstanding Large Alpine Patrol Award.

• Lira’s Minden grocery store is closing Oct. 2.

• South Lake Tahoe Police Canine Association is hosting K-9 Trials Sept. 25 at 3pm at the ball fields behind South Tahoe Middle School. It’s free and open to the public.

• The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Governing Board voted this week to take 90 days to evaluate the judge’s decision in the shorezone case.

Who is leading Tahoe-Reno’s economic revival?

By Bill O’Driscoll, Reno Gazette-Journal

Their mission is the same: To grow business in Northern Nevada.

But with record-high unemployment and the harshest recession since the Great Depression comes the question of cohesion among economic development agencies, as the region continues to compete with other states for commerce.

Pessimism in the recently released Sierra Region Economic Outlook Mid-Year Business Survey prompted calls for greater unity to, as Northern Nevada Development Authority Executive Director Rob Hooper put it, “turn this economic beast around.”

“It’s a matter of getting everyone on the same page,” Greg Mosier, dean of the University of Nevada, Reno College of Business, a survey sponsor, said in assessing what needs to be done.

“In some ways, they’ve tried to do that, but it’s never been

everyone in the room at the same time," Mosier said. "I don't think there's been a team effort so far. It's going to be a train wreck going forward. We've got to say, 'What are we going to do?'"

Read the whole story

Tahoe taps into harvest mentality with fall food events

By Johnathan L. Wright, Reno Gazette-Journal

It all started 25 years ago in a campground in Tahoe City. A small group of food and wine enthusiasts had gathered in a tent to sample the objects of their affection. They shivered as it began to snow.

Cut to 2010. The tent is long gone. The Lake Tahoe Autumn Food and Wine Festival, which ran from Sept. 10 through 12, now sprawls across the Village at Northstar and, this year for the first time, up Northstar Mountain to the new Ritz-Carlton, Lake Tahoe.

Add in the inaugural Lake Tahoe Restaurant Week, with places offering $20, $30 and $40 prix fixe menus through Sept. 12, and the result was a mix that drew locals while giving visitors a reason to come to Tahoe beyond Labor Day, the traditional end of the summer season.

"Fall is our third season in Tahoe, and we think this helps anchor the season," said Judy Laverty, the festival's director, who was one of the original shivering few in the

tent a quarter century ago.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Like having a job? You'll love Prop. 23

By James Kellogg

My labor union supports Proposition 23 for one simple reason: It will protect the jobs of millions of hard-working California men and women.

Prop. 23 will temporarily suspend some very expensive, job-killing regulations under the state's global warming law, AB32 – regulations that even folks advocating immediate implementation of those rules admit will cost jobs. Ironically, those same folks go out of their way to avoid talking about global warming, which the law is about in the first place. Why? Because they know that California acting alone can't reduce global warming but that voters care about jobs. So they're bending over backward to try to make voters believe – inaccurately – that the global warming law was a jobs bill all along.

A jobs bill for where – China? India? Certainly not for California. The facts should send every working Californian running to vote "yes" on 23.

Read the whole story

James Kellogg is the international representative of the United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry.

Mediation fails between MV, STATA in Tahoe transit mess

By Kathryn Reed

Mediation this week failed to resolve the lawsuit MV Transportation filed against the South Shore's transit agency and the members in the organization.

MV Transportation filed a lawsuit against South Tahoe Area Transit Authority after the agency severed the contract with the Fairfield-based company. MV had signed a three-year contract in summer 2009 to run the day-to-day operation of the bus service on the South Shore that includes BlueGo, Heavenly ski shuttles, Nifty 50 Trolley, routes to Carson City, and service into Carson Valley.



Transit on the South Shore is in a precarious predicament. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Financial issues began surfacing early in the relationship. Sources close to the situation told *Lake Tahoe News* MV was

racking bills immediately because drivers employed by former bus contractor Area Transit Management did not pass the basic state and federal tests. This meant MV had to bring in workers from outside the area at an added premium.

Issues at the bus garage in South Lake Tahoe and maintenance of the vehicles were also problems MV had to contend with.

During this time John Andoh was the transit administrator. The board, made up of representatives from South Lake Tahoe, Douglas County, Heavenly Mountain Resort, Ridge Tahoe, Harveys, Harrah's, MontBleu, Lakeside Inn, Horizon, and Tahoe Transportation District gave him free reign without much oversight. (El Dorado County at the time was a member, but has since pulled out; TRPA has a non-voting member on the board. They are named in the lawsuit.)

No financial wrongdoing has been alleged in regards to Andoh. He was hired to operate the buses by the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency. He wasn't hired to keep track of expenses. He was told to make sure the buses ran. And he did.

The board didn't know about MV's expenses until the bills started piling up because they weren't getting paid. MV board members have said off the record they didn't know bills weren't being paid. They didn't believe it was their job to know what was going on a day-to-day basis.

MV wants its money and that's what the lawsuit is all about. The firm claims it is owed about $2 million and wants another $1 million in lost profits.

Other than confirming there was a mediation session for the better part of a day in Reno this week, MV officials did not want to comment further.

With STATA having filed for bankruptcy on Sept. 13, MV doesn't have much to gain from the agency. The agency owns two buses, while the members own the remainder.

Mike McLaughlin, attorney for STATA, said the attorney representing his client in bankruptcy court is going to seek to remove this particular lawsuit to bankruptcy court. This means the bankruptcy judge would rule on the lawsuit as part of the bankruptcy resolution.

It is possible MV will ask the bankruptcy judge to remand the case back to state court.

Each of the members pays a different amount into the STATA kitty, so to speak. Each, though, has an equal vote on the board. If the bankruptcy judge decides the members are liable for paying the millions of dollars, it is not known if it would be in equal payments or some method based on their annual contribution.

The 2008-09 audit as of Sept. 24 was still not posted on the BlueGo website so it's hard to know if the document had been prepared by the federal deadline of months ago, if any information contained in it could have prevented some of the chaos that is going on now.

For now, the buses keep rolling. But the routes keep changing.

Board members have their fingers crossed that one day BlueGo's vision statement will be more than just words and will be a reality, "The vision statement of BlueGo is to provide a transit service that allows anyone to go anywhere easily on a service that is clean, accessible, reliable, efficient and safe which hereby improves the environment and the quality of life in our resort community. "

Navy choppers dip into Emerald Bay

By Jeff Delong, Reno Gazette-Journal

The Navy is investigating an incident during which two Seahawk helicopters attempting to hover over Lake Tahoe were damaged when they briefly hit the water, a Navy spokesman said Friday.

The Navy's two MH-60 Romeo helicopters, were en route from Mather Air Force Base near Sacramento to Lemoore Naval Air Station Sept. 13 when the accident – displayed on a video posted on YouTube – occurred, said Lt. Aaron Kakiel, spokesman for the Naval Air Forces command at North Island in San Diego.

The YouTube posting states the incident occurred at Emerald Bay but Kakiel couldn't confirm the precise location. The area in the video does resemble the Tahoe's famous bay.

Read the whole story

Judge suspends prosecution of Phillip Garrido; sanity at issue

By Sam Stanton, Sacramento Bee

A judge in Placerville suspended the criminal prosecution of accused kidnapper Phillip Garrido after his public defender declared she doubted his mental competency to face trial.

The judge ordered a hearing for Oct. 8 on whether to appoint a mental expert to examine the 59-year-old alleged kidnapper of Jaycee Lee Dugard, who was abducted in 1991 at the age of 11.



Phillip and Nancy Garrido

The judge said he would allow the prosecution of Garrido's wife, Nancy Garrido to proceed. But he said he had his own doubts about Phillip Garrido's competency after public defender Susan Gellman said she, too, doubted his competency. The judge suspended the case.

The development could delay the prosecution of Phillip Garrido indefinitely.

His wife still faces a hearing Oct. 1.

Read the whole story