Hot August Nights has yet another alternative location

By Guy Clifton, Reno Gazette-Journal

A pair of local businessmen and classic car enthusiasts are planning to give locals an alternative to traveling to South Lake Tahoe to show off their classic vehicles in advance of Hot August Nights.

Michael Babcock and Mike Baker have organized the three-day Rebel Reunion, a event open to any classic car buff or hot rodder.

It will include cruises, poker runs, a concert, dance contest and drive-in movies. It is scheduled to run Thursday through Saturday,.

“We’re not doing this to replace Hot August Nights,” said Baker, who owns A&W Restaurant on Kietzke Lane, the central location of the new event.

Read the whole story

Millennium scholars praise Guinn for creating education program

By Lenita Powers, Reno Gazette-Journal

When Jared Townsend wrote the thesis for his doctorate in

biochemistry and molecular biology at the University of California, Davis last month, he gave Gov. Kenny Guinn credit for much of his success in college.

“I never met Gov. Guinn, but I always felt I definitely owed something to him,” said Townsend, who now works at Sierra Sciences, a Sparks biotechnology company researching ways to halt and reverse the effects of aging.

Townsend, a Las Vegas native, said his siblings never graduated from high school. But he became the first in his family to graduate from college by earning a combined bachelor’s and master’s degree from the University of Nevada, Reno in 2005, thanks to the Millennium Scholarship.

Established in 2000, the program provides $10,000 to academically qualified Nevada high school graduates to attend an in-state college or university.

Read the whole story

Defensive response to grand jury report by South Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe City Council members had almost nothing to say before the city’s response to the scathing grand jury

report was voted on. The written response by City Manager Dave Jinkens agrees with little that the independent panel chastised the city about and instead gives a flimsy defense to many accusations.

Before Councilman Bill Crawford had to leave the July 27special council meeting, he said he considered the report and response to be the same – "vague."

The vote was 3-1 to accept the response as written by Jinkens and prepared with City Attorney Pat Enright. City Councilman Jerry Birdwell was the dissenting vote, though he said nothing at the meeting.

Afterward he told *Lake Tahoe News*, "No. 1, I think the grand jury report was correct. I saw no need to answer and argue about the report. I accept the report and as I have previously stated, I take it as constructive criticism and that we need to do better."

He said he is trying to do what he can to make the council run as smoothly as possible. Birdwell points to his stance on the issues involving Johnny Poland, the city cop who successfully fought his termination case, and former City Attorney Jacqueline Mittelstadt, who resigned after the city tried to fire her, as proof he was right.

Birdwell is good with how he is conducting himself on the council, but agrees with the grand jury there that there is plenty of room for improvement.

Jinkens read part of his staff report into the record on Tuesday, saying, "I am proud of the work of city government as a whole and city employees to deliver efficient, effective and a high quality of service to the people of South Lake Tahoe each and every day of the year. Employees are our greatest resource and we must work with them and the community in a positive and constructive manner to address the pressing needs of our community."

Click on response to read the city's unedited and therefore not quite final version to what it will submit regarding the 2010 El Dorado County Grand Jury report.

The response defends the reimbursement for outside legal counsel to Councilman Bruce Grego, even though the grand jury questions it.

In the 20-page response *LTN* learned "the city manager is 'technically' the director of finance" and the city manager is the personnel officer.

It addresses the nepotism issue by giving only estimates of how many married couples work in the city (seven) and how many family members (eight) work for the city. This doesn't include council and commission members.

Even with 30 of the 195 full-time employees related, this would represent more than 15 percent of the workforce having a perceived conflict. And that's just the number the city admits to. It doesn't include those who are engaged or living together.

The city's response says, "The statement of the grand jury gives insufficient information to determine if alleged concerns by complaining parties are on a city-wide basis or in one or more city departments. In order to properly evaluate this statement, more information is needed and requested about the situation."

But the city won't reveal to *Lake Tahoe News* who all is related by blood and marriage between full-time and part-time employees, council members and commissioners, and only gives estimates in its response. How can the city know if there is problem, if it doesn't know who is related and therefore who is reporting to whom?

Instead of addressing the issue internally, it has put the onus back on the grand jury – a body that is seated for one

year.

This theory seems to contradict a segment of the city's response under "overview and comments" that says, "The City Council, city manager, city attorney and all department heads have a duty to ensure that the workplace is productive and devoid of illegal harassment and discrimination of any kind."

While that statement is a fact, many city workers who have spoken to *Lake Tahoe News* say it is not a policy that is practiced.

The response in another section further says, "The city will review within the next six months its existing nepotism policies in the personnel rule and MOU from a legal perspective and with representatives of recognized employee associations to determine if changes are needed and the city manager will report his findings to the City Council."

Considering there will be a new city manager in 10 days and the council will be changing by at least 40 percent in five months, it's hard to know if there will be follow through on the above statement.

At one point the grand jury calls the council "bush league". To this the response begins, "The city is unfamiliar with the term 'bush league'."

The 1982 dictionary at the offices of *Lake Tahoe News* defines "bush-league'" as, "of or pertaining to a bush league; mediocre; second-rate."

Washoe-Douglas-Alpine counties form public safety partnership

By Susan Voyles, Reno Gazette-Journal

The Washoe County Commission approved a number of agreements Tuesday.

They include:

Communications system: An agreement with Douglas County and Alpine and Calaveras counties in California to create a Tahoe partnership to develop a multi-agency public safety communications system.

Read the whole story

Gibbons, Reid spar over $175 mil. Nevada loses in ed funds

By Michael Martinez, Reno Gazette-Journal

State and local educators said Tuesday that they plan to move ahead with some of the strategic reforms for public schools outlined in their application for federal Race to the

Top grant money, even though Nevada was not among 19 semifinalists and will not get the $175 million for which the state was eligible.

The money sought was part of a $3.4 billion pot aimed at

improving struggling schools nationwide.

The announcement that Nevada has no chance to compete in the second round of Race to the Top grant competition also sparked a rancorous political exchange between Republican Gov. Jim Gibbons and U.S. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev.

Read the whole story

Crews make progress on lightning started fires

By Victor Calderon, Reno Gazette-Journal

Firefighters continued Tuesday to battle several fires caused by lightning strikes including one north of Gerlach while containing just over half of the Constantia Complex Fire north of Reno.

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management is managing the Rock Creek Fire, about 18 miles north of Gerlach, said Lisa Ross, a public affairs specialist for the Winnemucca BLM district.

By 5:30pm Tuesday, the 6,200-acre fire was about 30 percent contained, Ross said. The fire started about 10pm Saturday.

“Firefighters have made good progress and the expected containment is by Thursday,” she said.

Read the whole story

Tahoe City's Bahrke retires from skiing

By Elizabeth Karam, U.S. Ski Team

Known for her dyed pink hair, glittery eyelids and bright smile, Shannon Bahrke of Tahoe City announced her retirement from the U.S. Ski Team. Bahrke was a member of the freestyle moguls team for 12 years earning Olympic and World Championships medals, World Cup titles and wins and U.S. Championship titles during her tenure with the team.

"I'm going to miss everything, freestyle is such a way life. It's just so much fun and I'm really going to miss that," said Bahrke. "I'm going to miss the people, the competition and I think I'm certainly going to miss waking up every day and having a purpose to kick somebody's butt. There are so many things I'm going to miss, the people here, my teammates, but I'm ready for what comes next in life."



Shannon Bahrke

Bahrke first clicked into skis at the age of three, ripping the mountain with her mom. Her career began as an alpine ski racer before making the switch to freestyle, eventually settling on moguls. Her first big splash came in 2002, when she won the Gold Cup at Deer Valley Resort in Park City, solidifying her spot on the 2002 Olympic Team.

"That night I was there with my whole family, right before

they [aerials] competed they played the National Anthem and raised the flag. I looked over and my dad was just balling. I've never seen my dad cry like that," remembered Bahrke. "So I said, 'dad what's wrong?' He said, 'my baby's going to the Olympics.' That really kind of solidified everything I've done and everything that they've put on hold for me. That was a really cool moment."

Bahrke, competing on home snow, won the silver medal at the 2002 Olympic Winter Games in Salt Lake City, after earning her spot six weeks prior. Following 2002, she went on to become the 2003 World Cup champion and World Championships dual moguls silver medalist. In 2007, Bahrke added another World Championship medal, taking home bronze in dual moguls.

Her remarkable career was filled with wins and medals. Over the course of her 12 year tenure, she competed on five World Championships teams, winning two medals, and three Olympic Teams, also winning two medals including bronze at the 2010 Olympic Winter Games in Vancouver.

"I believe things are better experienced when they're shared. You can tell someone how awesome closing and opening ceremonies are. But when you get to walk into the closing ceremony holding your brother's [Scotty Bahrke of Tahoe City] hand – it is really a special moment," said Bahrke, looking back on memorable moments from her career. "I'm now passing the torch to him. I've done everything I wanted to do and now it comes to him."

Bahrke has no plans of slowing down, now that she is "retired." She will marry her fiancé Matt Happe in October at a destination wedding in Hawaii with family and friends. On top of getting married, she plans on devoting more time to their business, Silver Bean Coffee. Bahrke also has hopes of one day being on ABC's hit show "Dancing with the Stars" or hosting NBC's "The Today Show".

“I’m really happy in life. I’m excited about my career and how it ended, whole thing. I’m just going to try and go with it, whatever happens. Maybe that’s hosting the ‘Today Show’, hint hint or be on Dancing with the Stars, hint hint,” said Bahrke. “I really can’t get past the fact that I’m really happy. I think that will get a little bit harder as next season rolls around, but right now it’s just good, I’m enjoying the sunshine.”

El Dorado County expects more jobs, services to be cut

By Carlos Alcalá, Sacramento Bee

The El Dorado County Board of Supervisors gave the go-ahead to start planning cuts of 150 positions from the county’s budget for 2011-2012.

The job eliminations are needed to bridge a projected $16 million budget deficit.

They would cut nearly one out of every six full-time positions covered by the county’s discretionary budget.

There are now 932 full-time equivalents in that budget. The county has 1,761 such positions in all, including mandated positions paid for by outside revenue sources.

Read the whole story

South Tahoe Chamber mixer

South Tahoe Chamber of Commerce mixer on July 29 from 5:30-7pm at Borges Chiropractic in South Lake Tahoe is free.

The office is in the Tahoe Valley Pharmacy Plaza at 2074 Lake Tahoe Blvd.

For more information or to donate a drawing prize, call Borges Chiropractic at (530) 544.5800 or JoAnn Conner at (530) 544.7412.

Autumn Fest at Lake Tahoe Community College

Autumn Fest at the Lake Tahoe Demonstration Garden at Lake Tahoe Community College is Sept. 12 from 11am-3pm.

Celebrate autumn and support the Lake Tahoe Demonstration Garden by enjoying a pumpkin patch, bake sale, speakers, bluegrass music, silent auction, kids’ games and more.

No entrance fee.

Contact Kara Steeland at ksteeland@tahoercd.org or (530) 543.1501, ext. 105 for more information.