Jelly Bread plays in Meyers

Jelly Bread will be at Divided Sky in Meyers on April 3 at 10pm.

Genoa Cowboy Poetry & Music Festival

The first Genoa Cowboy Poetry & Music Festival is scheduled for April 29 to May 2, and organizers are working to combine Carson Valley's varied cultural heritage and history with music, poetry, performance and visual arts to create an event worthy of its location.

The festival will feature more than 50 performances in a variety of venues around Genoa during the four days as well as exhibits, vendors, workshops and of course, opportunities to enjoy beverages and dining. Participants in all of those areas, from well known musical and cowboy poetry performers to crafters, instructors and vendors are being pursued by the festival's Program Committee and other committees, including Marketing & Publicity, Logistics, Education/Workshops, Finance, Visual Arts and Food are moving forward to put their elements in place.

For more information, click here.

Fallen Leaf Lake concessionaire issue nears resolution

By Susan Wood

The board tasked with running Fallen Leaf Lake operations agreed to start negotiations with a local electrician to run the store and marina in the small mountain haven near South Lake Tahoe.

In a complete turnaround of events, Saturday's meeting, which included snippy comments between board members, concluded with Community Services District board President Mike Kraft declaring it the most "positive" gathering, applause and a unanimous 4-0 vote in favor of South Shore residents' Rob and Sandy Wirths' proposal as concessionaires.



The Fallen Leaf Lake board is close to having a concessionaire for this summer. Photo/Kathryn Reed

With an eye on summer approaching, the district sent board

member Jennifer Thornton to meet with the Wirths – who run Innovative Electric – to hash out the final contract. Thornton pledged to return with either a thumbs up or down by April 10. Board members are optimistic because the Wirths have seen the contract as a baseline for what's expected.

At the end of the meeting at Lake Tahoe Airport, a collective sigh of relief seemed to embody the embattled board, which has run up against months of opposition by a segment of the community that did not want former concessionaires John and Ruth Rich ousted. After 14 years of operating the hub of the mountain village, the couple found themselves at odds with the board about accounting practices and an agreement over rent to be paid to the district, along with other issues.

The quagmire led to a breakdown in talks with the Riches, legal threats by the community, former board President Dana Clark resigning, and the previous choice of concessionaire after the Riches' stint to opt out less than a month after agreeing to take the helm.

As it stands now, the contract calls for a $121,500 minimum rent to be paid to the district for revenue gained by the concessionaire for running the store, café and marina under a six-year lease. The concessionaire needs to put up a $20,000 security deposit to assure performance of the lease.

"If I would look at that contract for a job, I would do it," Kraft told Rob Wirth, who was one of about 20 people in the room for the meeting that lasted more than four hours.

When Rick Firkins backed out of the concessionaire role last month, Kraft ran an advertisement to find a replacement. In Saturday's meeting, Thornton questioned his authority to do so and insisted he should have called an emergency board meeting.

"You were out of line," she said.

On numerous occasions like this one, Kraft pointed to the

clock ticking as motivation for his actions. And with that, tensions mounted.

At one point, he told Thornton to “zip it” when she repeatedly demanded he follow the bylaws and involve the board more in selecting a concessionaire.

To that, Thornton barked that she wasn’t a child.

After a break, the board plowed through its agenda and civil conversation resumed. When the agenda returned to the concessionaire, it was as though clouds had lifted when Wirth gave his five-minute pitch to run the operation.

“I’d like to bring a good attitude and fresh community feel, which I think is needed, especially after sitting in on this meeting,” he said, adding he’d like to use a team effort from those he knows and bring the community together. The issue has divided the mountain village for almost a year.

Wirth came armed with letters of recommendation, including one from Food and Beverage Director Dave Dennis of Stanford Sierra Camp. The two men worked together for seven years at the lake’s university retreat.

Beyond running an electric company, Wirth has served on the Barton Hospital Foundation board and the South Lake Tahoe Code of Appeals Commission. Since 1988, he’s lived at Fallen Leaf Lake with his family, where he enjoys water skiing and backcountry snow skiing.

It’s for these very reasons Wirth would like to make improvements to enhance the experience at Fallen Leaf Lake. He wants to add more hiking equipment to the store inventory and provide lakeview dining at the café.

In Wirth’s response to the request for proposals, he agreed to the financial terms in spirit and threw in a broiler and backup generator for good measure.

His proposed café menus are extensive and personal. Included are “Rob’s hearty quiche” and “Mom’s macaroni salad”. His children have put in their two cents, too. They want board games at the village store.

The plan is to have the operation running by Memorial Day weekend.

In other business:

• The board agreed to declare a special election for August to fill the seat vacated by Clark.

• In July, the district needs a two-thirds vote to continue a special tax to pay for the fire district at an annual rate of $660 per improved parcel. El Dorado County is no longer providing funds to augment the Fallen Leaf fire district.

• The board also hashed out its five-year fire master plan and plans to soon hire a fire chief.

• The district decided to take up board member Terri Thomas’ idea to spend up to $500 for improved communications, which would be anchored by a newsletter.

Heavenly ski patrol fundraiser

Heavenly ski patrol fundraiser on April 10 at 4:30pm at the top level of the city’s parking garage at Heavenly Village.

Blue Turtle Seduction and an opening band will provide entertainment for this all-age event.

Tickets are $10.

For more information, contact the First Aid station at the California base at (530) 541.6466.

SLT city manager talks about consolidating services

Dear Publisher,

As I mentioned at our recent public workshop on the new RDA Project Area last week, it is time for STPUD and city officials to seriously explore developing joint facilities and exploring the option of a merger and consolidation of services. While we could have done so earlier, it is never too late.

STPUD and City government should not be or appear to be competing. We both have valuable services needed by our customer base.

Do we have to have two “city halls”, two corporation yards, two road maintenance crews, two finance operations, two clerical staffs, etc.? How much can we save by consolidation of services and maybe even agencies? Is it possible that by coordination and consolidation of services and agencies those taxpayers in the county and city will benefit in their pocket books by avoiding yearly utility rate and other fee increases?

Is it possible that with one-stop district and city permitting as part of an overall efficiency improvement plan for our organizations, we can better serve our customer base and reduce our overall operational costs?

We will never know unless we take a serious look at this option.

There are examples of this going on all over California as noted in the article below. Has our time arrived?

Dave Jinkens, city manager South Lake Tahoe

Tahoe businesses turning food waste into compost

By Kathryn Reed

By separating out food waste for composting, Embassy Suites in South Lake Tahoe last year reduced the amount of trash it produced by 33 percent. Yes, the hotel's occupancy was down in 2009, but only by 8 percent.

David Hansen, director of engineering for the property, has been spearheading all things green at the Stateline area hotel. He is also the key to making Compost Tahoe a reality.



Other members of Compost Tahoe are Joanna Walters, Tom Wendell, Garry Bowen, Chris Taylor and Erik Taylor.

“Compost Tahoe has more of an educational piece to it,” Hansen said of the local compost movement.

He would like more people to use compostable products, which are different than biodegradable.

According to Compost Tahoe’s website, “Compostable: means an item will break down completely into soil, water and carbon dioxide with no leftover residue. Biodegradable: means an item will break down into smaller and smaller pieces.”

Another goal is to get people to use the end product – the composted material as a soil amendment. Embassy does this.

For a while Hansen was making two trips a week to Full Circle Compost in Minden to deliver food scraps and other compostable material. With South Tahoe Refuse starting a pilot compost program and businesses besides Embassy now on board, Hansen can let others do the driving.

Last week Zephyr Cove Resort joined the pilot program. Both Marriott properties on the South Shore are interested. Whittell High School may be another player.

“We are trying to reduce the amount of solid waste refuse we produce,” said Mark Smith, project manager and environmental steward with Aramark. “There are a lot of items that go in this besides just food waste and food prep.”

(Aramark owns the two paddle-wheelers on the South Shore, and Zephyr Cove Lodge.)

Locally, Aramark doesn’t use many compostable products besides food. However, coffee grounds, eggshells, nutshells, tea bags without a staple, cardboard without tape, paper towels, napkins and shredded paper are all compostable.

One thing that makes Embassy unique is that it uses compostable plates, flatware and cups – so even more is going into its bin.

“We are using mostly recycled content material. We have not gone full-bore with compostable material. We thought this would be a first step,” Smith said of separating out food waste.

Just like what Embassy had to do, it is a matter of training employees to learn what goes in the compost container and what keeps going into the regular trash.



An employee at Embassy Suites separates food waste for composting. Photos/Provided

“In the bin is a bag that is compostable,” Hansen explained. That bag is then tossed into a dumpster just for composting that STR picks up.

“This is part of integrated recycling. A good amount of weight is in food waste,” said Jeanne Lear with South Tahoe Refuse.

Every city and county in California must divert waste from landfills by 50 percent. South Lake Tahoe has set a goal of 55 percent. STR expects to hit 50 percent when the Resource Recovery Center opens in April. Eliminating some food waste will help hit that target as well.

In the pilot program that started with Embassy in February, the garbage company wants to see how big of a route it could

handle, how much compostable material properties will collect, what it's like to take a front loader to the Minden facility once a week, and the benefits and drawbacks of the program.

Just like normal garbage, the amount of compostable waste will fluctuate with the seasons – another concern of the refuse company's.

Lear said she envisions bigger properties participating in the composting program. Douglas Disposal, which the group owns in the Carson Valley, is looking at Walmart having a composting bin.

STR's permit from the state does not allow it to compost on-site in South Tahoe. Residential compost pick up is not likely. Lear also pointed to the difficulty of collecting compostable material at businesses in strip malls because of space, the greater potential to contaminate the compost bin, and logistics.

A definitive time line to know if the compost route is working hasn't been set.

The other part of the equation is with Full Circle Compost. If the goods being delivered by STR aren't actually compostable, there is no reason for them to keep accepting the matter.

But it's also possible to contaminate the plastic recycling program if large quantities of compostable plastic gets mixed in with recyclable plastic.

It's back to that education component. People need to know what they are using and what to do with it when they are done.

"This is a great for the community. It could make the South Shore sustainable powerhouse that it should be," Hansen said of the compost program.

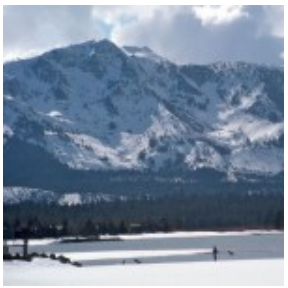
Publisher's note: ***Read Lake Tahoe News on March 30 to find out what compostable products are all about.***

Blizzard warning issued for Lake Tahoe

A blizzard watch is in effect from Tuesday morning through that evening.

A cold front will pass through the Lake Tahoe Basin and Alpine County, according to the National Weather Service.

Expect southwest winds of 20 to 30mph, with gusts up to 50mph in the lower elevations and ridge gusts near 100mph. Winds may be combined with heavy snow to create blizzard conditions.



Mount Tallac will be covered in more snow this week. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Snow accumulations of a foot or more above 7,000 feet and up to 8 inches below 7000 feet are possible, with the largest amounts along and west of Highway 89.

There is a potential for snow combined with winds more than 35mph that may lower visibilities to less than one-quarter of

a mile. Possible whiteout conditions could make travel dangerous, the Weather Service warns.

Locals dominate podium at Squaw in dual moguls

By USSA

OLYMPIC VALLEY – It was the way Squaw was hoping to wrap up the weekend as hometown favorite Shelly Robertson (Reno, NV), along with Jeremy Cota (Steamboat Springs, CO), took the dual moguls titles during the Sprint U.S. Freestyle Championships Sunday.

“This is so awesome being at Squaw in front of all my friends and family,” Robertson said. “I’m so excited to win today. This is where it all started for me on this run right here when I was 15. It feels good to finish on this run on top.”

Robertson was joined on the podium by Eliza Outtrim (Steamboat Springs, CO), who marked her second silver of the weekend, and Heather McPhie (Bozeman, MT) who was pulling in another third for the event.

According to Robertson, her fourth U.S. title came with a little luck and some hard-fought skiing throughout the bright day in Tahoe.

“I felt like I got a little lucky on a couple of the runs before, and I wasn’t skiing on my game. I knew I’d have to put it together on this last run,” Robertson said. “I was happy to finally put down the run that I wanted to ski on this last one.”

After a weekend riddled with successes, Outtrim is looking back on what she feels are two weeks that can push her forward.

“It’s incredible. I’ve probably had my best three results I’ve ever had in the last week and a half,” Outtrim said. “They’re my first podiums at U.S. Champs and to get two seconds is pretty sweet.”

Absent from the competition, but there watching with friends and family was local hero and Olympic bronze medalist Shannon Bahrke (Tahoe City, CA) who was not racing due to an injury.

On the men’s side, reeling in his first U.S. title had Cota very excited that he could go up against some of the sport’s best and succeed.

“This is my first time winning a national title and I’m definitely psyched,” Cota said. “There’s a lot of incredible skiers in this event and for me to win I had to do my very best, and I was happy to be able to do that.”

Also on the podium with Cota, marking his second appearance in the week was U.S. moguls champion Joey Discoe (Telluride, CO) in second, and Dave DiGravio (Farmington, ME) in third.

Freestyle Championships,Squaw Valley, March 28, Dual Moguls

Men

1. Jeremy Cota, Steamboat Springs, CO

2. Joey Discoe, Telluride, CO

3. Dave DiGravio, Farmington, ME

4. Zak Watkins, Telluride, CO

5. Bradley Wilson, Park City, UT

Women

1. Shelly Robertson, Reno, NV

2. Eliza Outtrim, Steamboat Springs, CO

3. Heather McPhie, Bozeman, MT

4. Laurel Shanley, Squaw Valley, CA

5. Mikaela Matthews, Frisco, CO

Prescribed fire in Meeks Canyon this week

The U.S. Forest Service will continue its Meeks Canyon prescribed fire activity Monday.

The project would continue through the week as favorable weather permits.

Other fire management agencies both state and local are expected to conduct prescribed fire work during this period.

Residents and travelers can expect to see smoke from prescribed fire project areas.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

• Assemblyman Ted Gaines, R-Roseville, is having a town hall meeting March 30 from 6:30-8pm in the Aspen Room at Lake Tahoe Community College in South Lake Tahoe.



Ted Gaines

• U.S. Postal Service officials this month unveiled a Nevada postage stamp that has the state flag, mountains and a desert ocotillo plant. This is part of the agency's "Flags of our Nation" collection.

• Charles Fee is producing artistic director for the Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival.

• Three South Lake Tahoe residents have been chosen from 250 nominees throughout El Dorado County as "Champions for Children". They are Bijou Community School teacher Bob Hickman, South Tahoe Middle School secretary Becky Fortier, and Orion Davis of the Probation Department.

• In May, Carson City Parks and Recreation Department will conduct an online survey asking people what they want for indoor recreation.