Crews gain on 1,700-acre fire north of Reno

By Victor Calderon, Reno Gazette-Journal

Firefighters continued Monday to contain several brush fires caused by lightning strikes and made progress on the large Constantia Complex Fire about 45 miles north of Reno.

Fire activity was slow Monday on the Constantia Complex Fire, which had consumed more than 1,700 acres of timber, grass and brush near Doyle, Calif., Sierra Front spokesman Todd Chaponot said. Nearly 300 fire personnel were on scene strengthening the area on the west side of the fire, he said.

There were three fires that comprised the Constantia incident, a main fire, a second to the west of that fire and one to the north, Chaponot said.

Read the whole story

Wildflower-wine festival in Kirkwood

Celebrate 10 years of food, wine, and wildflowers at Kirkwood on July 31.

Take a stroll with guided hikes by local wildflower expert Laird Blackwell before savoring flavors of local Amador and El Dorado county wines. Hit the plaza and visit booths filled with the works of local artisans while The Kingtones play.

The 10th Annual Wildflower Festival benefits the Sugar Pine Foundation, a group dedicated to preserving the flora and fauna of the High Sierra. Tasting tickets are $20 per person with events happening on the Village Plaza from noon to 5pm.

Diesel spill closes Mt. Rose Highway

By Jaclyn O'Malley, Reno Gazette-Journal

An overturned truck that dumped 40 gallons of diesel fuel is causing Mount Rose Highway to be closed for the next hour, Nevada Highway Patrol reported.

Upon completion of the clean up, the road will be a single lane for the next few hours after that.

Troopers said motorists will have to travel through Carson City or Truckee as a detour.

The incident occurred about 11 a.m. on Mount Rose Highway near the Christmas Tree Inn. No injuries were reported.

Read the whole story

Tahoe brothers bring their

‘Deadliest Catch’ stardom to Reno

By Johnathan L. Wright, Reno Gazette-Journal

For Keith and Monte Colburn, crab is still king.

The brothers are the captain and relief captain, respectively, of the “Wizard,” one of the boats on “Deadliest Catch,” the popular Discovery Channel series about crab fishing in the Bering Sea.

But despite television stardom, the Colburns say it’s crustaceans, not cameras, that still draw them to some of the brawniest waters on Earth.

“We’re crab fishermen; it’s what we do,” Monte Colburn said. “It’s been paying the bills all these years.”

The brothers, who grew up at Lake Tahoe (Monte Colburn still lives there), are scheduled to appear at a meet-and-greet July 31 at the Silver Legacy Resort Casino.

Read the whole story

Native Americans celebrate culture at Valhalla

By Kathryn Reed

CAMP RICHARDSON – For two days, the grounds at Valhalla on the South Shore were reminiscent of what life might have been like less than 100 years ago.

Dressed in traditional garb of the Rancheria Miwok and uttering a prayer in a chant-like fashion for the ground and themselves, the group danced around the grass.



Tinki Huasi makes a dream catcher on July 25. Photos/Kathryn Reed

Their words and movement mean something important still to this day. All that was missing was a translator for the non-Indian speakers in the crowd. The Native Americans knew when to respond as the group sang.

The Was She Shu It'Deh, now its 20th year, is an annual festival of Native American Arts that is hosted by the Washoe Tribe and Tahoe Tallac Association. The purpose is to increase awareness of appreciation for traditional and contemporary Native American art.

The July 24-25 event brought out various tribal dance groups, musicians, and included a basket competition.



Rancheria Miwok dancers at Valhalla.

Plenty of native jewelry was for sale, along with pottery, food and dream catchers.

A T-shirt for sale says, “America’s Original Homeland Security: Fighting Terrorism since 1492.”

‘The Indian and The White Guy’ come to Harrah’s



Following their long-awaited Hot August Nights engagement at Harrah’s Reno on Aug. 5, the irreverent and hilarious Williams and Ree, a.k.a. “The Indian and The White Guy,” return to the South Shore Room at Harrah’s Lake Tahoe on Aug. 7.

The duo has sustained a career of more than 30 years packing casinos, clubs, and arenas with their incredibly quick-witted and ever-changing routine.

Bruce Williams and Terry Ree met in 1968 at Black Hills State College in Spearfish, S.D., where they began playing together in a band where they often filled time between their songs with their unique brand of humor. After realizing that the humor became a bigger draw than the music, the comedy team was born.

Polishing their performances at venues such as the world famous Comedy Store in Los Angeles during the 1970s, and

testing new material with the likes of Robin Williams and David Letterman, Williams and Ree discovered their natural ability to play off one another. They have since shared the stage with acts such as Garth Brooks, Oak Ridge Boys, and Tim McGraw in addition to hosting “Country Kitchen” with Florence Henderson, a TV show that entertained audiences for more than 10 years.

The recent resurgence of comedy shows such as the Blue Collar Comedy, Last Comic Standing, Whose Line Is It Anyway, and TBS’s “Minding The Store,” proves that audiences nationwide are still entertained by comedians who have the innate ability to find humor in everyday life. By combining pop culture trends into a fast-paced, lively show, full of zings interspersed with songs, Williams and Ree prove they have what it takes to get an audience going. This winning combo has allowed Williams and Ree to entertain thousands, performing more than 300 shows every year.

Tickets are $25 plus fees. Show time is 7:30pm. This show is for audiences age 21 and over. For more information and to make reservations, call 800.786.8208 or purchase tickets online at www.SouthShoreRoom.com.

Wanderlust Festival brings yoga, music, food, wine together

The second annual Wanderlust Festival prepares to descend on Squaw Valley USA July 29 through Aug. 1.

One of the first events of its kind, Wanderlust brings

together the biggest names in yoga with the hottest names in electronic and dance music for a weekend of mindful revelry. In addition to practicing yoga with instructors like Seane Corn, Baron Baptiste, and Shiva Rea, and catching live shows with artists like Moby, Bassnectar, or Pretty Lights, Wanderlust offers a multitude of experiences that surprise, challenge and entertain the mind, body and spirit.

What's new at Wanderlust:

* Speakeasy Lecture Series: This lecture series, presented by Evol Burritos, will cover topics ranging from environmentalism and spirituality to conscious consumerism and fair fashion. Discussions will be led by Kaitlin Quistgaard, editor-in-chief of Yoga Journal, and feature speakers Shiva Rea, Seane Corn, Moby, Adrian Grenier, Mariel Hemmingway, and internet entrepreneur Chris Sacca, amongst others. Lectures are free for all yoga and music ticketholders, but attendance must be scheduled in advance using the Wanderlust class scheduler.

* Wellness Village: Constructed out of sustainable bamboo, the Wellness Village cabanas offer massage, bodywork, acupuncture and other healing arts from Friday through Sunday.

* Wine Tastings: Wanderlust will offer a series of wine tastings from July 29-31, hosted at Kali Kopley's Uncorked in the Kula Village. Held on the patio at Uncorked, these evenings will feature live music and tastings of Merlot and Malbec from Wanderslust's official red wine, Red Rock Winery, alongside an impressive list of small biodynamic and organic wineries including Calera Wine Co., Ceago Vinegarden, Honig, Family Winery and Vineyards, Inman Family Wines, Yellow & Blue, Mendocino Farms, Saracina, and Ukiah Cellars. All of the wine events are free, but the Saturday event will be limited to the first 150 people to register.

* Food Co-op: A wide array of organic and sustainably-farmed foods will be offered at this year's festival. The centerpiece

of these efforts will be the first ever food co-op at Wanderlust, which will consist of a number of quality organic vendors such as Amy’s Kitchen, Ritual Coffee Roasters, Uncommon Kitchen, Evol Burritos, and Spiro’s Giros, as well as a small farmers market featuring fresh fruit and veggies from local producers. The co-op will be clustered around the iVillage tent where you can lounge, check your email, post updates on the event and get special goodie bags. Wanderlust is also working with the local restaurants in the Village to create a “Wanderlust menu” featuring organic and local food options.

* Fire & Ice Dinner: Returning for a second year, the popular Fire & Ice Dinner at High Camp will offer a wide range of organic and local foods, plus a number of vegetarian and vegan items.

* Kids Program: The Wanderkind kids program features interactive activities for children including henna tattoos, hula-hooping, crafts, and of course, kids yoga. Presented by Om Kids Yoga in Truckee, the Wanderkind program takes place at Squaw Kids and allows parents to check out Wanderlust knowing their children are having a fun learning experience suited for them.

Tickets for the four-day event are still available at www.wanderlustfestival.com. Prices start at $29.50 for a one-day music pass and $90 for a one-day yoga and music pass.

Opinion: The goodness of

Kenny Guinn

By Jon Ralston, Las Vegas Sun

I have told the story before, but now seems an appropriate time to relate my favorite Kenny Guinn vignette:

It was late in the second excruciating special session of 2003. Gov. Guinn had proposed a billion-dollar tax increase he argued was necessary to keep the state afloat, a painful choice for an exemplar of the GOP establishment. Fifteen Assembly Republicans, led by Bob Beers, had refused to go along, creating a bitter, elongated stalemate that would define Carson City politics thereafter.

Late one night, Guinn and his bodyguard/driver ran into Beers at Gleneagles, a capital watering hole. The governor refused to shake the hand of his prime antagonist.

Read the whole story

Youth nature camps in August on South Shore

The Lake Tahoe Humane Society and S.P.C.A. is sponsoring two youth camps in August. The first is a Nature Camp at the South Lake Tahoe Recreation Center. Preregistration is required for the session which takes place Aug. 2-6 from 9am-1pm. Nature Camps are limited to 12 participants, age 8 to 10. The camp fee of $75 includes all materials.

Kids age 10 to 12 years may participate in the the Outdoor Adventure Camp Aug. 16-20 from 9am-4pm each day in a forest

setting. OAC is limited to 10 participants and preregistration is required. The camp fee of $150 includes transportation plus all materials and use of equipment such as binoculars.

Activities are designed to help foster appreciation for the Lake Tahoe area and to nurture a desire to become environmental stewards.

For more information and to preregister, call camp director Liz Maul at (530) 542.2857.

Kollar juggles complexities as sheriff in divided county

By Kathryn Reed

Fred Kollar was a short timer from the first day he took the helm of the El Dorado County Sheriff's Department. And he's OK with that.

But he's not about to take on the roll of a lame duck leader just because he was appointed the position earlier this year when Jeff Neves left before his term was up or because he will retire after a new sheriff is elected in November.



Fred Kollar

For some time there has been talk about morale being lousy inside the department. Kollar disagrees. He doesn't get that sense walking down the hallways in Placerville, where he spends the bulk of his time. Nor does he overhear negativity when he is changing in the locker room.

"I don't want my successor to clean up my problems," Kollar said during a recent lunch. Meaning he is doing what he can to ensure there is cohesiveness in the department.

He points to the number of people applying for the sergeant's test as evidence people are happy.

"People wouldn't strive to move higher up if morale were bad," Kollar said.

A vacant detective-sergeant's position had more than a dozen internal applicants.

Still, it's curious that the two candidates for sheriff represent an insider (Craig Therkildsen) and an outsider (John D'Agostini). Perhaps that is more reflective of the electorate than what is going inside the department when it comes to status quo v. change.

One issue that is wearing on the department is a recent discrimination suit filed by an employee.

Tahoe-Placerville relations

An issue that has been going as long as Kollar can remember is the disconnect between Lake Tahoe and Placerville. It's even obvious in the sheriff's race. The six candidates in the June primary barely showed their faces in Lake Tahoe. The two finalists have set no public events in the basin, nor does anyone seem to realize there is a sheriff's race in November.

The department has most newbies start in Tahoe, then go to Placerville. The idea is then they have a feel for the whole county as well as an appreciation for what goes on in the

basin. Kollar said any affection an officer had for Tahoe seems to wane after a couple years.

Part of the issue is that a fraction of the 175,000 county residents live in the basin. Estimates are about 30,000 are on this side of the summit.

Kollar isn't in Tahoe nearly as much as he would like. One of the things that is different with him compared to his predecessors is they all had an undersheriff. When he moved from the No. 2 to No. 1 post, his former job was not filled.

But he also points to this Tahoe-Placerville divide not being unique to the sheriff's department. Most departments with a Tahoe office tend to feel isolated by the granite barrier known as Echo Summit.

That summit is of concern to Kollar and officers working in Tahoe because it's expected to be closed next spring or come with substantial delays when Caltrans replaces the rock barrier.

County employees commute between the two areas. Sheriff's deputies regularly transport inmates over the summit.

"It's going to add an hour each way," Kollar said of routing his staff through Amador and Alpine counties.

Plus, cell phone and radio reception can be sketchy on the back roads.

Tahoe specific issues

For a small county, and the portion of Lake Tahoe being a blip on the map in some ways, this area has had it's share of high profile events.

Right now Joseph Nissensohn is sitting in the South Lake Tahoe jail awaiting his murder trial for a crime that occurred in 1989. The trial in this death penalty case is supposed to

start in January, but with the death of a key witness, it could change things.

Kollar has testified at hearings involving that case. The trial will be in South Lake Tahoe.

From the 2007 Angora Fire, it's media relations that the sheriff said needed the most improvement.

"We didn't have a good handle on it until the fourth day into it," Kollar said.

On the first night – June 24 – the department was planning how residents of the 254 houses that burned to the ground and their neighbors would be allowed in. Kollar kept the road closed so people could assess the damage without being hounded by onlookers.

Deputies on looting patrol took down the addresses of the houses that were destroyed. This provided displaced residents with quick, accurate information.

"It would have been a great day on patrol if they were not my neighbors," sheriff's Lt. Randy Peshon said. His house survived. The stories of his heroic acts to get people out of the inferno are cherished by those he helped. Some say he is lucky to be alive.

Kollar was also the lead spokesperson last summer during the first press conference after Jaycee Lee Dugard was rescued after 18 years of captivity.

"We worked that case long after people thought we had stopped," Peshon said.

Shortly after Dugard was rescued, Kollar was sent to the Antioch compound where she and her two daughter lived with the kidnapping suspects, one of whom fathered her children.

These cases just scratch the surface of what Kollar has been

involved in during his law enforcement career.

Publisher's note: ***Read Lake Tahoe News on July 27 for look inside the South Lake Tahoe jail.***