Bubble Lady at Zephyr Cove library

Zephyr Cove Library on July 8 at 1pm will celebrate the Summer Reading program with Bubble Lady Rebecca Nile. The Bubble Lady will entertain and delight the audience with her bubbles.

The excitement mounts toward the finale as they grow in size, until there is a bubble large enough for an audience member to fit inside it. Families of all ages are welcome.

The Bubble Lady has performed throughout San Francisco

and the Bay Area. Trained by “The Amazing Bubble Man,” Louis Pearl, she guarantees a laugh-filled, squeaky-clean show.

This free program is sponsored by the Friends of the Douglas County Public Library. The Douglas County Public Library in Zephyr Cove is located at 233 Warrior Way.

For more information, call (775) 588.6411 or visit douglas.lib.nv.us.

Firefighting movie in South Tahoe

On July 5 at 2pm Explore Tahoe An Urban Trailhead presents “The Greatest Good,” U.S. Forest Service Centennial Film featuring short stories on women smoke jumpers, hotshots, aerial attacks, Smokey Bear and more.

It is free.

Explore Tahoe is located at 4114 Lake Tahoe Blvd. at the Stateline Transit Center. For more information, call (530) 542.4637.

BMX racing begins in South Tahoe

South Lake Tahoe BMX opening day race for 2010 season is June 24.

Located at 1100 Lyons Ave., all ages and abilities are welcome to participate.

Trophies awarded to the top three riders in each division.

Sign ups from 5:30-6:30pm. Racing starts at 7pm.

Race fee $10. Spectators are free.

South Lake Tahoe BMX is sanctioned by the American Bicycle Association. All riders must wear helmet, long pants and long sleeves to participate.

Call (530) 542.9355 for more information.

Incline Lake’s future tied up

in federal court

By Jeff Delong, Reno Gazette-Journal

Obtained for the public in 2008, a once-picturesque Sierra lake will remain drained with its future in limbo until a complex case is resolved in federal court.

Incline Lake, long a gathering spot for Nevada's rich and famous, was transferred to the U.S. Forest Service in July 2008 after a $46 million payment to the Incline Lake Corp.

The sellers drained the lake because of concerns over the safety of its dam and the danger it could fail during an earthquake, sending floodwaters rushing downstream into Incline Village.

Although U.S. Sen. John Ensign, R-Nev., secured more than $5 million to repair the dam, which would allow the lake to be refilled, the Forest Service has no plans to do so.

Read the whole story

Landscape photographer delves into climate change



By Kathryn Reed

INCLINE VILLAGE – Photographs of sub-Alpine conifers, fields of lupine and the boulder lined East Shore of Lake Tahoe are more than just pretty pictures to scientists. They can represent what climate change is doing to the local and surrounding environment.

“Changing Range of Light: Climate Change in the Sierra Nevada” is part landscape photography coffee-table book, part educational resource, part poetry.

“I feel it is important to educate the public about the threats to these landscapes,” photographer Elizabeth Carmel told the approximately 70 people who chose not to watch Game 7 of the NBA Finals.

She found inspiration for her second book from John Muir, who coined the phrase “Range of Light” and whose writings helped preserve the Sierra Nevada; as well as photographer Ansel Adams, who captured in a different way much of what Muir had done with words.

The idea was to delve into what is going on environmentally in the Sierra Nevada in the 21st century. Carmel’s pictures are complemented by easy to read text from two scientists as well as poems from well-known writers.

The Squaw Valley Institute and UC Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center (TERC) brought Carmel, and scientists Geoff Schladow and Bob Coats together at Sierra Nevada College on June 17 for a presentation about the book the three collaborated on. This was the first time the trio had given a talk together.

Carmel has been a professional photographer for the last decade. She has a studio on Truckee. Schladow is the founding director of TERC. He has a doctorate in civil and environmental engineering. Coats has a consulting firm called Hydroikos Ltd. He has a doctorate in wildland resource science.

Schladow touched on how as the Earth warms, trees in one region will vanish and appear in another to stick with the climate they are used to thriving in.

As droughts become longer and more sustained, it’s possible the level of Lake Tahoe will consistently remain below its natural rim. This could turn lush meadows into muddy or dry fields.

“Imagery can be used to quantify climate change, though that is not the purpose of this particular book,” Schladow said.

Schladow shared an editorial from November 1957 from a paper in Indiana that first mentioned global warming.

Climate change is not a new phenomenon, the scientists said. What they said is different now is that in the last 200 years there has been a dramatic spike in climate change because of carbon dioxide in the environment from humans.

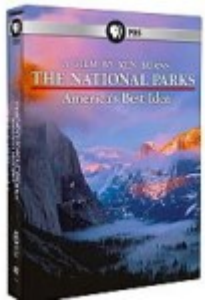
Coats said the level of CO2 in the atmosphere is the highest it’s been in thousands of years.

He said if the temperature changes by 5 degrees Celsius by the end the century, Lake Tahoe at 6,200 feet would be similar to what life currently is like at 4,500 feet.

Coats also said as the lake warms the level of phosphorous will dramatically change, which in turn will have a profound negative affect on lake clarity.

For more information about the book, call (530) 582.0558 or click here.

National parks come to life on small screen



By Kathryn Reed

The United States is a world leader in many areas. One area that often goes unrecognized is the contribution to the preservation of open space.

It was March 1, 1872, that the first national park in the world was created. President Ulysses S Grant created Yellowstone National Park that day.

Now there are nearly 400 parks in the United States.

Other countries soon followed in setting aside undeveloped land for the preservation for generations to come.

The history of the U.S. park system, the struggles, the evolution and the people who made it all a reality come to life in “The National Parks: America’s Best Idea.” The six-part film by Ken Burns first aired on PBS last fall. Now the series is available for rent on DVD.

Even though I learned a ton from the hours of video, I have to admit I fell asleep through parts of the first four discs. I don’t know if it was the music, scenery, soft voices or just my state of mind.

Of course it could have been the editing and redundancy. I love Yosemite, and would say it’s my favorite national park, but I was ready to move on from this granite splendor long

before the filmmakers were.

With that negativity said, without hesitation I recommend watching the first, fifth and sixth DVDs. Yes, you will be missing a tremendous amount if you skip half of the videos, but you'll still learn a ton.

With so many national parks and monuments in California and Nevada, it makes me want to get off the computer and into the Jeep to start exploring and rediscovering places I haven't visited in years.

The photography is incredible – and not just because the subject matter is stunning to begin with. The cinematography is exquisite. The research is superb. The message is incredible.

The history can be a bit much to take at times, just because there is so much of it. I would suggest watching the first few videos in more than one sitting. This will ward off the sleepiness as well as help you grasp everything.

With only a fraction of the parks mentioned throughout the series, I have to admit it makes me curious about the hundreds of others in the system.

Road trip?

For more information about the series, click here.

Workshop for school board

candidates

The El Dorado County School Boards Association and the El Dorado County Office of Education will conduct a workshop for prospective school board members on June 30 at the El Dorado County Office of Education. Registration is at 4:30pm, with the workshop taking place from 5-6:30pm.

The purpose of this workshop is to inform prospective school board members of the duties and responsibilities of school board members.

According to Vicki Barber, El Dorado County superintendent of schools, local board members and superintendents from various school districts will discuss topics such as time commitment, the Brown Act, policy development, budget responsibilities, and the general role that school boards have in public education today.

The election filing dates are between July 12 and Aug. 6.

There is no charge to attend this workshop. Contact Janet Maruniak at (530)295.2217 or email jmaruniak@edcoe.org, by June 25 to register for the workshop.

‘Pay it Forward’ in South Tahoe

To the community,

Help Pay it Forward by volunteering with your neighbors at several projects around the South Lake Tahoe community. Painting, gardening, assembling, cleaning up and much more.

Families of all ages are encouraged to participate.

Contact Paula at tahoepaula@sbcglobal.net to sign up.

Paula Peterson, South Lake Tahoe

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2 nights of free ice skating for students

South Tahoe and Whittell high school students in the classes of 2010-14 can skate for free June 25-26 from 7-9pm at the South Lake Tahoe Ice Arena.

Other high school students can participate for a $3 skate rental fee.

All students must present a school ID.

The café will be open to purchase dinner or snacks.

Call (530) 542.6262 or come by the arena at 1176 Rufus Allen Blvd. if you have any questions.

Public, employee panels divided on SLT city manager

By Austin Fay

A community panel reached an informal consensus to recommend

Tony O’Rourke to the City Council to be the next city manager of South Lake Tahoe.

Seven community members spent 90 minutes questioning the two finalists Monday morning.

It may have been a waste of time for everyone involved because the City Council interviewed the men on Sunday, with Councilman Bill Crawford choosing not to be part of the process. After they were done with the session they reached the same conclusion – O’Rourke would be better than Mike Segrest.



Tony O'Rourke delivers answers at the public forum June 21. Photo/Austin Fay

O’Rourke has signed the necessary paperwork to start the background and reference check process.

However, that process will not begin immediately because the two other groups interviewing the candidates Monday – employees and department heads – were not as convinced O’Rourke is the man for the job. (Redevelopment Director Gene Palazzo was not an interviewer because he applied for the job and is still technically a candidate.)

It’s possible the council will bring in three more candidates

to be interviewed in the next week. The council still needs to reach consensus to do this. If more candidates are brought in, the three panels will be asked to reconvene to interview the next group.

If O'Rourke is not in the top two, the background check process will not begin.

About four city employees drifted in and out of the room at Lake Tahoe Airport during the public interviews, but were not available for comment. There was one person attending the meeting who was not a city employee.

A city manager is needed because Dave Jinkens is ending his eight-year stint as city manager on Aug. 7.

Who's on the panel?

The public panel was made up: Claire Fortier, vice chairwoman of the Sustainability Commission; Michael Berg, chairman of the Planning Commission; Chip Morrow, chairman of the Parks and Recreation Commission and on the Sustainability Commission; Sherry Miller, Airport Commission and the airport director; Hermano Aragon, Latino Affairs Commission; B Gorman, president/CEO Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce; and Ken Sands, representing the South Lake Tahoe seniors.

The South Lake Tahoe Chamber of Commerce and TACCD did not send representatives.

City Attorney Patrick Enright facilitated the process Monday.

Members of the panel were looking for different elements in a new city manager, but a common thread was the city needs an "agent of change." O'Rourke, in his slate-grey suit and businessman demeanor had "done his homework" the panel agreed, and was the strongest candidate to be that agent of change for South Lake Tahoe.

Questions were similar for the two interviews, with each

representative having the opportunity to ask two questions, though some panel members asked more. Each interview lasted 90 minutes.

Questions entailed important issues the new city manager will wrestle with: fiscal policy in tough economic times, utility-related issues, the convention center project, annexation issues, collaboration with government agencies, anecdotal evidence of building consensus among other elected officials, as well as potholes.

The candidates

“He does come from the private sector, but he’s got a wealth of public service as well,” panel member Berg said of O’Rourke.

Segrest has been town manager in Moraga, a tony East Bay community of about 17,000 people, for more than a year. He also served as city manager of Snowmass, Colo. He is an avid sailor. One of the motives for Segrest’s considered relocation to this “very charming community” is his wife’s allergies.

O’Rourke touted his self-described “passion for the public,” while emphasizing his experience in the private sector. O’Rourke has a background in marketing and managing, as he is executive director of Beaver Creek Resort Company based in Avon, Colo., a town of about 6,500 people and a regional population of about 61,700. During Monday’s public interview he placed an emphasis on “creating a brand” of South Lake Tahoe combining his experience in private sectors.

“Being a city manager is effectively the same position as being the CEO of a company,” O’Rourke said.

Segrest has had much experience in the public sector and was forward in citing his strengths, which were finances and his decisive personality.

Post-interview comments

“If Tony doesn’t accept (the position), I would not be happy with Michael, and would like to look at additional people,” Gorman said with nods of approval from most of the panel.

Segrest responded to many questions with wandering, non-specific answers, giving way to a veneer of politician-speak; or, textbook answers that didn’t reflect a nuanced understanding of the issues facing South Lake Tahoe.

When speaking about budgets and money O’Rourke referred to $100,000 as “not a small sum,” while Segrest thought $700,000 was “not a lot of money.”

Interviewers were given reaction-prompting sheets where they were also able to make comments during the interview. *Lake Tahoe News* was denied access to the documents collected from interviewers at the end of the session because it’s a personnel matter, Enright said.

The City Council does not have a date set to make a decision, but may reconvene in “seven to 10 days” to make a decision, according to Enright.