Placerville winery provides house white to Bay Area eatery

By Jordan MacKay, New York Times

Guests who are lucky enough to claim any of the 47 seats at Frances, Melissa Perello's hot new restaurant in the Castro, are offered not only the wine list but also the choice of house wine, red or white.

The house wine is presented in a tall glass carafe, more vase than pitcher. The instruction from the waiter is simple: "Pour your own, and we charge you at the end only for what you drink, a buck an ounce."

Though novel, the serve-yourself strategy has been used elsewhere. What's compelling at Frances is the beverage director Paul Einbund's spin on house wine – he himself blends the wines, which are brought in bulk straight from the winery to the restaurant in kegs and served on tap.

Read the whole story

Curling about to take over SLT Ice Arena

Thanks to a generous donation by Big George Ventures the South Lake Tahoe Ice Arena has purchased curling equipment for the community to enjoy.

Curling is a sport similar to shuffleboard played on ice. It can be played by children through geriatrics and competitors need not be chiseled athletes.

An orientation and game is May 7 from 7:30–9:30pm. Prepare yourself by logging on to

www.curlingbasics.com to learn the fundamentals of the game.

Cost is $12 and enrollment is limited so sign up soon by stopping by the arena at 1176 Rufus Allen Blvd., South Lake Tahoe or calling (530) 542.6262.

KMS not in Douglas County School District's future



By Kathryn Reed

When Kingsbury Middle School closed two years ago no one thought it would re-open. That thinking was solidified with the approval of Douglas County School District's facilities master plan.

The plan that was OK'd by the board in April calls for getting rid of the Stateline parcel or at a minimum lease the property.

Declining enrollment at Lake Tahoe forced the district to go from three schools at the lake to two in fall 2008. For a

variety of reasons KMS was picked as the school to close.

At the time John Soderman was superintendent of the district and he was talking to Douglas County about using the school in some capacity. Now that Soderman is the interim superintendent of the district those talks have resumed with current County Manager Michael Brown.

“The idea at this time is maybe to lease the building,” Soderman said. “It serves us to have somebody in it. It would be good for a senior center. It has a cooking facility, classrooms, all the computer wiring, a gym for activities. It could be an expanded library because there is plenty of space.”

If a lease were to occur, it’s most likely would be with the county and not a private company or individual. This is because there are state regulations about who could lease such an entity.

A land swap and selling the property are other alternatives. If a swap were to occur, it would most likely be with the county. There is land near Zephyr Cove Elementary and Whittell High schools the district might be interested in acquiring, Soderman said.

A couple real estate agents made inquiries in April about the KMS property.

Nevada law requires the district go through a well mapped-out process in order to sell school property. This includes getting multiple appraisals, seeking bids and being completely transparent. The district could turn down offers for any reason.

DCSD Chief Financial Officer Holly Luna would not put a monetary value on the property because an appraisal has not been done in years. Any money collected from the sale would be deposited in the capital improvement account. It cannot go

toward salaries – just capital projects.

All of the projects approved in the 2008 bond will not be covered with those dollars. The idea is selling Kingsbury Middle School would supplement that pot of cash.

“It’s not the building that is worth anything. It’s a prime piece of property at Lake Tahoe,” Luna said.

Soderman said, “I’m guessing just the coverage is worth a fortune.”

With the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency dictating the percentage of a parcel that can be covered, coverage is a huge issue in Lake Tahoe.

Luna said there is minimal cost to the district with KMS closed – keeping the thermostat at 50 degrees, plowing in the winter and having a phone going so it connects to the fire line.

With the second gym opening at Whittell High School this spring, it means the gym at KMS has been padlocked.

Soderman says the district has saved about $1 million a year by closing the Kingsbury Middle School.

Unity at the Lake drum ministry

May 30 – Unity at the Lake One Heart Drum Ministry – Tahoe Senior Center – 3050 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe at

11:30am after Sunday Celebration Service.

Express the heartbeat of God within. Come and share the healing energy of creating rhythms together. Bring your drums and shakers – or just come and dance. No experience necessary; some instruments provided. Love offering. For more info, call (530) 544.2266 or visit www.unityatthelake.org.

Unity at the Lake Healing Circle

May 10 at noon – Unity at the Lake Healing Circle – Star Tahoe Bldg., 2489 Lake Tahoe Blvd., Ste. 27, South Lake Tahoe.

Affirm and align in consciousness with the truth that we are already whole. Simply one of the best ways to align our minds with Divine Mind and claim our Divine Inheritance. Bring a healing request to share in this powerful and prayerful ceremony. Love offering. For more info, call (530) 544.2266 or visit www.unityatthelake.org.

Clean-up day in Incline

Incline Village Community Clean Up Day is June 5 from 10am-noon at D.W. Reynolds Community Non-Profit Center, 948 Incline Way, Incline Village.

Participants of all ages are welcome, however children under 18 must be accompanied by an adult. The Incline Village Community Clean Up Day is part of The Great Tahoe to Truckee

Community Clean Up, a regionwide community clean up taking place in neighborhoods all over the Truckee-Tahoe North Shore on June 5.

For more information, call the Waste Not Hotline at (775) 832.1284 or email Wastenot@ivgid.org.

Caltrans begins another year of work on Hwy. 28

Caltrans will be working on Highway 28 now through Oct. 15. This is the third season of construction of a $46 million drainage reconstruction and environmental improvement project east of Tahoe City.

Motorists can expect delays from 7am-5pm Monday through Friday from three miles east of Tahoe City to Tahoe Vista.

Work will consist of placing sand collection vaults, infiltration basins and curb and gutters to channel runoff to these treatment facilities.

Also, roadway widening including a bicycle lane in both directions and new turn lanes at the busier intersections will be constructed.

New signs, roadside planting, vehicle barriers and slope stabilization will enhance the lakeshore highway environment. Final paving will take place later in the summer.

It covers 9.4 miles. The prime contractor on this project is Diablo Contractors of San Ramon. Completion is expected in 2011.

Researcher: Donner Party cannibalism did happen



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

Contrary to recent media reports sparked by a university's news release, the Donner Party of 1846-47 did cannibalize the dead, Western historians, authors and a bone researcher said.

The clarifications were based on a flurry of stories last week, which included headlines like: "Oops! Donner Party Gets Apology" (Winston-Salem Journal); "Analysis Clears Donner Party of Rumored Cannibalism" (Cleveland Leader); and "Donner Party Did Not Eat Each Other" (Examiner.com).

The problem: That's not what the bone study says. And telling Western historians the entrapped 1846-47 pioneers didn't eat each other is akin to announcing the Titanic missed that iceberg or Custer survived the Little Big Horn.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Lakeside Inn and Casino in Stateline turns 25 this month.

• Cal Neva in Crystal Bay opened the Circle Bar Ultra Lounge nightclub in April. The resort is operating even though it doesn't offer any gaming.

• South Lake Tahoe needs some help with the lead paint program. Click on information to find out more about the job.

• The May issue of *Fitness* magazine has a blurb on America's Most Beautiful Bike Ride, even though the June event put on by Curtis Fong is sold-out.

• KTHO FM-96.1/AM-590 plans to move the station to the Ski Run Marina in South Tahoe.

• Rep. Tom McClintock, R-Granite Bay, received the Spirit of Enterprise Award from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce for supporting legislation critical to the American business community.

Cracking down on Cinco de Mayo DUIs



To the community,

Cinco de Mayo has become a traditional time for many to celebrate California's rich cultural history. But it is also a night out with expected dangers when someone chooses to drink and drive. Party hosts, bars and restaurants this year must be sure to plan and promote designating sober drivers in advance -– before the Fiesta begins.

The Avoid the 6 will be deploying additional Roving DUI patrols into the communities of South Lake Tahoe andPlace rville in an effort to lower deaths and injuries with so many local establishments offering discounted drink offers in conjunctions with Cinco de Mayo promotional activities.

DUI related crashes have dropped in California thanks to increased sobriety checkpoints and special DUI enforcement campaigns. However, the No. 1 killer on our highways remains impaired driving, with 1,029 dead in 2008 and another 28,457 injured in alcohol involved collisions.

"Communities everywhere will see special events and night spots celebrating Cinco de Mayo this year," said interim SLTPD Chief Martin Hewlett. "Do your part this year and make your celebration memorable by designating non-drinking drivers before the first margarita is ever mixed."

El Dorado County Avoid the 6 DUI Taskforce will be deploying overtime patrols onto city streets while CHP will be saturating the freeways and into unincorporated communities looking for the signs of a drunken driver:

• Weaving out of the lane

• Wide turns

• Failing to go on a green light

• Driving below the speed limit

• Aggressive, reckless driving

• Drivers who appear drunk behind the wheel

Officers will be stopping errant drivers and checking for the signs of intoxication, conducting field sobriety tests, arresting those who are intoxicated and impounding vehicles of those with suspended or no license.

“Drunken driving is simply not worth the risk. Not only do you risk killing yourself or someone else, but the trauma and financial costs of a crash or an arrest for impaired driving can be significant,” said Christopher J. Murphy, director of the California Office of Traffic Safety. “Violators often face jail time, the loss of their driver’s license, higher insurance rates, attorney fees, time away from work, and dozens of other expenses. So don’t take the chance. Remember, if you are over the limit, you are under arrest.”

Avoid the 6 DUI Taskforce funding is provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Shannon Laney, SLTPD sergeant