Gibbons recovering from pelvis surgery

By David McGrath Schwartz, Las Vegas Sun

Gov. Jim Gibbons is in stable condition after doctors performed surgery to repair his pelvis, which was broken in "several places," according to his office.

Gibbons suffered the injury Tuesday afternoon when he was thrown from a horse at a private Northern Nevada ranch.



Jim Gibbons

Gibbons, 65, had the surgery at Renown Regional Medical Center in Reno, where he is recovering and expected to be through at least Friday. The surgery lasted about two hours.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

• Kirkwood Mountain Resort hired Michael Dalzell to be director of sales and marketing. He has worked for Intrawest and was most recently at Kicking Horse Mountain Resort.

• Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce board voted last week to support California Proposition 22.

• Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board will vote Nov. 16 on the amendment to Lake Tahoe's Tahoe Maximum Daily Load. No time yet for the meeting at Lake Tahoe Community College in South Tahoe.

• The premiere of Matchstick Production's "The Way I See It" is Oct. 2 at 8pm at the MontBleu theater in Stateline. Cost is $15.

• Lake Tahoe Museum in South Lake Tahoe is open Saturdays from 11am-3pm and by request for groups. Just call (530) 541.5458.

• The Nevada State Board on Geographic Names voted to name a cove near Incline Village for Samuel Clemens, better known as Mark Twain.

Students earn right to paint principal's truck pink

By Kathryn Reed

See that pink Ford F-150 cruising around South Lake Tahoe. It belongs to an elementary school principal. It's not that he can't afford a professional paint job, it's just that his students are so smart.

Sierra House Elementary School Principal Ryan Galles smiled and shook his head as Girl Power, peace signs and hearts were painted on the hood of his 1992 truck.



Principal Ryan Galles, pink shirt, watches his truck become bright pink. Photos/Kathryn Reed

Pink paint was everywhere as most grades, including sixth-graders who came back Sept. 22, took brushes to every open spot except for windows, chrome and tires.

Malia Alexander, a fifth-grader, took her time to fill in the brown parts on the side that still showed through.

Pedro Chavez and Jesus Zepeda, sixth-graders, climbed into the bed of the truck to reach the roof.

Galles was trying to convince himself the original brown paint mixed with the pink created a camouflage look of sorts. He wasn't convincing anyone within earshot.

This is the vehicle he drives to work most days.

"The paint is magenta, but it's drying pretty pink," Galles said.

The students were rewarded with this bit of mischief because they exceeded expectations on the statewide test scores that were just released. Last year he had to shave his hair into a Mohawk because these South Tahoe kids did so well.

“It’s getting harder and harder to top the previous year,” Galles said. “I’ve told the kids to put on their thinking cap for what to do next year.”

Galles’ philosophy is education needs more ways to motivate kids. The thought of painting the principal’s truck did the trick this year.

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Tahoe left out of DEA, El Dorado sheriff’s drug disposal day

The El Dorado County Sheriff’s Office is partnering with the Drug Enforcement Administration in the National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day on Sept. 25. This is an opportunity for county residents to dispose of old and unwanted prescription drugs.

The sheriff’s office will be operating two sites where these drugs can be disposed of with no questions asked. The hours of collection will be from 10am to 4pm. One location is the main office – 300 Fair Lane, Placerville and the other is the El Dorado Hills Substation, 4354 Town Center Drive, Ste. 112. El Dorado Hills.

The initiative seeks to prevent increased pill abuse and theft. DEA will be collecting potentially dangerous expired, unused, and unwanted prescription drugs for destruction at sites nationwide on Saturday.

South Tahoe working on creating functional website

By Kathryn Reed

With no discussion about why the cost of the new website for South Lake Tahoe has nearly doubled, the council OK'd the $38,047 expenditure on a 5-0 vote.

Even though awarding the contract to CivicPlus out of Kansas was on the consent agenda Sept. 14, Councilman Hal Cole pulled it to talk about website content. He wants to ensure people landing on the current site seeking tourism information will be directed to the appropriate places in the future. As it is now, the city's website is just about government business.

Christine Vuletich, city finance director, told Cole he was a step ahead of everyone and that, yes, the appropriate links will be included in the redesign.

"All the city departments and others will be involved in designing the website," Vuletich said.

Mayor Kathay Lovell asked for staff to send out examples of websites CivicPlus has done so the economic committee of Cole and Councilman Jerry Birdwell could take a look at them. However, in the council's packet of information that day were examples of designs CivicPlus has done for Emeryville, Windsor, Mammoth Lakes, Maui and others.

South Lake Tahoe's current site is 7-years-old and has always been difficult to navigate. It is not intuitive and

information is often difficult to find.

Compounding the problem is some departments have created their own, separate site instead of having them be extensions of the city's primary site. These sites will be consolidated into the main site during the redesign so there is uniformity.

The funding is budgeted in the 2009-10 budget, with $18,000 having been allocated from the economic development account. The $20,047 comes from the website capital improvement project account.

City staff determined it didn't make sense to pay the $18,000 allocated for the old "prospector" website, so that's how the design team wound up with more money.

The new site will be up and running some time in 2011.

South Lake Tahoe council candidates delve into issues

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – Fiscal responsibility and transparency in government were overriding themes of the nine South Lake Tahoe City Council candidates who attended the first forum of the election season. One person chose not to attend.

Soroptimist International of South Lake Tahoe hosted the Sept. 22 event at Harrah's Lake Tahoe. Based on the order they will appear on the ballot, candidates gave one-minute opening statements. Then they each answered four questions.



Soroptimist Ann Swallow asks the candidates questions Sept. 22. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Some substance and true examples of what they want to do was provided. Plenty of rhetoric and cliché responses were part of the mix. Sometimes the question was never answered.

Doug Cichowicz is concerned about how tax dollars are spent and believes there is waste at all levels of government.

Joy Curry wants to move South Lake Tahoe forward by improving the community, making it safe, and creating transparency in government.

Steve Kubby believes it’s impossible to be a First World resort town with Third World roads and bikes.

Adrian Gooch says having worked for the city in redevelopment gives her the advantage of knowing the nuts and bolts of how the organization works. She wants to put pride back into the community.

Alice Jones would use her knowledge as a certified public accountant to help get the city on secure financial ground, work on long-range planning, and look into dealing with aging infrastructure.

Claire Fortier believes economic stability will come from geotourism, recreation and green business.

Angela Swanson opened with not asking for the group's vote, but instead their support, explaining a new vision for South Tahoe will take the effort of everyone in that room and outside those four walls to bring change – that it can't be done by just five councilmembers.

Georg May agrees there needs to be change and experience is important, but doesn't believe that a person has to have lived here nearly a lifetime to contribute to the future good.

Tom Davis, who has been off the council for the last six years after serving for 12, said when things are bad is when great leadership is needed – and said he is the one with those leadership skills.

Question No. 1: Criticism has been leveled on some in this race for having a distinct agenda. But the truth is everyone has an agenda, some call it a platform or issues, for why they are running. Describe your agenda.

Davis: The economy is his agenda. But he said it would take a council that can work together to bring change.

Cichowicz: Fiscal responsibility. He doesn't understand why Industrial Avenue was repaved instead of streets that have heavier use.

Curry: She wants her children and grandchildren to be able to live in South Lake Tahoe with successful jobs.

Kubby: He believes the city is treating businesses like ATM machines and that needs to end. He wants the council to get back to basics – roads and bike paths.

Gooch: She, too, wants to get back to basics, to have the council set sound policy, be approachable, honest and operate with transparency.

Jones: She has two small children for whom she wants to help build a stable community through teamwork and long-range planning, as well as looking at expenditures and why no money was in the budget for roads during fiscally sound years of just a few years ago.

Fortier: She's seeking a vibrant community through economic stability via creating a first-class recreation destination.

Swanson: She said it's not her agenda she will bring to the council, but what she hears from the people as she walks the streets. They are telling her they want the basics to be better.

May: He wants a more sustainable community. To pay for improvements he proposes taxing water bottles and getting everyone in government to be able to write grants.

Question No. 2: PERS, the Public Employee Retirement System, is a drain on the city's budget. How would you change the city's benefits package for employees?

Curry: She likes how the city has been working to make changes and believes it's important to be responsible with city contracts. She supports furlough days as a way to reduce costs. She also believes city employees deserve health benefits and a retirement.

Kubby: He doesn't understand how the Finance Department has nine employees, especially when the city has a $3 million deficit. He pointed to retirement packages being a statewide issue.

Gooch: She just started collecting PERS. She said there are other agencies in the basin with better benefits than the city. She supports the changes that have been made, but does not believe more needs to be done.

Jones: She wants to compare South Lake Tahoe benefits to other

cities the same size. But she also recognizes that if salary and benefit packages are cut too much, it will be difficult to find qualified people to hire.

Fortier: She pointed out the two ways of balancing a budget – putting money in, or taking money out. She would like to review PERS and the entire budget.

Swanson: With the city having seven bargaining units and a projected $12 million deficit over the next three years, she believes being a good employer means looking at the long-term issues.

May: He doesn't want double standards with some employees getting one thing and new hires another.

Davis: Of the approximately 200 city employees, about half are employed by the police or fire department. He wants the best workers possible, but also wants the city to live within its means.

Cichowicz: He doesn't believe it makes sense to only cut at the bottom. He wants PERS to be changed.

Question No. 3: The City Council also acts as the directors for the Redevelopment Agency. Many years ago the meetings were distinct, the agendas were distinct. Now it's all blurred with most of the public assuming the council is making the redevelopment decisions. There was even a time when the mayor was not in charge of the agency portion of the meeting. Would you leave the status quo, revert to the old ways or have some other way to handle business for the two entities? And why?

May: He talked in general about redevelopment without answering the question.

Davis: He didn't really answer the question except loosely to say there needs to be better outreach to the community.

Cichowicz: He didn't answer the question, and instead talked

about the convention center project.

Curry: She just talked about how wonderful redevelopment is.

Kubby: He sees redevelopment as a disease.

Gooch: She was the first person to quasi answer the question. She explained the City Council and Redevelopment meetings were thrown into one meeting to capture everyone who came to a council meeting. She didn't elaborate if she would keep the status quo or not.

Jones: She's adamant the council should oversee redevelopment and questions some of the accounting practices in redevelopment.

Fortier: She grasped the question – it had to do with transparency. But she didn't answer the question. She wants everyone to understand the ramifications of redevelopment.

Swanson: She wants transparency to come through having study sessions so the process is slowed down so the public understands the process and/or project.

Question No. 4: Will you be taking the city's health benefits, which is one of the perks of being a councilmember? Why or why not?

Kubby: He thinks he may need them by the time the job is done.

Gooch: With no past employee being elected to the council, the issues with getting retiree medical benefits at the same time as council benefits has not been dealt with. She believes she'll use council benefits as her supplemental source.

Jones: Undecided.

Fortier: Undecided.

Swanson: Maybe.

May: No.

Davis: Yes, as a supplemental to Medicare, which he goes on in January.

Cichowicz: Not likely.

Curry: No.

The South Lake Tahoe Lodging Association, South Tahoe Association of Realtors and *Lake Tahoe News* will be putting on a candidates' forum Oct. 14. More details will be posted soon.

Lake Tahoe News sent questions to the council and Douglas County Commission candidates to garner their viewpoints on a range of topics. Responses will be printed starting Oct. 1.

Lack of state budget impacting Tahoe marathon

Updated Sept. 22 at 8:27pm: CHP Sgt. Dan Paxton of the South Lake Tahoe office said tonight, "The marathon will go on and we will be involved." Patrolmen can do traffic control, they just can't bill anyone for it, Paxton said of Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's mandate.



To the community,

An unbelievable political event has occurred. The governor of

California has canceled all Caltrans encroachment permits onto the state highways and CHP overtime affecting our event and leaving us without dedicated CHP protection.

I have no intention of canceling our events. City, county, and federal services are still available. And the common intelligence of our athletes will provide common sense safety.

Athletes are coming from all over the world for this event. We will bike and run as planned with some safety modifications. The swim, kayak, and golf events are not affected.

I will ask the city of South Lake Tahoe, and El Dorado and Placer counties to help provide for our safety issues.

We will run on the side of the road facing traffic. Bikes will obey all traffic regulations as already stated in the rules.

I will update everyone at the volunteer meeting tonight [Sept. 22] at 6pm at the Horizon casino.

The governor is trying to force the state Legislature to pass the state budget. He obviously wants the citizens, and in this case, our runners, to call and pressure their individual legislators. The first step would be to contact the governor's office to impress upon him the unfairness of canceling this event, especially so close to the date. His office phone number is (916) 445.2841 and the fax number is (916) 558.3160.

Les Wright, Lake Tahoe Marathon director

Garrido indictments may speed

up trial in Dugard case

By Sam Stanton, Sacramento Bee

Prosecutors in the kidnap-rape trial of Phillip and Nancy Garrido apparently have changed gears, moving to get the El Dorado County grand jury to indict the couple and move the case to trial without going through a preliminary hearing, Nancy Garrido's attorney said this afternoon.

Stephen Tapson said he had been told that the couple were indicted by the grand jury Monday or this morning but that he would not receive official word until a transcript of the grand jury session was completed.



Phillip and Nancy Garrido

District Attorney Vern Pierson could not be reached today, but Tapson said the net effect of the move would be to have the pending charges against the couple dismissed at the next scheduled hearing on Oct. 1. The new indictment would preclude the need for a preliminary hearing that had been set to begin Oct. 7, and would allow the new charges to be sent directly to a trial court, possibly speeding up proceedings that already have dragged on for 13 months.

Read the whole story

Composting program at LTCC

The South Lake Tahoe Garden Club will host a public meeting on Sept.28 at the Lake Tahoe Community College Demonstration Garden Pavilion. Guest speakers will be John Marchini from South Tahoe Refuse and Craig Witt from Full Circle Compost in Carson Valley.

They will discuss the current program taking garbage from Tahoe to the valley and turning it into rich black compost.

The program will be an opportunity to learn about an “Earth Friendly” project and to see the newly renovated college garden.

Bring a sack lunch if desired. Light refreshments will be served before the noon presentation.

For more information, call (530) 541.4654

43% in El Dorado County have at least 2-year degree

By Laurel Rosenhall, Sacramento Bee

Sacramento County is typical of California in the portion of the population that is college-educated, according to a report being released today by a foundation advocating that more people go to college.

The report from the Lumina Foundation says that in Sacramento County and across California, 38 percent of working-age adults (age 25-64) hold at least a two-year college degree.

Other counties in the region have a more highly educated population. In El Dorado County, 43 percent of adults have at least a two-year degree; the number was 47 percent in Placer County and 49 percent in Yolo County, home to the University of California, Davis.

Read the whole story