Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Lake Tahoe-based McCall Realty is presenting $10,000 to area children's nonprofit organizations Aug. 5 from 4–7pm. It will include free barbecue, drinks, kids' activities and a 5pm check presentation in the Round Hill Mall, 212 Elks Point Drive in Zephyr Cove.

• The Parasol Tahoe Community Foundation AmeriCorps Team's video "Carrying Our Community" was selected as a finalist in the National AmeriCorps Video Contest. Follow the link to view the finalists and cast your vote.

• There will be a Hot August Nights Swap Meet at the Heavenly's California Lodge parking lot July 31-Aug. 1. Admission is free. Find a rare part or just walk around enjoying the mix of scenic beauty and classic cars. Lakeside Inn is getting in on the action, too.

• The nonprofit Tahoe Swim Club, based in South Lake Tahoe, is always looking for new member. For more information, contact Jerry Erickson at tahoeswim@charter.net.

• UC Davis is sponsoring a series of discussion on state water policy issues. There will be one Aug. 4 from 6-8pm in West Sacramento at the Arthur F. Turner Community Library, 1212 Merkley Ave. Advance registration is required by calling (916) 375.6465.

• The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency invites small businesses and municipalities to nominate representatives to provide input on a proposed stormwater rule. The rule would strengthen the national stormwater program under the Clean Water Act and focus on stormwater discharges from developed sites. Here is information about participating in the panel. For more information about the rulemaking, click here. South

Lake Tahoe City Manger Dave Jinkens said, “If the federal government is going to come up with new requirements for stormwater discharge, they should also come up with the money for business owners and operators to comply with these new standards. As we all know, businesses in our community cannot and should not have to bear more costly requirements.”

Donner Party was carrying documents from President Lincoln

By Frank X. Mullen Jr., Reno Gazette-Journal

Researchers in Illinois, Utah, and California have confirmed that an original Abraham Lincoln document from the 1830s was carried by one of Lincoln’s militia buddies on the ill-fated Donner Party expedition to California in the 1840s.

The researchers said the document, an 1832 list of the men in a company of Illinois volunteers during the Black Hawk War, was carried on a 2,000-mile journey across the continent among the papers of James Frazier Reed, one of the founders of the Donner Party of 1846-47.

The list is now in the California State Library in Sacramento, where experts recently determined it contains Lincoln’s original handwriting.

“We often find documents that detail fascinating stories about Abraham Lincoln’s life and times, but it is rare indeed for the document to have such an intriguing history after it was written,” said Daniel W. Stowell, director of the Papers of

Abraham Lincoln. “That these documents detail part of Lincoln’s military service and that they accompanied the Donner Party to California makes them doubly significant.”

Read the whole story

Writers’ workshops at Squaw Valley

The 41st Annual Community of Writers at Squaw Valley will convene again this August with workshops in fiction, nonfiction and screenwriting.

Participants assemble each day for workshops, as well as attend presentations on the craft and business of writing led by renowned authors/teachers. Most events are free and open to the public.

Click here or call (530) 581.5200 for the full schedule of events.

The workshops run Aug. 8-12.

California e-waste program short circuits

By Tom Knudson, Sacramento Bee

It seemed a perfect symmetry: California, the world’s high-

tech capital, would lead the way in recycling the debris of our digital revolution.

But five years after its launch, the state government-run electronic waste program stands out not as a model of the green innovation for which California is famous but as an example of good intentions gone awry.

By paying more than $320 million to collect and recycle computer monitors and televisions, the state has built a magnet for fraud totaling tens of millions of dollars, including illegal material smuggled in from out of state.

Read the whole story

Livermore residents rediscovering their piece of Tahoe

By Mark Tarte, Oakland Tribune

The Livermore Area Recreation and Park District has been around for more than 60 years. Founded in 1947, it has been an integral part of Livermore for generations of kids and families since the beginning.

Besides the parks and facilities it operates around town, the district also has a treat of a campsite at Lake Tahoe that has been available to Livermore residents for years, Camp Shelly.

Camp Shelly came under LARPD control in the early 1960s. The six-acre site is just a stone’s throw from Lake Tahoe, just off Highway 89. Open from June to September, Camp Shelly is a

wonderfully rustic site with all the amenities that you need to camp and have some outdoor, family fun.

The campground is equipped with washrooms and hot showers, running water, a basketball court, Ping-Pong tables, a volleyball court and horseshoe pit. Each site is equipped with a parking lot, table, tent area, food storage locker and metal fire pits and grills.

Read the whole story

South Tahoe jail's success a testament to staff's work

By Kathryn Reed

Finding fault – that's usually what a grand jury does.

It's getting more difficult to do that at the South Lake Tahoe jail.

Every year the two jails in El Dorado County are scrutinized by the grand jury – it's the law. Commendations are extremely unusual. The South Lake Tahoe jail received its third commendation this year.



Randy Peshon

Sheriff Fred Kollar says the praise in this summer's report "says a lot about (jail commander and Lt.) Randy (Peshon) and his staff."

Just based on the people who spend the night, trouble has walked through the door. It's how the staff deals with the inmates that contribute to the 158-bed facility functioning so well.

"This group I'm working with in the jail is the best ever. They are very excited and very positive," Peshon said. He has been jail commander for eight years.

The report says, "The 2009-2010 El Dorado County Grand Jury commends the South lake Tahoe Jail administration and staff for their dedication in providing a safe and secure custodial environment. The number and variety of available programs, especially the Culinary Arts program, have a proven record of success."

Other entities receiving commendations from the grand jury this year include:

• The registrar of voters for plans to save the county money and actions to secure accuracy of all ballots cast.

• The Probation Department and Office of Education for advocacy and rehabilitation programs for at-risk youth.

• The CAO and staff for consolidation of administrative service functions in county government.

• Growlersburg Conservation Camp leadership for various items.

Besides the culinary program, which serves 700 meals a day, the grand jury noted the church services, drug and alcohol counseling, English as a second language, GED program, Health Education and Recovery Through Self-Responsibility, Mental Health Court, and Women's Health.

The report found four items the jail needs to address – most of which Kollar and Peshon said have been taken care or are in the process of being fixed. With the building originally built in 1971 and an addition coming 20 years later, the flat roof the grand jury pointed out as contributing to leaks is not going to change any time soon.

Originally, the facility was the sheriff's department substation.

In the 2010-11 county budget are the dollars to upgrade the security and surveillance cameras, as well as improve and expand the number of recording cameras.

The department is working on getting the cracks in the cinderblock fixed. Kollar said it was built with 4-inch blocks when it was supposed to be 8-inch.

What the inmates get

Budget issues are always looming over Peshon's head. One category he has little control over is medical expenses. About $1 million a year is spent on inmate health care – just in the Tahoe jail.

"Inmates generally have more health care issues than the general population," Peshon said. "People who go through the system have more issues. They age faster."

It's not unusual for a 50-year-old inmate to have the health problems a 70-year-old on the outside would have.

Peshon said with a significant number of inmates older than 34, he has noticed a rise in health issues.

People coming in often experience withdrawals from their drug of choice in a matter of hours. A nurse is on duty 24 hours a day to handle whatever comes up.

A general practitioner comes in once a week, as does a

psychologist. Psychiatric care is via videoconference.

A trek to Placerville is required for dental care.

Serious medical conditions mean a trip to the hospital.

Exercise is encouraged, with an area downstairs for those who can’t walk upstairs, and a larger area on the second floor for the more able bodied.

Taking part in one of the programs in also encouraged.



The commercial kitchen at the South Lake Tahoe jail. Photos/Kathryn Reed

“You are dealing with people who may not want your help, but need your help,” Peshon said of the inmates.

Most of the programs are segregated by gender, but a few are co-ed. The thinking is that with so many inmates having relationship issues that getting them to interact with the other gender before getting out will make their release easier.

Inmates are not allowed to call staff by first names. It’s rank and last name.

“There is always something going on 24 hours a day,” Peshon said. “If it suddenly goes quiet, you are going to have

problems.”

Various murals are painted on the walls inside – all done by inmates. The one in the kitchen has the culinary program’s theme written out – “Jail house catering, it’s so good it’s a crime.”

A system within the system exists if inmates misbehave. Steve Sherman is responsible for making sure the punishment fits the crime. If an inmate is caught writing on the wall, his likely sentence is painting.

Once formally sentenced, inmates can stay in county jail for a year. Some have stayed longer while awaiting trial. Ulysses Roberson, who was convicted earlier this year in the murder of his 4-year-old son, spent six years in this jail before his trial began.

Working inside the jail

“Literally, it’s like running a little town,” Peshon said of the jail.

When he got into law enforcement he never envisioned he would learn so much about food and nutrition, as well has laundry.

Under his direction the culinary program is receiving awards, allowing inmates to have a skill when they get out and provides qualified employees for local businesses.

Keeping the peace is a full-time job for Joe Ruelas. As a gang expert, he figures out who plays nice together and when housing changes need to be made.

“It’s a balancing act,” Ruelas said. He is part of the regional intelligence meetings that include California and Nevada law enforcement, parole and probation officers.

It’s the Norteños and Sureños that dominate the turf on the South Shore, with the Sureños the larger group. The latest

gang of concern is the Juggalos out of the Modesto, Ruelas said.

No one in the jail wears a gun. This is for everyone's safety. But tear gas, grenade launchers and gear are just outside the housing units in case officers need to quell a major disturbance.

Often it is the jail employees who come up with ways to make their work area function better. Pads were added to the booking area to prevent injuries because this had been an area where fights would often break out.

Computerization has made it so booking went from a four-hour event to 45 minutes.

A box phone is in the holding cell because years ago an inmate hanged himself with the cord from the old phone. Another suicide preventive feature is sprinkler heads designed so an inmate can't tie off on it.

"We exceed the training for suicide prevention," Peshon said.

Even when there was a fire a year ago in the jail, the staff still managed to lay eyes on every inmate each hour – a state requirement.



The second-floor control room.

On the second floor Sherman doesn't stand still. A slew of monitors are in front of him. Out the vast windows in this

circular work area are the various pods of inmates. The floor has glass so he can see some of what is going on below him.

The jail is at minimum staffing with 24 sworn officers and six sergeants, along with Peshon who is a lieutenant.

Clerks, nurses, sheriff's technicians and detention aides make up the whole workforce.

"What keeps it running smoothly is everyone watches out for everyone else," Peshon said. "We keep our humor up. We run it as a family."

Somber gathering to remember Guinn

By Ray Hagar, Reno Gazette-Journal

LAS VEGAS – They came from cross the state tonight – Nevadans involved in sports, schools, banking and government – to pray for the soul of departed former Nevada Gov. Kenny Guinn, who died here Thursday after falling from the roof of his home.

U.S. Sen. John Ensign, R-Las Vegas, state Senate Minority Leader Bill Raggio, R-Reno, and former Gov. Bob List were among the hundreds who packed into St. Joseph, Husband of Mary Catholic Church for the recitation of the rosary, ahead of Tuesday's 10 a.m. funeral at the church.

Former first lady Dema Guinn was not in attendance. She had been at a private family ceremony earlier in the evening and was too emotional to attend the rosary, family friends said.

Read the whole story

South Shore chamber mixer

The Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce Garden Party Business After Hours Mixer at Kingsbury Square is July 28 from 5:30–7:30pm.

The Garden Party mixer is hosted by member businesses located in Kingsbury Square, including Sunbasin Nursery, Balance Body Studios, KRLT 93.9 “The Lake” and KOWL 1490 “The Owl”, Erik Watada State Farm and Floppy’s. The mixer will be based out of Sunbasin Nursery. Mirabelle Restaurant will provide hors d’oeuvres.

Attendees will have the opportunity to visit other host businesses during the event.

Admission is $10 for chamber members and $20 for non-members. Admission includes two drink tickets and five raffle tickets.

For more information, call (775) 588.1728.

Living History Day at Ehrman Mansion

Living History Day at Sugar Pine Point State Park on the West Shore on July 31 from 10am-4pm, with Ehrman Mansion open house, historical speakers, vintage car display, artists in residence and live music.

Tennis exhibition in Incline

The Incline Village Tennis Center hosts a professional exhibition match July 31 at 11am between Jan-Michael Gambill (formerly No. 14 in the world) and Robert Kendrick (currently No. 153 in the world). Cost is $5/adults and kids are free.