Free pancakes at IHOP on Tuesday

Eat for free at IHOP on Feb. 23 from 7am-10pm.

The free order of short stack buttermilk pancakes is designed to raise money for Children's Miracle Network, a nonprofit organization that raises money for children's hospitals in North America.

The idea is for people to eat for free, but then doante the value of the meal – $4.99 – to the charity.

IHOPs are at 3730 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe; 10150 N. McCarran Blvd., Reno; 1800 S. Virginia St., 9786 S. Virginia St., Reno; 4752 Galleria Pkwy., Sparks; 3883 S. Carson St., Carson City.

Pedaling toward a postcarbon future



By Kyle Boelte, Sierra Magazine

My legs start to burn as I hit a hill, but the soft yellows of dawn are filtering through the city streets, and a cool breeze is brushing my cheeks. My mind is clear. At the end of my five-mile bike commute, my blood is flowing, I'm focused, and I'm excited for work. This is how I start my day: fully alive. How many Americans can say the same about their commute? I

have a hunch: all the cyclists.

Until recently, bike commuting in the United States was something of a cult, mysterious to outsiders who assume it's only for the young, the superfit, and the spandex-clad. But that's rapidly changing, as urban planners are designing streets where bikes are as welcome as cars, and employers are offering bike facilities as a way to attract creative professionals. "Quality of life today is the most important tool of economic development," says Gil Penalosa, the former parks commissioner of bike-friendly Bogota, Colombia. "People save all year to go on vacation to places that are walkable and bikable. Why not live in a place where it's walkable and bikable?"

If you already bike to work, consider yourself part of the vanguard that's pushing the country toward a postcarbon future of high-density, vibrant communities. If you haven't biked since childhood, it's not too late to rekindle your passion for that most efficient of human inventions.

Read the whole story

Lake Tahoe ski report, Feb. 22



There's blue sky and fresh snow out there today. Here is the ski report from Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.

Tahoe residents clamor for food straight from the farm

By Kathryn Reed

In today's world of instant gratification, global trade and I'll eat what I want no matter the season attitude, some folks in Lake Tahoe and beyond are putting an end to all of that.

Community Sponsored Agriculture (CSA) is a growing movement.



Loading boxes for the Great Basin Basket CSA. Photos/Provided

Small farms in California and Nevada are growing produce for the consumer, not the grocery store or some middleman distributor. This means the farmer is making more money, too.

It's good for the farmers because they know their goods will make it to a table at a set price before the harvest. It's good for the consumer because they are getting food straight from the farm and what is in season.

"You get what grows here and what grows well, and what should

be the diet of somebody who lives here," said Ann Louhela, coordinator for the Great Basin Basket CSA, which is based in Fallon. "If you hate beets, beets are still going to be there."

Participants of CSA pay for weekly deliveries of produce. Boxes may have close to a dozen items. Prices and sizes of boxes vary, but can be as low as $21/week. Supplements for fruit can be added through some CSAs. In some cases, a supplement of tomatoes can be added or wheat grass or some other specialty.

In larger communities like the Bay Area, boxes arrive at an individual's house.

For the Great Basin Basket, South Shore participants are still being gathered so a drop-off can be local instead of someone needing to bring it up from the Carson Valley.

Natural Trading Company, a CSA whose farm is in Penryn off Interstate 80, has drop-offs in Incline Village, Kings Beach, Tahoe City, Truckee and three locations on the South Shore.

Melanie Greene of South Lake Tahoe has been a member of the Natural Trading Company CSA for a handful of years.

"You are eating with the season. That is something people have to get used to," Greene said. "You are eating more nutritious food. It makes you eat more creatively. I have great dinner parties."

She finds the shipments less expensive than buying organic produce at the grocery store. Plus, it's driven a shorter distance than the average 1,500 miles produce travels from farm to kitchen.



Great Basin Basket workers.

With the large bounty that arrives, friends often share a box.

Each CSA is different – it depends what grows in the area where it's located. The variety also depends on the number of farms involved in the cooperative. With Great Basin, Lattin Farms is the primary supplier of produce, but a number of other farms are also part of it. This contrasts with Natural Trading Company, which has the loan farm run by Bryan Kaminsky and Caren Hamilton and their 12-year-old daughter.

Some CSAs allow participants to request to opt out of a certain vegetable. Others say give it to a neighbor.

Most participants say it's like unwrapping a present each week because they don't know what's inside.

Both of these CSAs identify what the produce is if it might not be commonly known, sometimes offer tips how to cook it and provide full recipes on occasion.

Most CSA participants aren't familiar with everything that shows up each week. But that's also a nice thing because a CSA can provide things a grocery may opt not to supply.

Kohlrabi and some of the squash were new to Greene.

Nicole Zaborsky, who helps coordinate the South Shore effort for Natural Trading Company, said mizuna, a Japanese green had her scrambling to figure out what to do with it.

Zaborsky said meeting the farmers who grow her food has been an incredible experience.

“It is picked the day before so you can’t beat that,” Zaborsky said. “They started doing poultry this past fall, which was phenomenal. We got our Thanksgiving turkey through them.”

Roommates Shana Gross and Taylor Farnum have been members of both these CSAs.

As a vegetarian, Gross likes Great Basin a bit more because of the variety that comes from the ability to tap into multiple farms. Great Basin also extends its season farther into the fall.

The thing about CSAs is that it’s hard to join one once the season has begun. Deliveries often start in April and run through early fall.

Most of the CSA participants are fans of farmers markets. But some find it difficult to leave work to shop there or they use the farmers market to fill in any gaps the box may have left.

For more information about Natural Trading Company, click here. For Great Basin Basket information, click here.

Public’s chance to be involved with ‘Laramie Project’

In association with the production of â€œThe Laramie Project,â€ the Lake Tahoe Community College Theatre Department is inviting submissions from students, and the

community about personal experiences involving harassment, violence, hate, intolerance, or feelings of being targeted or threatened because of sexual orientation, religious beliefs, race, gender, physicality, or disability, and how individuals were able to overcome this experience.

Interested people may submit a written essay about their experience, how it affected them, and how they dealt with it, or a piece of artwork (drawing, painting, other) that represents their experience; or a written essay or artwork based on the theme of nonviolence.

Submissions that are selected will be displayed in the college commons area at LTCC from March 10-21. Submissions may be anonymous.

Submissions can be dropped off at the Theatre Arts Department, Room F116, or mailed to Theatre Arts Department, LTCC, One College Drive, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150. Submissions must be received by March 8.

For questions or more information, contact Susan Boulanger, director of theatre, (530) 541.4660, ext. 240, or Boulanger@ltcc.edu.

STPUD contemplating term limits for board members

By Kathryn Reed

South Tahoe Public Utility District board members are expected to vote March 4 whether they want to take the issue of term limits to the voters.

Three of the five must agree to place it on the ballot for it to be there. Because the district does not have any members up for election until 2012, it would incur about a $17,000 bill to have the question on the November ballot.

It would then be up to the voters if they want the STPUD board members to be termed out.

Board President Dale Rise is proposing three four-year terms be the maximum any person could serve. It would not affect current board members unless they are re-elected – that's when the start of the 12 years would be begin based on state law.

This means with the next election being in 2012 for STPUD that those people could serve until 2024.

At this juncture, it does not look like the board is interested in having an at-large election for the five seats. The board has the power to change this without voter approval.

Also at the 2pm March 4 meeting the board is expected to further discuss the city's proposed redevelopment area. City officials gave a 2.5-hour presentation to the board at its Feb. 18 meeting.

Spa treatments run the gamut in Whistler

By Kathryn Reed

WHISTLER, British Columbia – It was a month ago today that I met Robert. He certainly made a lasting impression because I remember exactly how he made me feel by the time he was done with me.

He seemed to manipulate my body into pretzel-like positions. I was in heaven. I'm in heaven just reflecting on it.



Vida Spa at Whistler

My neck finally moved in all directions like it's supposed to. It did take some manipulation and patience on his part to get it out of creaky computer neck position – my name for the usual constant state of duress I find myself in.

Robert is one of the many massage therapists at Vida Spa inside the Fairmont Chateau Whistler.

This was the first Thai massage I had experienced. No wonder people rave about them. All that stretching was just what I needed that day – and every day.

At times when I was conscious of what was going on, I had flashbacks of previous massages of Shiatsu, Lomi Lomi and Watsu (even though the latter is in water).

Sue experienced her first hot stone massage. Fanny made her so relaxed she forgot about the stones between her toes until the therapist took them out.

The basalt rock that is used in hot stone massage is said to have energy. During full moons the rocks used at Vida are set outside to absorb that energy.



A client at Vida receives hot stone massage. Photo/Provided

A slew of spa treatments are offered at Vida – including more traditional deep tissue massage.

As wonderful as Robert made my muscles feel, I do have two complaints. The first is where spa clients are supposed to change. (I came dressed in loose fitting clothing as is normal for receiving Thai massage.) But Sue and others who would be without clothes for their massage had to change into a robe in the hotel's changing area by the indoor pool-hot tub.

As guests of the Fairmont and not being that modest, it wasn't any big deal for her to walk in a robe through the hotel. For others, though, I could see the lack of privacy being an issue.

My other complaint is the price. The cost of each of our hour massages together is what I charge at A Massage at Tahoe for four one-hour treatments. Yes, the convenience of being at the

hotel has a price. But these fees are the same whether you're a guest or not – so not everyone would see the convenience in going to Vida like we did. Yes, Thai and hot stone take extra training. But, still – $150 for an hour massage is too much.

I just hope Robert and Fanny got a higher cut than the spa, but that isn't always how it works at places like this.

Vida Spa, which has been operating since 2002, also has three locations in Vancouver and one in Seattle. For more information, click here.

My other massage experience while in Whistler last month was at Taman Sari Royal Heritage Spa inside the Summit Lodge. Like at the Fairmont, the spa here is a separate entity from the hotel.

After filling out a short form, which is not uncommon, spa director Julie Wahono engaged me in conversation. She knew I worked for this website. That's why it surprised me how she went on and on about how much better the hotel was when it was owned by Kimpton.

Our experience at the hotel was great and one we would like to repeat, but without going to the spa.

Wahono talked about how it's the best spa in Whistler – that customers tell her that. Not this customer.

It was not the best way to start the massage. I'm there in a robe. I don't have a pen or paper in hand. This was not an interview, but still I got an earful. It was weird. I've been a massage therapist since 1997. Making clients relaxed is important. It wasn't working.

On the form it asked if I wanted my breasts and/or buttocks worked on. I had not seen that on an in-take form before. No to the former, yes to the latter.

I think a more relevant question is a person's occupation

because that can tell a therapist a lot about the likely aches and pains a person has.

Maryann was my therapist. She was good, but she wasn’t Robert. I had the hour Javanese massage, a deep tissue where only the palms and thumbs are used. Unfortunately Maryann’s thick accent prevented me from understanding her. She handed me something to begin with which I couldn’t figure out what it was in the darkness of the room. After the massage I realized it was a pair of underwear. I’m still scratching my head on that one.

I have to disagree with the spa director. Taman is not the best place for a massage in Whistler. If I were to spend $150 on a massage, my money will be given to Vida.

Workshops for writers

Connect with a writing community, generate new material, play with language and meaning, explore craft and form, and develop a writing practice in a supportive creative environment.

For writers at any level of experience. Each workshop is different. Coffee provided.

Workshops meet March 6, 27, April 10, and 24;

Saturdays from 10amâ€“1pm;

Cost is $35 for one workshop;

Sign up for two or more at a time for $30 each.

Contact Karen Terrey at (530) 386.3901 or email tangledrootswriting@gmail.com for more information and to sign

up.

Terrey, poetry editor for the literary arts journal *Quay*, has an MFA in creative writing and teaches Creative Writing at Sierra Nevada College in Incline Village.

Rahlves, Kerr not even close to podium in ski cross

By Lisa Dillman, Los Angeles Times

VANCOUVER, British Columbia – Bright sun, snow and plenty of strong Canadian beer was flowing at the Cypress Mountain venue.

And all before noon.

There was little doubt that the newest Winter Olympic sport, ski cross, would prove to be a hit with spectators, TV viewers and competitors as it made its highly awaited debut Sunday.

Ski cross had them at "hello." Or maybe with the first spectacular crash.

"Some people live for long walks on the beach, and I live to be standing at the top of a ski-cross course getting ready for the final," said Errol Kerr of Truckee, who represented Jamaica.

Read the whole story

Unsettled weather expected for last week of February

By Kathryn Reed

While the South Shore of Lake Tahoe didnâ€™t record more than a few inches of snow in the last 24 hours, Reno broke snowfall records.

The Reno area saw 4.2 inches of snowfall with a liquid equivalent of 0.42 inches. The old record for Feb. 20 for snowfall dated to 1918 when 2.9 inches fell. The precip record was 0.17 inches set in 1979.



A kayaker paddles up the Upper Truckee River on Feb. 21. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Snow showers are expected on and off throughout Sunday and Monday in the greater Lake Tahoe area. Unsettled weather is being called for most of the week, according to the National Weather Service.

Roads in and around the area are slick and are likely to ice up again when the temperatures drop below freezing. Chain controls have been in affect on some roads leading in and out of the Lake Tahoe Basin

Ski resorts on both ends of the lake were boasting of about 4 inches of new snow this morning,