South Shore bus system operating behind closed doors



By Kathryn Reed

A special closed session meeting of the transit authority that oversees BlueGo, the bus system on the South Shore, seemed to produce more questions than answers.

Lake Tahoe News normally receives notification via email of the South Tahoe Area Transit Authority meetings. Not so in this case. A phone call long after dark alerted this publication that a meeting had been called.

BlueGo Administrator John Andoh said the agency's legal counsel put out the agenda on Tuesday. Apparently, not to all of the media as would be normal.

The agenda items listed at bluego.org says:

A. EMPLOYMENT APPOINTMENT

Title: Executive Director

B. EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Title: Transit Administrator

C. EMPLOYEE DISCIPLINE/DISMISSAL/RELEASE

Title: Transit Administrator

D. ADJOURNMENT

Chairwoman Nancy McDermid said the meeting was to listen to a company the city of South Lake Tahoe wanted to bring in to give a presentation. Assistant City Manager Rick Angelocci, who is vice chairman of STATA, and Mayor Kathay Lovell, did not return calls Friday night.

McDermid said the city took it upon itself without direction from the STATA board to bring the company in. She said the board members who were at the Friday morning meeting didn't take action.

The finance and marketing committees are expected to analyze the data from the presentation.

McDermid said there is no direction to replace MV Transportation, which operates the system. She was evasive when asked if Andoh would retain his position.

McDermid said now that the agency is not under the umbrella of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, it is trying to figure out how to structure the organization, what type of staffing to have, how to increase revenue without fare increases, and to initiate an audit of its fleet of 43 buses.

"I honestly don't know what was discussed," Andoh said hours after the meeting concluded. "I've been pressuring them to get an executive director."

For now, he still has his job.

Movie depicts bitterness

toward bottled water industry



By Kathryn Reed

Water might be something people in the Lake Tahoe area take for granted considering the amount of snow that falls each winter and the big lake thatâ€™s out there.

But predictions are that by 2030 two-thirds of the world will lack access to clean drinking water.

Even though 75 percent of the world is covered in water, only 1 percent is drinkable.

These and other startling facts come from the move â€œTapped,â€ which was shown Thursday night to an audience of nearly 50 at Lake Tahoe Community College. It was sponsored by the collegeâ€™s Geology Club and provided by Tahoe Water Suppliers Association.

Before and after the movie people could test their taste buds by trying three unmarked sources of water. One was bottled, one was from South Tahoe Public Utility District which gets its water from wells, and the other was from Incline Village which gets its water from Lake Tahoe.

The movie shows how the bottled water industry is unregulated. Groundwater is regulated by each state. The Food and Drug Administration was made out to look super foolish in the movie, with its half person devoted to bottle water issues and its reliance on industry reports regarding whatâ€™s in the bottles of water instead of using independent studies.

In 2007, it was an $11.5 billion dollar industry. Pepsi, Coke and Nestle are three of the biggest companies to bottle water. Part of the reason they got into water is because soda sales were declining. Now their ads are all about the benefits of drinking water, with subtle implications tap water is unsafe.

The movie said 80 million bottles of water are consumed in the United States each year. As water becomes a commodity, moral issues come into play. The debate becomes are water rights private or public?

People are paying big bucks for water at stores. One gallon ranges from more than $1 to $8, where as tap costs one-tenth of 1 cent. Much of the cost of bottled water is the plastic container its in.

The movie showed the negative affects of companies tapping into community water supplies.

The movie also delved into the hazards of these bottles made with petroleum products. Not only are the areas near the plants prone to having an abundance of residents with health issues, but the bottles also can be dangerous to drink from.

That was another troubling thing about the movie â€“ learning some of the chemicals that have been found in bottled water and there being little or no oversight of the industry.

On top of that, the litter issue was also talked about and how recycling isnâ€™t working when only half of the people in the United States have curbside recycling.

The movie will be shown on March 31 at 6pm for free at the UC Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center, Sierra Nevada College Campus, 291 Country Club Drive, Incline Village.

For more information about the movie, click here.

North Shore gears up for 10-day SnowFest

North Lake Tahoeâ€™s annual SnowFest, a 10-day winter carnival, commemorates its 29th anniversary with a bevy of new events March 5-14.

Squaw Valleyâ€™s Cornice Cantina kicks it off after the Opening Night Ceremonies with the inaugural ’80s Retro Dance Party on March 5 at 9pm. Guests are encouraged to dress in the neon trends of yesteryear with prizes for the best outfits.

In Tahoe City, the completely renovated Fat Cat CafÃ© offers up the Frosty Kitty Snow Party March 6 with â€œwet your whiskersâ€ appetizers and entrees and live music starting at 4pm and running until 2am.Lakeside Pizza, also based in Tahoe City, has the grooving Snow Down Party with San Franciscoâ€™s Space Cowboys March 6 at 9pm.

Are you smarter than a bottle cap? Prove it at the inaugural Tournament of Champions at The Slot in the Village at Squaw Valley March 8 at 5 pm when participants are asked to solve the â€œMickeyâ€™sâ€ puzzle caps in a timed format.

Kings Beach hosts the first Snowman Building Contest March 12 from 3:30-4:30pm at the North Tahoe Events Center. This event is open to all ages, and participants can compete solo or in teams.

North Lake Tahoe Historical Societyâ€™s Prohibition Pub Crawl is March 12 from 4-9pm. The festivities begin at the Bridgetender Bar & Grill in Tahoe City, where guests pick up their speakeasy passwords and visit participating gin mills and speakeasies for old-time drink specials â€“ all while

learning about the Lake Tahoe Basinâ€™s lawless past and enjoying Tahoe Cityâ€™s favorite watering holes.

Up on Donner Summit, Sugar Bowl Ski Resort hosts the Silver Belt Banzai on March 13, when skiercross action meets downhill speed, with the first three down advancing to the next round. Olympians Daron Rahlves and Errol Kerr also plan to put the pedal to the mettle in this swift race.

Homemade tamales will be served up at the Food for Thought Tamale Dinner March 13 from 6-10pm at the North Tahoe Boys and Girls Club in Kings Beach. The event will also highlight traditional Mexican fare with local youthsâ€™ photography, film and writing showcased as part of the dinner.

Located along North Lake Tahoeâ€™s historical Crystal Bay casino corridor, the Cal-Neva Resort puts on the Snow Ball March 13 with tunes from the ’60s, ’70s and ’80s, in a winter wonderland setting.

For more information about SnowFest and a complete list of events, click here.

Tahoe-Reno Olympic team making contacts in Vancouver

By Lauren Gustus, Reno Gazette-Journal

WHISTLER, British Columbia – The Reno-Tahoe area isn’t going to secure host status for a future Winter Games during the Vancouver Olympics.

But Reno Tahoe Winter Games Coalition members are here, trying to plant a seed.

“It is not the occasion to sell,” said Nevada Lt. Gov. Brian Krolicki, chairman of the nonprofit coalition’s board. “It’s the time to show our support. It’s the time to kick some tires and eyeball folks, and make sure that we think this is something we believe we’re up to.”

Read the whole story

Garridos allowed to call each other

By Stan Stanton, Sacramento Bee

A judge today refused to allow accused kidnappers Phillip and Nancy Garrido to visit each other in jail for now, but he ordered the El Dorado County sheriff to allow them two five-minute phone calls between now and April 15.

Judge Douglas Phimister said he did not believe the couple had given up all their rights to speak to each other, and ordered that Nancy Garrido be given the option of calling her husband in the jail if she so chooses.

Read the whole story

Dugard, daughters, mom file

claim against state

By John Simerman, Contra Costa Times

Jaycee Dugard, her two daughters and her mother each have filed claims against the state for damages from failures by parole agents to unearth the mystery of her 1991 kidnapping and years of captivity.

The claims, which generally precede lawsuits, were filed with the state Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board. In the simple, two-page forms, Dugard, the two girls and her mother, Terry Probyn, all cite “various lapses by corrections department” and claim “psychological, physical and emotional” damages, said Jon Myers, spokesman for the board.

They list no dollar figure for damages, only a checked box indicating they exceed $25,000. State law requires personal injury claims to be filed within six months of an “incident.” Authorities learned Aug. 26 of Dugard’s identity and that she and the two girls fathered by Phillip Garrido had been living in a hidden backyard compound near Antioch.

Read the whole story

Storm rolling into Lake Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

Blue sky has given way to gray in the greater Lake Tahoe area as the anticipated storm blows in.

Winds are picking as what is being described as a fast moving storm approaches. Winds are expected to be in the 50mph range

this afternoon, twice that forceful this evening on the ridges.



More snow headed to Lake Tahoe this evening. Photo/Kathryn Reed

The National Weather Service has issued a storm warning from 1pm Friday to 10am Saturday for elevations above 7,000 feet â€“ so, the passes, not the lake level. The storm is expected to be at its worst between 5-11 tonight.

Snow totals are predicted to be 6-12 inches above 7,000 feet and 2-6 inches below that elevation.

Temperatures are to be mild during they day, but in the teens Saturday night.

The sun should return on Sunday, with snow in the forecast for Tuesday.

Full moon snowshoe on West

Shore



Full moon snowshoe with California State Parks rangers at the Hellman-Ehrman estate and along Lake Tahoe's West Shore.

A beginner's clinic is at 6:30pm Saturday and March 27, followed by hikes at 7pm both nights.

Cost is $12, free for children 12 and younger.

For reservations, call (530) 525.9920.

Lake Tahoe ski report, Feb. 26



A winter weather advisory goes into affect at 1pm today. Here is the ski report from Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.

Mountain Bike Gravity Tour

The 2010 USA Cycling Professional Mountain Bike Gravity Tour (Pro GRT) is having a five-event series this year, with a stop at Northstar-at-Tahoe June 26-27

The Pro GRT will remain a downhill-only series in four states from April to September. Each stop offers series ranking points to top finishers, and overall individual titles for professional men and women. The series also features an Amateur GRT which, like the Pro GRT, will give expert-level category 1 racers the opportunity to compete against each other for an overall series crown.

For more information on the series, visit www.progrt.com.

2010 USA Cycling Pro Mountain Bike Gravity Tour (Pro GRT)

April 24-25: Northwest Cup, Port Angeles, Wash.

May 22-23: Plattekill Gravity Open, Roxbury Bike Park, N.Y.

June 26-27: Northstar-at-Tahoe, Truckee

July 31-August 1: Trestle Bike Park (Crankworx Colorado), Winterpark, Colo.

Sept. 11-12: Whiteface 5th Annual 5K Downhill – Lake Placid, N.Y.