Caltrans to address Echo Summit project with TRPA

A public hearing for the replacement of the historic rock barrier wall on Highway 50 at Echo Summit is scheduled for Aug. 5 at 2pm before the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency hearing officer.

Click on agenda for more information.

Thunderbird's future remains uncertain



America's most recognizable wooden speedboat, the iconic Thunderbird yacht, is celebrating her 70th year on Lake Tahoe. Since America's Great Depression, Thunderbird has transported guests in opulent luxury between high-mountain estates and luxury resorts. While her past is privileged and legendary, her future is uncertain.

Thunderbird's 70th birthday initiates a fundraising campaign to preserve Thunderbird operating on Lake Tahoe for generations to come. Annual operation costs, such as insurance, fuel and maintenance to keep the Thunderbird afloat are more than $250,000. For information about sponsorships and how to save this historic vessel, please visit ThunderbirdLodge.org.

A glimpse into Thunderbird's past will help to understand her

future. In 1939 George Whittell Jr., a character and raconteur, commissioned John Hacker, a Naval architect, to design an express commuter yacht in the style of Whittell's personal DC-2 aircraft and his many Duesenberg automobiles. Thunderbird was constructed at the cost of $87,000 (more than $3.3 million in today's dollars), and was launched in the pre-dawn hours on July 14, 1940, in Tahoe City. Since then, Thunderbird has arguably become America's most famous wooden boat. At 55 feet, she boasts Honduran mahogany hardwoods, polished stainless steel and elegant crystal. Her two vintage V-12 Allison Aircraft engines power her across the Lake-in-the-Sky at speeds approaching 70mph.

In 1962, Bill Harrah set out to acquire two of Whittell's Duesenberg automobiles for his auto collection, but when he returned from his meeting with Whittell, he not only had the two automobiles, but the infamous Thunderbird. Her new owner made extensive modifications, adding a deck cover, expanding the deck and installing her dual V-12 Allison Aircraft engines. Harrah was quite the entertainer, and always had his "70 mile-per-hour cocktail lounge" poised and ready to entertain the celebrities from his casinos.

Thunderbird's rich history includes transporting sports legends, recluses, stars, scientists, U.S. presidents, artists and terminally ill children. Some of the celebrity guests include Ty Cobb, Jack Dempsey, Dean Martin, Tony Bennett, Liberace, Frank Sinatra, Bill Cosby and Howard Hughes.

Thunderbird yacht and Thunderbird Lodge were transferred to Foundation 36, a 501(c)3 public charity with a mission to preserve and protect Nevada's cultural, historic and natural treasures, in 2007. Foundation 36 has raised half the necessary funds needed to restore, rehabilitate and preserve the Thunderbird for the benefit of the Thunderbird Lodge Preservation Society.

As part of her year-long birthday celebration, Thunderbird

will command center stage at the 3rd Annual South Tahoe Wooden Boat Classic, July 30-31, where more than 65 antique and classic boats will be on display at Tahoe Keys Marina in South Lake Tahoe. (www.TahoeWoodenBoats.com).

For more information visit Thunderbirdlodge.org or contact Bill Watson at (775) 828.3536 or Watson@ThunderbirdLodge.org.

Suggestions for what to do with kids in summer

By Vicki Barber

Yes, summer is almost over and this is often the toughest time for families, especially kids. There's no longer quite enough to do to keep them busy and they've run out of the entertaining fun. Now what?

Well, there's always TV and video games, but you've really tried to stay away from them. We all know that doesn't seem like the best use of time. So let's come up with some other activities that would help make the end of summer fun, yet not become too taxing for anyone.



Vicki Barber

Games are great fun and great learning tools for those of us

who would like to see a little learning going on as well as enjoyment. When was the last time you played Monopoly? How about Yahtzee or Scrabble? All three games are fun and Monopoly's definitely a great escape from the vagaries of the current economy. Just think, you can own houses and hotels and have a bank full of money – at least for a few hours. It's a great learning experience for kids, too. Yahtzee is great for math skills and Scrabble is fun for spelling and vocabulary, sandwiched in between the laughter of challenges that go awry. If your children are still on the younger side, try Chutes and Ladders. There's no reading required, but there's a lot of counting going on.

Cribbage, chess, checkers, and Chinese checkers are fun too. Some games are more involved than others, so matching the game with the skill level of the child helps. I'm not advocating "letting" kids win. I've known too many children who can beat me at just about any game they learn how to play. Given a little time and practice, they become good in a relatively short period of time.

Trivial Pursuit comes in all shapes and questions these days. Mancala is fun too. One requires knowledge of a wide variety of subjects. The other requires strategy and perception; great skills for everyone.

If you're not into board games, card games work well, too. Gin Rummy, Hearts, Canasta, War, or Solitaire all have possibilities. Also, there are some games that require special decks of cards like Pinochle, Skip-Bo, or Crazy Eights. Often we have those decks lying around the house in some corner drawer. If not, the Dollar Stores may carry them.

Outside games are fun, too, whether playing or watching. From Little League to a pick-up game in the backyard, baseball/softball is still a great tradition. A little time on the basketball court is great for older ones, and there are little hoops now for the littler ones. Soccer is fun,

especially after all the coverage the World Cup has gotten in the last few weeks.

Those all seem like they're organized and a team is necessary. Games like tag or hopscotch are just as much fun, and sometimes easier for the little ones to play.

Games are about fun and laughter, and they're also about enjoying each other, being close, and learning skills. Summer's almost over, but the enjoyment doesn't have to be. So let the games begin.

Vicki Barber is superintendent of education for El Dorado County

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Abundance of color, creativity dominate garden tour yards

By Kathryn Reed

MEYERS – If there were any doubt about summer's arrival in Lake Tahoe, one need only go on next weekend's annual garden tour on the South Shore. Lush green lawns and plants are accentuated by splashes of color representing all shades of the rainbow.

Creative water features prove these aren't just something flatlanders can have. Meandering paths create an artistic flow to the outdoor oasis. Vegetable gardens are robust – enough so that if they pooled their resources the neighbors could establish their own farmers' market.



Russell Crawford has a knack for creating unique features for his yard. Photos/Kathryn Reed

The Lake Tahoe Historical Society's seventh annual garden tour is June 31. This is the society's major fundraiser, with most of the money being used at the museum in the middle of South Lake Tahoe by the senior center.

While many garden tours have professionals come in and work the yards, the eight on this tour are created and maintained by the homeowners.

"Our theme is anyone could do it," said Lynne Bajuk, this year's organizer.

Though it's true these eight houses have at least one gardener in the family, the truth is many left this reporter exhausted just looking at them. Some of the land is on more than an acre. At least one house had a riding lawn mower. Not all are retirees, so odds are a ton of time after work is spent in the garden.

Each has a uniqueness, with the overriding theme being a tremendous amount of pride and love for their property.

Two weeks before the public tour, organizers and homeowners

take a look at the gardens, see what the flow will be like for the public, and answer questions the owners may have about the event.

Many of the owners pointed to the long winter delaying growth. Everything seems to be about three to four weeks late this summer. Some complained of voles – but looking around, their complaints seemed minimal compared to non-garden tour yards.

A sampling of the gardens

Without giving away all the details about the gardens, *Lake Tahoe News* will give you a sneak preview of seven of the eight yards.

Beverly Pevarnick is quick to point out it's her husband, Dennis, who gets most of the credit for their expansive yard that backs to Lake Tahoe Golf Course. There is little delineation between their backyard and the greens.

No golf balls have hit the house, but plenty end up in the yard.

Islands of flowers, shrubbery and boulders break up the nearly acre lot that is full of grass, making a ride on the lawnmower something of an adventure.

It's the back yard of Jerry and Marcia Gaudet that is full of raised planter beds. He starts most things with seeds.

A greenhouse is where the tomatoes start. Silicon oil on the windows allows them to expand in the heat so the ventilation is automatic.

Various lettuces, strawberries, beans, onions, beats, carrots, snap peas, potatoes and other veggies fill the planter boxes.

"I make my own compost," Jerry Gaudet said of the soil mixture.

An abundance of bears have come by their Bakersfield Street house. In the last couple years, cottontail rabbits have been visiting the garden.

Some might say it’s cheating that Diane and Chip Morrill’s garden is on the tour because she works for Aspen Hollow nursery.

Dirt from the old Office Depot site was transformed into a mound in their front yard that features a tremendous amount of plants, a wooden stairway that seems to lead to nowhere when in fact a water feature is at that top that looks like a mini stream. This water eventually forms a waterfall dropping into a small basin.

Their robust asparagus plants caught the eye of several of the gardeners on the preview tour.

The back is full of flowers from seeds Diane Morrill threw out, along with beds of veggies.

The accents in the garden at Russell and Judy Crawford’s are mesmerizing. Judy Crawford’s stenciling on part of fence above a dresser that has plants in the drawers is eye-catching.

The backyard expands in the lot they bought after moving into the house decades ago.

“Every time she watches HGTV I go ‘oh, no’,” Crawford said of his wife.

Walt and Debi Shild’s 1.25 acres feels like much more than that. It goes on and on – in a good way. On the far side is the chicken coop, where they can get 15-20 eggs a day in the summer. On the opposite side is pea gravel with a fire pit and wildflowers.

In between are two distinct sections – one is the veggie garden, the other lawn and other vegetation.

A short walk from there is the garden of Rick and Laray Taylor.

On this nearly acre lot, the Taylors have 360 feet of riverfront property. Laray Taylor said only once has the Upper Truckee River caused her concern – during the 1997 flood when it came close to being at the edge of their lawn.

Wild aspens in the landscape would make this an ideal fall garden tour spot.

Next door is the home of Sue and Bob Novasel. Pool or river? That’s the tough question they have to ask themselves.

With the steep grade from the house to the river, it must make mowing a challenge. It flattens out at the bottom where two chairs sit; looking over what is now a mildly flowing river.

Tour details:

July 31 from 10am-4pm. All gardens are in El Dorado County. Five of the eight gardens are on land once owned by the Celio family. Tickets are $20 and may be purchased at the museum at 3058 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe, and at Aspen Hollow, Tahoe Outdoor Living, Nel’s and SunBasin. Tickets are limited and last year it sold-out. For more information, call (530) 541.5458.

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Brief hailstorm dampens South

Lake Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

A 10-minute hailstorm in South Lake Tahoe on Friday afternoon sent people scurrying indoors – at least those near the Y.

The National Weather Service in Reno said this was not unexpected, but seemed impressed to hear the size of the hail was more than a quarter-inch in diameter in some cases.



Hail on a hot tub cover near the Y in South Lake Tahoe on July 23. Photo/Kathryn Reed

It was all over, including some heavy rain, by 5:45pm.

A hazardous weather outlook and fire weather watch has been issued for the Lake Tahoe Basin and Reno-Carson areas.

Sunday is when the worst weather is forecast, though thunderstorms are possible Saturday, as well.

“We’re expecting significant thunderstorms Sunday,” Zach Tolby with the NWS said. They are expected to be dry, which makes the fire hazard severe.

Highs will continue to be above normal – meaning in the high

80s in the basin and triple digits in Reno.

Wildflower, waterfall hike with TRTA



The Tahoe Rim Trail Association is leading hikes July 28 and July 31 entitled Galena Falls Wildflower Hike.

This is a leisurely hike, which starts with a climb up and over a ridge and through the forest to a cascading waterfall. Followed by a moderate climb to a high mountain meadow in brilliant blooms; the result of late spring snow.

The trail goes a loop to a dirt road and trail. It may be hot, so bring lots of water (two liters), lunch, camera, and wind/rain gear depending on the weather. This hike is open to participants 10 years old and up; no pets; maximum number of participants is 15.

Hike Time: Four hours

Meeting time: 10am at the Mt. Rose parking lot; north side of Highway 431 at the summit.

Distance: Six miles

Difficulty: Moderate; elevation ranges from 8,900 feet to 9,400 feet.

Register: Contact TRTA for pre-registration as space is

limited.(775) 298.0012 or email programs@tahoerimtrail.org

Celtic Harp and Bagpipe Concert at Boathouse Theatre

South Shore harpist Anne Roos will be joined on stage by local, eighth generation bagpiper Séan Cummings in a lighthearted evening of Celtic music at the Boathouse Theatre at the Tallac Historic Site on the South Shore on July 28.

It’s part of the Valhalla Summer Festival and the fifth year for the Celtic Harp and Bagpipe Concert.

The concert is from 7:30-9pm. Tickets are $15 adu.ts, $12 students-senior-active military, $5 12 and under.

For more information, call (530) 541.4975.

LT Autumn Food and Wine Fest lines up slew of chefs

The Lake Tahoe Autumn Food and Wine Festival is celebrating a milestone – 25 years – Sept. 10-12.

Culinary aficionados and hungry travelers can return to the cobbled streets at the Village at Northstar in Truckee for chef battles, free cooking demonstrations, along with wine seminars.

Visitors can join in with noted celebrity chefs, presenters and vintners, including a special Celebrity Chef Luncheon with Chef Traci Des Jardins of Manzanita at the Ritz-Carlton Highlands; a live cooking demonstration with Chef Joseph Keller of Bouchon at Yountville, Las Vegas and Beverly Hills; outdoor grilling with Chef Lars Kronmark, a chef instructor at the Culinary Institute of America at Greystone in the Napa Valley; cooking demonstrations with Jason Gronlund, former executive chef with Tabasco; and Lake Tahoe's Chef Michael Plapp of Baxter's Bistro & Lounge; kids' cooking class with Chef Lara Ritchie of Nothing To It Culinary Center in Reno; food and wine pairing seminar with Roger King of Suisun Valley Vintners and Growers Association; Silver Oak Cellars vertical wine tasting and Olivier Napa Valley food and wine pairing with Silver Oak Senior Wine Educator Kim Caffrey; and the Charbay Artisan Winery & Distillery Annual Launch Party with Marko & Jenni Karakasevic.

The 25th festival will also host a number of other events and programs, such as a Grape Stomp, 25th Anniversary Welcome Reception at the Ritz-Carlton Highlands, Lake Tahoe; sushi rolling class with Mikuni Japanese Restaurant & Sushi Bar; a Gourmet Marketplace Vendor Fair; Plein Air Painters, Art & Sculpture Show; a Wine Walk, Blazing Pans Mountain Chef Cook-Off (Iron Chef style) and a Chocolate Class, as well as live entertainment and winemaker dinners throughout the week.

The weekend culminates with the Grand Tasting and Culinary Competition, when dozens of regional chefs serve their finest creations paired with premium California and international wines. An auction of unique wines and libations follows.

Guests can come early to take advantage of the region's most delicious week and its exceptional values by attending the inaugural Lake Tahoe Restaurant Week (Sept. 5-12), when more than 30 of the area's best bistros, eateries and resorts are offering 3-course prix-fixe menus for $20, $30 and $40 per person.

Many of this year’s Lake Tahoe Autumn Food and Wine Festival events, including the cooking classes, are free. Ticketed events range from $20 to $90 and are on sale now.

For more information, call 888.229.2193 or go to www.TahoeFoodandWine.com. Special room rates will also be available during the festival, click to the North Lake Tahoe Visitors Bureaus’ website, www.GoTahoeNorth.com, and then Cool Deals.

The Lake Tahoe Autumn Food and Wine Festival is a fundraiser for the Community Fund of North Lake Tahoe through the nonprofit Truckee Tahoe Community Foundation.

Casting call for ‘Sleeping Beauty’

Grades 1-12 may audition for Tahoe Arts Projects’ Missoula Children’s Theatre production of “Sleeping Beauty” on July 26 from 10am-noon at the Sierra House Elementary School multipurpose room in South Lake Tahoe.

If cast, there will be a fee of $50 per child. A limited number of scholarships are available.

Call Peggy Thompson at (530) 542.3632 for more information.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• KTHO radio General Manager Paul Middlebrook and *Lake Tahoe News* Publisher Kathryn Reed each taped a segment about the media with host Steve Teshara to be aired on Douglas County's public access television channel for a month.

• Tour de Tahoe – the Sept. 12 cycling event around Lake Tahoe – is working with the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation for the first time. Riders don't need to be affiliated with the foundation. Click here for more information.

• The Friends of the West Shore meeting scheduled for July 24 has been canceled.

• The Fallen Leaf Lake Community Services District board came up with more questions July 17 about the inter-agency agreement that would be needed to get mitigation funds via El Dorado County and Tahoe Regional Planning Agency to buy an electric boat. A decision could be months down the road.

• Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District board this month shot down an appeal by someone who doesn't want Kirkwood Meadows Public Utility District to build a diesel power plant.