Geotourism nomination deadline looms

A hands-on, drop-in nomination clinic is Aug. 23 for anyone who needs help with the nominating process for geotourism website being created for the region.

The clinic will take place from 10am-3pm in the conference room at the Auburn offices of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, 11521 Blocker Drive, Ste. 205, Auburn.

Organizers are urging participants to bring laptop computers along with their plans and ideas for nominations.

The nomination period for the Tahoe Emigrant Corridor (counties of Placer, Nevada, El Dorado, Washoe, Douglas, and Carson City) ends Aug. 30. Local residents can log on here to place a nomination of a destination to be included in the WebMap.

TOCCATA coming to South Lake Tahoe

Baroque Brassy is Classy is the program being brought to St. Theresa Catholic Church in South Lake Tahoe by TOCCATA on Aug. 23 at 7:30pm.

Mark Lord, Robert Nagel, William van Meter and Joe Savage on the trumpets will perform Baroque Concerti for 1,2, and 3 trumpets and strings. Also included in the program will be the Handel Organ Concerto OP 4 No. 2 and the Bach Cantata. Also featured are Toni Healy, flute; Marianne Maytan, oboe; Darrell

Moore clarinet; Ben Benson, bassoon; and Bruce Kanzelmayer, French horn.

For more information, visit www.ToccataTahoe.com.

Tickets are $20 for adults, $15 seniors age 62 and up, and $5 for students.

Fallen Leaf Lake board members resign

To Fallen Leaf Lake Community Members,

After a lengthy conversation with David Livingston {El Dorado County counsel], it became very clear that I am unable to legally participate in the voting process at Fallen Leaf Lake. Per the Fallen Leaf Lake Community Services District "By-Laws" [see below], I must be registered to vote within the district in order to serve as a board member. Because I am unable to legally do so, I am resigning from the Fallen Leaf Lake Community Services District Board.

In parting, I would like to make a couple of comments. Fallen Leaf Lake has always been a very big part of my life. My family has been present at the lake since 1926 and we have always felt privileged to be ableto enjoy such a beautiful and wonderful place. Many, many of the people I have known over the years at Fallen Leaf Lake have been quite special to my family and myself. In order to preserve the beauty of Fallen Leaf Lake I spent countless hours and several hundred dollars of my own money to establish the first and only mandatory boat wash system and program in the state of California. I did this to ensure the physical beauty of Fallen Leaf Lake is kept

intact for future generations.

Over the past two years, I have experienced a side of Fallen Leaf Lake that I am truly disheartened about.

It was my feeling that by simply being a member of our community the people at the lake had a special bond. Apparently this is not the case. Our community is divided, it is my belief that there is a portion of our community that wishes to control the community area for selfish reasons. This group does not seem to have the entire community, the CSD's financial interests, and/or the public at large in mind. The fact that the board had accomplished so much in such a short time while being constantly criticized and even threatened is disturbing to stay the least. Within the last 1½ years we have seen the resignation of our interim General Manager Lee Vestal, our board President Dana Clark, our concessionaire Rick Firkins, our board Vice President Terri Thomas, and as recently as this morning our Secretary Treasurer Patsy Miller.

You can ask any of these people about their time involved with the CSD board and they will tell you that the criticism, harassment, and threats they received were if not the entire reason for their resignation at least part of their reason. There have been many people that have treated myself and others with disrespect, arrogance, aggression, and they have shown a sense of entitlement that would be unflattering to anyone.

This has been an organized assault on the board and people supporting the boards decision regarding our new concessionaire, the meetings, petitions, straw votes, letters, and emails [with no recipient list so the CSD was unable to reply to recipients] were circulated trying diligently to regain control of the community area. Many of these email and correspondences included inaccurate, false, and misleading information in order to sway the recipient's views on issues. On several occasions these actions were done disrespectfully

and even in unethical ways.

I have lost friends that I have known for years based on rumors and correspondences that have been circulated about me with no fact to back them up. These rumors and correspondences were circulated with the intent to discredit me personally.

As I have said in the past, the community area is not for controlling it is for sharing with everyone, this includes the entire community and the public at large. I wish our community and the public luck in being able to share and enjoy Fallen Leaf Lake in harmony with each other, at this time I am unsure if this is possible.

Sincerely,

Mike Kraft, CSD president

Green lodging conference embraces eco-capitalism

By Joann Eisenbrandt

Composting. Recycling. Energy-efficient lighting. Everyone knows these are good for the environment. Organizers of the West Coast Green Lodging Conference taking place Aug. 22-25 at Embassy Suites in South Lake Tahoe are convinced they’re good for a hotel’s bottom line as well.

Embassy Suites, the conference host, has been in the forefront of environmental sustainability at the lake, implementing over the last several years a number of green initiatives that have significantly reduced the hotel’s carbon footprint and shown a profit for the property.

David Hansen, Embassy's director of engineering, has been a driving force in this effort. Terming himself an "eco-geek," Hansen emphasizes, "Lodging uses 25 percent of all the energy in the U.S. If we can attack this sector of the economy, think how much energy we could save."



David Hansen is the leader of green lodging in Lake Tahoe.

He "got the green bug" while working for Robert Redford as director of facilities at the Sundance Ski Resort, where he built a totally-sustainable day spa. "I was addicted," he said. When he came to Tahoe to work at Embassy Suites Lake Tahoe Hotel & Ski Resort, he was determined to turn it into a sustainable property.

The four-day Green Lodging conference brings together hotel general managers, chief engineers, innkeepers and owners to share ideas on sustainability as it specifically relates to hotel operations. Tahoe was an obvious venue. The Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce website lists 82 member entries under the "accommodations" category.

"The Lake Tahoe Basin should rightfully be the world's sustainability leader," Hansen believes.

Conference speakers, including Hansen and chamber President B Gorman, will address why and how to go green and the benefits it affords the individual property and its community.

Participants will also have the opportunity to take a “back-of-the-house” tour of Embassy Suites’ Green Program in action.

The conference keynote speaker is Glenn Hasek, publisher of the Cleveland-based *Green*



Glenn Hasek is the keynote speaker at the Green Lodging Conference.

Lodging News, an online portal for the lodging industry offering a potpourri of green information and links. A former managing editor at Hotel & Motel Management Magazine, Hasek is sold on the wisdom of Green Lodging. As he told *Lake Tahoe News*, “Green lodging is synonymous with smart lodging. It’s running your business in the most efficient manner possible, using green technology and green teamwork.”

But after all, business is business, so green lodging advocates are quick to point out that going green isn’t synonymous with going broke. Given the right planning and management, the additional costs of some changes, like replacing Styrofoam serving ware with compostable plates, cups and utensils, can be more than offset by cost savings gained elsewhere by boosting income from recycling and greatly-reduced power and water bills.

“For corporate America,” Hansen believes, “environmental sustainability might not be a driving factor, but saving money is. It’s eco-capitalism – saving money and saving the planet

at the same time."

Eco-capitalism is putting down roots in the lodging industry. Creation of a nationwide Green Lodging Association to represent the industry is being seriously talked about. Twenty states, including California, now have Green Lodging programs. The state's website offers information on building, buying, traveling and working green, a listing of 200 green hotels in California as well as some convincing statistics on the impacts lodging properties have on the environment. For example, average-sized hotels purchase more products in a week than 100 families do in a year and use 218 gallons of water per day per occupied room.

Locally, a visible "green-mindedness" has emerged. Aramark's Zephyr Cove Resort and Fire & Ice at Marriott Vacation Rentals have joined Embassy Suites in South Tahoe Refuse's pilot commercial composting program. STR picks up the properties' compostables (plates, cups, utensils and food waste) and transports them to Full Circle Compost in Minden. Compostables, unlike biodegradable materials, break down completely into soil, water and carbon dioxide.

Jeanne Lear, human resources manager at STR, says of the innovative pilot program, "We're hoping the costs and benefits of these sustainable practices will be able to be expanded to other commercial properties."

Compost Tahoe, a grassroots organization of community sustainability advocates, offers composting education, including a program in which volunteers go to local food service establishments and train employees in sustainable food waste practices. South Lake Tahoe is developing its own Green Building Program, and has added a Sustainability Commission to its roster of community advisory groups. The Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce initiated a Sustainability Measures Project, is holding green forums for businesses and formed a Green Business Cooperative, where local businesses can share

ideas and get support for implementing sustainability practices.

Why this spike in interest now?

“The economy has tanked,” Hansen explains. “Tahoe isn’t drawing the gaming crowd as in the past. What we are about is this pristine lake, the environment; we should be showcasing that. We should be purchasing locally, reinventing our own area. Business is what allows us to live here.”

But green lodging won’t work if the traveling public doesn’t buy in. Hasek’s blog has a posting seeking participants for a Green Traveler Survey conducted by CMI Green of San Francisco, which will gather information about lodging purchasing practices and how much they are impacted by a property’s green policies. Last year’s survey showed travelers are embracing the “green” changes.

Hasek and Hansen agree. Hansen says at least 50 percent of their guests are “ecstatic” about the hotel’s sustainability program. For the rest, the changes are so subtle they’ve gotten no complaints. For the most part, they’ve been so well-integrated into hotel operations that they go unnoticed.

Registration for the West Coast Green Lodging Conference is from $300/person with room rates from $149/person. A conference program and registration information are available here.

Life’s universal topics come

to the stage at Valhalla

Unbearable loneliness, crises of confidence, bereavement, loss of hope and struggles with faith are just some of the universal topics being talked about on the stage of the historic Boathouse Theatre at Tahoe's annual Valhalla Arts, Music and Theatre Festival on the South Shore. "Talking With" is a collection of 10 monologues by 10 characters.

"Talking With" will take the stage Aug. 25-28 at 7:30pm and on Aug. 29 at 2pm. Tickets are $18/$15 per person. On Aug. 26 there will be a Wine Tasting and Play sponsored by Après Wine Bar for $28/person, $50/couple. Tickets are also available without the wine tasting.

MontBleu's parent company posts quarterly loss

By Steve Green, Las Vegas Sun

Gaming operator Tropicana Entertainment Inc. of Las Vegas on Friday posted a second quarter loss of $1.6 million on net revenue of $165.1 million.

The company said the overall results are not comparable to previous periods since the company's big Atlantic City property is not included in the comparable quarter for 2009.

Tropicana Entertainment Inc. is controlled by investor Carl Icahn.

The company, which in March emerged from the Tropicana Entertainment LLC bankruptcy, has Tropicana casinos in

Atlantic City and Laughlin, as well as the River Palms casino in Laughlin, the MontBleu casino resort on Lake Tahoe and riverboat casinos in Evansville, Ind., Baton Rouge, La., Vicksburg, Miss., and Greenville, Miss.

Read the whole story

Garrido's competency questioned; tabloids buy Dugard photos

By Martha Bellisle, Reno Gazette-Journal

PLACERVILLE -– The lawyer representing Phillip Garrido, charged with kidnapping Jaycee Dugard in 1991 and holding her captive for 18 years, raised concerns Friday about whether Garrido is competent to stand trial and help with his defense.



Phillip Garrido

After meeting with the attorneys and prosecutors privately before a hearing in El Dorado Superior Court, Judge Douglas Phimister told the courtroom that Garrido's attorney, Susan Gellman "may be declaring doubt," meaning she may file a

motion questioning Garrido’s mental state.

If she does so, Phimister said the court would appoint an expert to examine Garrido to determine his competency status. He set another hearing for Oct. 1 to discuss the next step.

Read the whole story

$5,000 penalty for evading Tahoe’s boat inspectors

A boater who refused a mandatory invasive species decontamination earlier this summer faces a $5,000 penalty for evading watercraft inspectors in order to launch illegally into Lake Tahoe. The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Governing Board will decide the matter at their meeting Wednesday at Stateline.

On June 28, Tahoe Resource Conservation District watercraft inspectors at a boat ramp on the East Shore sent the boater away from the ramp for a mandatory decontamination because the boat he wanted to launch was determined to be high risk for invasive species.

All motorized watercraft in the Lake Tahoe Region are required to be inspected for aquatic invasive species, such as quagga and zebra mussels and New Zealand mudsnails, before being allowed to launch.

The boater’s decontamination was scheduled for three days later, on July 1. When the boater did not show up for the decontamination, inspectors put the vessel’s registration identification on a watch list as an alert to other launch and

inspection sites.

Inspectors soon discovered that later on June 28 the vessel was brought to the roadside invasive species inspection station in Meyers where the boater gave different information to inspectors about the boat’s origin. Inspectors found the boat to be clean and sealed the vessel which allowed the boater to launch at Meeks Bay.

Using the vessel’s description and registration numbers, the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency watercraft team located the vessel and alerted the California Department of Fish & Game. Wardens assisted in removing the boat from the Lake.

According to the operator’s statement at the East Shore inspection site, the boat had come from Utah’s Sand Hollow Reservoir, which is infested with quagga mussels. Quagga mussels are capable of multiplying to the trillions in only a few years.

Although it was later verified that the boat had not last launched in Sand Hollow Reservoir, but rather had come from Lake Powell in Arizona and was likely not a high risk, the evasion of inspectors is a serious violation, according to Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Aquatic Invasive Species Program Manager Ted Thayer.

Immediately following this incident, Conservation District inspectors changed their watch list procedures such that the registration identification of any vessel sent for decontamination is circulated to all inspection locations and launch sites as a prohibited vessel. The registration identification is not removed from the watch list until the boat has been decontaminated.

Fire reported near Sand Harbor

Updated Aug. 21 12:02am: The fire burned some brush, but nothing significant. The cause is under investigation.

From the Reno Gazette-Journal:

Emergency crews are responding to reports of two trees on fire near Sand Harbor at Lake Tahoe.

The fire is reportedly visible from Highway 28, approximately five miles south of Incline Village.

Kings Beach classic car show

The 3rd Annual John Reichert Memorial Classic Car Show is Sept. 11 from noon-2pm at the Kings Beach State Recreation Area. This event is open to the public; both spectators and those who wish to show their cars.

John Reichert was a member of the North Tahoe Public Utility District Recreation and Parks Commission who passed away in 2008 and was involved in the development of the Friends of the Park Fund. This fund goes to support capital projects in the North Tahoe Regional Park. Current fundraising is focused on raising money for a new children’s playground.

A barbecue benefiting the North Tahoe Public Utility District Friends of the Park Fund will be available during the show.

Anyone wishing to show their car should contact Dave Shelton to RSVP at (530) 583.3787 or tahoed@gmail.com There is no cost

to participate, but a count of cars is important to determine the car layout in the parking lot.