Wine festival raises money for multiple sclerosis

Toast the end of the summer season during the 22nd Annual Alpen Wine Festival at The Village at Squaw Valley on Sept. 5. Wine aficionados will sip fine vintages while taking in the mountain scenery and listening to live music, all to help raise money for Can Do Multiple Sclerosis.

The Village at Squaw teams up with Uncorked Wine Bar to host an event where the aroma of the wines is accompanied by the perfume of the pines. For a $40 donation to Can Do Multiple Sclerosis, guests will sip vintages served in a crystal souvenir wine glass from 2 to 5pm.

Event attendees can enjoy a variety of flavors from more than 40 wineries such as Napa Valley winemaking pioneers Venge Vineyards, Canihan Family Cellars, known for their award-winning Pinot Noir, Syrah, and Cabernet Franc crafted on their certified organic estate vineyards in the heart of the Sonoma Valley, and Flowers, which grows and produces cool-climate wines that authentically express the unique character of the coolest areas of the rugged Sonoma Coast. The Alpen Wine Festival also will feature wines from Hall, Three Families, Vinum Cellars, Pine Ridge, Dierberg, Twisted Rivers, Merriam Winery, Praxis Cellars and many more.

Tickets will be available starting at 1pm on Sunday in The Village. The majority of wines served at the event also can be purchased at Uncorked.

The Alpen Wine Festival also will feature a silent auction room and raffle, which will help provide additional support for Can Do Multiple Sclerosis, formerly known as The Heuga Center. Festival attendees can bid on more than 50 items, including artwork, dinners at restaurants, magnums signed by

winemakers, mixed cases of wine and more.

Can Do MS, formerly The Heuga Center for Multiple Sclerosis, is an innovative provider of lifestyle empowerment programs for people with MS and their support partners. A national nonprofit organization, they empower people to move beyond their MS by giving them the knowledge, skills, tools and confidence to adopt healthy lifestyle behaviors, actively co-manage their disease and live their best lives.

For more information, visit www.Squaw.com or call (530) 584.6266.

Overhaul at South Tahoe rec center will save city millions

By Kathryn Reed

Unbeknown to swimmers, those at the front counter, people working out on the gym equipment and employees, the boiler which heats the facility was replaced Monday with one that makes the old one look like a relic from the Dark Ages of technology.

The new one weights 750 pounds; the old one 8,000 pounds. The new one is about one-fifth the size of the old one. It will be up and running in a couple weeks.



Jim Fisher, left, and Duc Le begin installing the rec center boiler Aug. 23. Photos/Kathryn Reed

Two boilers date to when the South Lake Tahoe complex opened in the 1970s. One will remain as a backup to the spiffy new one.

“We are going to save $1.6 million over a 24-year period,” explained Gary Moore, director of the city’s Parks and Recreation Department, of the retrofit at entire facility. That is a net savings.

The total savings is $2.4 million. The cost of the equipment is $850,000. The money to pay for this comes from a 15-year 3 percent loan from the California Energy Commission.

With the retrofit to the center that houses the community pool and the neighboring ice rink, a savings of $65,000 is expected in the first year.

Aircon Energy out of Sacramento is doing the bulk of the work, with local contractors being used when possible. On Aug. 23 it was a truck from local contractor Dale Rise that was hauling away the old boiler. It will be recycled.



The new blue boiler is a fraction of the size of the old white boiler.

Next up is digging the trench between the pool and ice rink. The turbine being installed to heat the pool will create electricity. That electricity will then be used to operate the ice rink.

The air handler for the pool bubble will be installed this fall.

All the lighting changes were done earlier this summer. New fluorescent bulbs and sensor devices were installed.

“We spent $60,000 for lighting to retrofit this site. The payback is $18,000 a year, so it doesn’t make sense not to do it,” Moore said. “The lighting is cool. It is brighter in the gymnasium, but it’s using half the wattage.”

Savings from the entire project will be used to pay off the loan.

“Once the equipment is paid off, whoever is sitting at this desk should lobby hard to keep it in this department,” Moore said. He is retiring Oct. 1.

Celebration of Writers

Celebration of Writers around the lake is Sept. 17 at 7pm in the Grand Hall at Valhalla on the South Shore.

Tahoe Writers Works hosts talent from the lake and beyond in a smart, funny, and inspirational night of prose.

The $10 fee includes wine reception and reading.

DRI scientist speaks about astrobiology

Microbe Planet: Life on Earth, Extreme Environments and Astrobiology will presented by Alison Murray of the Desert Research Institute on Sept. 9.

What kinds of life inhabit extreme environments? What strategies do they use to survive? What significance does this research have for the history of life on Earth and future studies on other planets?

As an overview of Murray’s current research, this program will provide a better understanding of the unseen life forms that dominate this planet and connect the study of life on earth and studies elsewhere in the Universe.

The discovery of a Martian meteorite in the Antarctic with evidence of microbial life resulted in a new field of science called astrobiology. This field has grown rapidly in the last 10 years as evidence of water on Mars and the moon of Jupiter and other bodies in the solar system have been discovered.

Murray’s research in aquatic and ice-laden environments utilizes new approaches for exploring the diversity and complexity of microbial life in order to understand how life functions and adapts to its surroundings here on earth. The implications of this work have far-reaching significance for understanding the history of life on Earth.

Murray has led a research program at the Desert Research Institute since 2001 focused on studying free-living and symbiotic aquatic microorganisms and their ecology to understand their capabilities for survival in often extreme environments. Murray’s research utilizes molecular tools to examine diversity, activity, community composition and genomic structure. Her work is interdisciplinary in nature, drawing upon oceanography, geosciences, computational biology, and chemistry. She has also worked in Lake Tahoe to characterize the diversity of organisms throughout the water column.

The program is presented by Squaw Valley Institute and UC Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center. For additional information, visit www.squawvalleyinstitute.org or terc.ucdavis.edu.

Time: 6:30pm no-host bar; 7pm program

Cost: $10

Location: Assembly Rooms 139 and 141 Tahoe Center for Environmental Sciences, 291 Country Club Drive, Incline Village, on the campus of Sierra Nevada College.

Mental health meeting in El Dorado County

A public hearing, hosted by the El Dorado County Mental Health Commission, will be on Sept. 7 from noon-1pm to receive input on the El Dorado County 2010-11 Mental Health Services Act Plan Update.

The hearing will be conducted via teleconference at two locations:

El Dorado County EMS Agency, 415 Placerville Drive, Ste. K, Placerville and El Dorado County Public Health, 1360 Johnson Blvd, No. 103, South Lake Tahoe.

The draft plans include updated information on proposed MHSA program activities and budgets for this year. Plans under review include: Community Services and Supports, Workforce Education and Training, and Prevention and Early Intervention. The draft plans are posted on the El Dorado County Health Services Department, Mental Health Division's website at www.edcgov.us/mentalhealth/mhsa.html.

Copies may be obtained by contacting Stephanie Carlson at (530) 621.6315. Comments may be emailed to mhsa@edcgov.us.

Good side of CHP killer up to defense to bring forward at

penalty phase

By Carlos Alcalá, Sacramento Bee

Jurors in El Dorado Superior Court are likely to face a tide of emotional testimony as the penalty phase of the David Zanon murder trial gets under way this week.

Prosecutors are expected to present descriptions of Zanon's victim – California Highway Patrol Officer Scott Russell – evoking the tragedy of a good man's life lost.

No one disputes that he was a good man, said David Brooks, Zanon's public defender.

Brooks, by contrast, will address his client's troubled upbringing and will try to produce evidence that Zanon had a good side, despite his acknowledged criminal history.

"It's going to be quite the roller coaster ride," Brooks said.

Read the whole story

Suspects sought in 2 arsons at N. Nevada schools

The Douglas County Sheriff's Office is seeking information regarding separate arson incidents that occurred recently at two elementary schools.

The incidents were discovered at Minden and Gardnerville elementary schools on the mornings of Aug. 18 and Aug. 19. In each of the incidents, evidence of the arson was discovered by

school custodians.

Evidence consisted of blackened scorch marks on backboards of handball courts at both schools, as well as an exterior wall of the main office building at Minden Elementary School.

Also found at the scenes were broken glass bottles and wicks made from ripped cloth material. No flammable liquid was present, but it is believed the suspects filled glass containers with some type of flammable liquid, then set the cloth wicks afire, and threw the liquid filled glass bottles at the walls – similar to a Molotov cocktail.The incidents are being investigated by the Douglas County Sheriff's Office and East Fork Fire and Paramedic District. A reward of $500 is being offered to anyone with information leading to the arrest and/or conviction of the suspect(s). Your identity is not needed and you may remain anonymous.

Anyone with any information regarding this incident is urged to call DCSO Investigator Ed Garren at (775) 782.9908, EFFPD Arson Inspector Terry Taylor at (775) 782.9861, or Secret Witness at (775) 782.7463.

23-mile TRTA challenge hike

Determine your fitness level on a 23-mile challenge hike with the TRTA. Join experienced volunteer guides for a day of hiking on the longest segment of the Tahoe Rim Trail.

The trail from Kingsbury Grade south to Big Meadow maintains a 10 percent or less grade, however there are some steep rocky sections around Monument Pass. Much of this route is exposed and above 9,000 feet.

Meet at Big Meadow trailhead at 6am Aug. 27, where the appropriate number of cars will be selected to shuttle the Kingsbury South trailhead. After the hike, a couple volunteers will be needed to bring shuttle drivers back to their cars.

Meeting Place: Big Meadow Trailhead

Time: 6am

Distance: 23.1 Miles

Expected Length: 10 hours

Difficulty: Strenuous

Bring: Lunch, snacks, and at least two liters of water. Water is available to filter at Star Lake. If you have a filter, bring it on this hike. Bring raincoat, sun protection (hat, sunglasses, and lotion).

Fitness Level/Special Skills: Please note that this hike is designed for experienced hikers who are in good physical condition. This is a long hike. Hikers should be comfortable hiking all day. Although there will be periodic breaks, a steady pace needs to be maintained in order to finish the hike at a reasonable time of day.

Pre-registration is required for all hikes. For more information or to sign-up for these hikes call the TRTA office at (775) 298.0012 or email jaimes@tahoerimtrail.org

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No budget, no Cal Grants for

college students

By Laurel Rosenhall, Sacramento Bee

It is a perilous time to be a college student depending on the state of California to get through school.

Some 335,500 students going to California colleges this fall have qualified for Cal Grants because their family incomes are so low. They need the grants to pay tuition, buy books or cover basic living expenses.

But without a budget for the 2010-11 year, the state is not sending out any Cal Grants.

State budgets have been late for so many years now that larger institutions have adapted. Campuses in the University of California and California State University systems will front the Cal Grant money to their students, then get reimbursed when a budget is signed.

Read the whole story

Mark Twain part of USFS program on South Shore

This year's evening program series at the Lake of the Sky Amphitheater will close out Aug. 26 with "An Evening with Mark Twain." The program, which begins at 7pm, features local favorite MacAvoy Lane recounting Twain's significant role in the history of the Lake Tahoe Basin.

The local U.S. Forest Service's nonprofit organization, the

Tahoe Heritage Foundation, accepts a $2 per person donation to help defray costs.

Come get a chuckle and go back in time for this one-hour living history presentation at the center’s Lake of the Sky Amphitheater, located on Highway 89 toward Emerald Bay.