Lake Tahoe ski report, Feb. 3



It’s cloudy in Lake Tahoe this morning. A little snow fell at lake level and more measurable amounts fell on the slopes overnight. Read the ski report for details. It’s brought to you by Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.

EDC feels snubbed by South Lake Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

El Dorado County is miffed with South Lake Tahoe’s decision to abort its presentation to the Board of Supervisors less than 24 hours before it was to take place.

The city was supposed to explain its latest redevelopment proposal to the county on Tuesday. Instead, City Manager Dave Jinkens sent a letter to County Administrator Gayle Erbe-Hamlin the afternoon of Feb. 1 that requested postponement and denied her request dated Jan. 26 asking for more time to comment on the environmental documents.

The redevelopment plan that encompasses the bulk of the city’s businesses and residents along Emerald Bay Road and on Highway 50 from the Y to Glenwood Avenue is slated to be discussed by the city’s planning commission in the coming weeks, with the council likely to take it up in March.

Mike Applegarth, senior administrative analyst for El Dorado County, said his bosses wanted to hear about the project “in

advance of formal proceedings, before you can’t undo things.”

The loss of sales tax dollars is what has the county concerned regarding the 45-year plan.

Jinkens in his letter says he is out of town on business and that others who were to speak Tuesday would likely be at a bankruptcy meeting regarding the would-be convention center.

Why Jinkens is in San Diego is not known. The city knew about the bankruptcy hearing on Jan. 28.

Applegarth said staff and the Board of Supervisors are frustrated because it has taken months to get a date on the books for the presentation.

“We take direction from the board. It’s hard for us to make a comment on a project of this significance without board input,” Applegarth said as to why the county has not submitted comments.

The comment period on the draft Environmental Impact Report ended Jan. 14.

Jinkens letter says, “All other agencies that received notice have provided comments within the time limits prescribed in law.” He also said he is willing to reschedule and to answer any questions staff or supervisors have.

City officials are slated to make a presentation about the redevelopment plan on Feb. 18 at 2pm to the South Tahoe Public Utility District board.

Barrel of fun at El Dorado County wineries

By Kathryn Reed

PLEASANT VALLEY – Who needs a bottle when you have the whole barrel?

It was more like who needs today's wine when you can have tomorrow's during the annual Bring Out the Barrel wine tasting event at 22 El Dorado County wineries last weekend.

Tasting rooms were full of people out for a sunny drive through the foothills to sample wine straight from the barrel.



Barrel tasting at Busby Cellars. Photos/Kathryn Reed

"I'm all about research," said Deborah Robinson of Sacramento as she sipped wine in the back room of Latcham Vineyards.

Seeing what the wineries are doing, finding out projections about the next vintage to be released and being able to purchase the wines before they are bottled are all reasons Robinson attends the barrel tastings.

Kevin Gleave, who Robinson was with, also touched on another reason to attend the event. "I like the drive," he said.

This sentiment was echoed at various wineries. A distinct hint of spring is in the air in the wine region, even though the vines still look dormant.

Many of the wineries pair food with their wines. Several had hot soup to ladle out on this cool Sunday.

At Narrow Gate, Sue Wood of South Lake Tahoe said she would go back just for the ham and white bean soup. She was fond of the gumbo at Busby, as well

“It’s a great soup because it doesn’t offend any of the wines. Bay leaves are the only spice. The ham hock flavors the broth,” Narrow Gate owner Teena Hildebrand said of her soup.



Plenty of barrels to taste from at Narrow Gate.

At Narrow Gate the one future (barrel tasting) for sale was a Syrah-Viogner blend that Frank Hildebrand created after tiring of paying $80 a bottle at other wineries for that blend. At the event last weekend the futures were selling for $20.80 bottle, but will be $26 when released this summer.

That’s one of the advantages to this event – getting a discount before the bottles are released.

At Busby Cellars, owner Elliot Graham said the barrel tasting event is good because it brings people to the region during a slow time of year.

“Sales-wise they are worthwhile,” Graham said of special events.

This particular weekend was picked because no significant football games were played. Some wineries, like Busby, plan to close Super Bowl Sunday because in past years traffic has been so slow.

It was so quiet last year that it was ideal for a movie to be filmed at Busby. The old barn will be part of a Spanish-language film. The area was doubling as Chile.

From the barrel, people could taste the 2007 Petite Sirah. The 2006 won best of class at the 2009 California State Fair.

At Sierra Vista Winery, 5 percent of the sales for the barrel tasting event were being designated for Haiti relief efforts.

Owner John MacCready said the barrel event doesn’t always bring a lot of buyers to his winery, but added that this year people were buying more than in 2009.



John MacCready taps into the barrel at his Sierra Vista Winery.

His wife and co-owner, Barbara MacCready, said overall ticket sales were up by a couple hundred people this year.

Tom and Madge McLennan of Granite Bay bought a couple bottles of the 2005 Cabernet. Sierra Vista was offering this in

comparison to the 2007 that is still in the barrel.

This was the first barrel event for the McLennans who said they were enjoying finding out what the various wineries have to offer.

Passport Weekend is the next big event for the El Dorado wine region. The dates are April 10-11 and April 17-18. Tickets are $65. For more information, click here.

Judge denies Lane extension in bankruptcy court

By Kathryn Reed

Developer Randy Lane was handed another setback Tuesday, though he is not calling it that.

As principal of Lake Tahoe Development Company, Lane has been trying to turn what South Shore residents call “the hole” into the region’s most expensive redevelopment project. The problem is he doesn’t have the money to build the $400-plus-million convention center-retail-hotel complex that broke ground in 2006.

He never did. But, still, the city gave him the OK to begin construction without financing in place. The city approved the contract without a performance bond. Hal Cole and John Upton were the City Council members who negotiated the contract.



Snow is the only thing new at the would-be convention center near Stateline. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Lake Tahoe Development Company, which is based in Zephyr Cove, filed for bankruptcy in October.

On Feb. 2, U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Thomas Holman in Sacramento denied Lane's request to extend the length of time he has to put together a plan. Lane wanted another 150 days.

The city and at least two creditors filed motions opposing Lane's request. He owes $54 million to various people who sold him the 11-plus acres in South Lake Tahoe directly across the Nevada border.

After the hearing, Lane told *Lake Tahoe News*, "It's a legal thing that doesn't impact what we are trying to get accomplished. What we are trying to do is a very positive thing for the city."

Lane would not divulge whether he intends to be part of the project when the dust settles; nor would he elaborate about the negotiations he is having or with whom he is talking to.

In addressing the rumor that Vail Resorts is interested again in the project, Lane said, "I wish they would tell me that."

RockResorts, the real estate arm of the Vail-based company, was going to operate the two hotels that were slated for the complex. That agreement was mutually severed a couple years ago.

The last time Lane met with city officials was Jan. 15. They found out Jan. 28 about Lane's decision to ask for an extension and were not happy.

In the filing Feb. 1 to the court the city writes, "If Debtor does have an investor, the City is prepared to meet with them and re-negotiate the OPA (Owner Participation Agreement), but as of this date the City has not been contacted to even set a meeting, much less discuss the OPA."

On Feb. 9, the City Council plans to discuss the whole issue in closed session.

"They have performance measures in the contract. At this point we don't have any construction going on and there probably should be," said Gene Palazzo, South Lake Tahoe Redevelopment Agency manager.

Palazzo said staff has not vetted all scenarios the City Council could contemplate.

The council must approve any changes to the contract or in ownership of the property.

"I think it will come to a conclusion this year," Councilman Bruce Grego said. "No one has a crystal ball, but it's possible the bankruptcy will fail."

Lane filed Chapter 11 bankruptcy, that means the court will have to approve a restructuring plan with the consent of creditors. Chapter 7 would have meant the sale of assets.

If Chapter 11 fails, it's unknown where this leaves creditors. Because a final parcel map was never approved by the city it's possible the land could return to the original owners. The

problem is rebar and concrete cover a good portion of the acreage.

What the city’s liability in allowing construction to begin without the map being recorded is not known.

Right now the city is not financially at-risk other than losing projected revenue.

Originally, the project was supposed to be celebrating its one-year anniversary this summer. Developers anticipated the property to bring 180,000 visitors a year who would funnel $78 million into the South Shore economy.

Krolicki blasts Obama’s anti-Nevada comments

President Obamaâ€™s second verbal assault on Las Vegas is an â€œunacceptable assaultâ€ that demonstrates his bias against an industry that supplies most of Nevadaâ€™s paychecks, Nevada Lt. Gov. Brian K. Krolicki said Tuesday.

â€œFirst, President Obamaâ€™s reckless remarks scared off millions of dollars in Las Vegas convention business and hurt Nevadaâ€™s tourism industry at a time when our state is suffering the nationâ€™s worst economic hit,â€ Krolicki said. â€œIncredibly, he does it again with an unacceptable assault aimed at Nevadaâ€™s casino industry, the finest in the world and a major provider of paychecks that feed Nevada families.â€



Brian
Krolicki

Obama, speaking in New Hampshire Feb. 2 , said, â€œYou donâ€™t blow a bunch of cash in Vegas when youâ€™re trying to save for college.â€

Krolicki, chair of the Nevada Commission on Tourism, said Obama may have gotten a pass from a number of people for his first anti-Las Vegas comment last year, when the president said bailed-out companies should not hold conventions in Las Vegas, but this time his remarks cannot be written off as a misspeak.

â€œPresident Obama has singled out an American industry in Nevada that employs our citizens and entertains millions of our visitors and held us up as a bad example,â€ Krolicki said. â€œNo U.S. president should be so irresponsible.â€

Local authors to converge at Douglas County library

The Douglas County Public Library in Minden presents â€œAn Afternoon with Local Authorsâ€ on Feb. 6 from 2-4pm.

This free event will feature an appearance by South Lake Tahoe mystery author Todd Borg. Other authors participating include: Dianna Maria de Borges, Soozie Lewis, Tim Mueller, Stan Paher, Tom Perkins, and Julia Wells.

The authors will sell their books, meet readers and sign autographs.



Todd Borg

Borg is the author of the Owen McKenna mystery series set at Lake Tahoe and the surrounding area. His latest book â€œTahoe Nightâ€ was released in August. Borgâ€™s novels have won the Ben Franklin Award for Best Mystery of the Year and won Best Mystery and Best Thriller awards from the Bay Area Independent Publisherâ€™s Association. His series of books have received many accolades and awards and have been praised in major newspapers and magazines.

De Borges is the daughter-in-law of the late Sam Borges, the founder of Borges Sleigh Rides at Lake Tahoe. She is a storyteller of local lore and legend. In her book she shares the familyâ€™s stories and adventures throughout their years as sleigh drivers and storytellers in the Sierra region.

Lewis has lived in Nevada since 1984 with her husband and family. Her book, â€œThe Bloomingsons of the Nevada Sageâ€ chronicles the lives of a fictional family that relocates to the Carson Valley in 1967. The great joys and heartbreaking difficulties of life, mixed with the beauty and dry rustic essence of a wilderness land, inspired her to create this story of hope, love and faith.

Mueller is a lifelong baseball fan whose love of the game and Nevada led to the book â€œHomeruns & Jackpots: Baseball in Nevada.â€ Mueller learned the nuances of Americaâ€™s favorite pastime through years of watching games at Renoâ€™s Moana

Stadium. This led to the overwhelming discovery of the great impact Nevada had on baseball in America. Mueller takes the reader on a ride through history that meets up with players such as Lyle Overbay, Matt Williams, Ray Fosse and Bud Beasley. Muellerâ€™s book will change the way people look at a baseball diamond. Mueller lives with his wife Sue, and two children in Carson City.

Paher wants the story of Nevada to be told. His first book, â€œNevadaâ€™s Ghost Towns and Mining Campsâ€ came out in 1966, and has been reprinted several times with additional photos and information. He continues to share his interest in Nevada history in his newest book, â€œNevada Ghost Towns and Desert Atlas.â€ He is known as the largest collector of Nevada items including rare bonds, coins, documents, and photographs. He is the author of books about Lake Tahoe, Death Valley, and ghost towns and mining camps in Nevada, California, and Arizona. He lives in Reno and Las Vegas.

Wellsâ€™ book â€œBlessed Beâ€ is her testimony and life story. She was born in San Pedro, in 1947. Wells moved to Nevada 40 years ago, spending time in the Reno/Sparks area before moving to Carson City where she met and married her husband. She studied interior design and as a hobby took creative writing classes. Wells has been active in her community through her employment and with a number of service organizations. She was inspired to write her book when her husband was diagnosed with cancer.

The Douglas County Public Library is located at 1625 Library Lane in Minden.

For more information, call (775) 782-9841 or visit douglas.lib.nv.us.

Parole agent speaks out about Phillip Garrido

By Lynsey Paulo, KCRA-TV

SACRAMENTO – Federal parole supervision records show officers recommended continuing Phillip Garrido's parole four times between 1990 and 1998, after he allegedly kidnapped and held Jaycee Lee Dugard captive in his Antioch home.

KCRA 3 obtained newly released U.S. Parole Commission documents Tuesday.

Read the whole story

CHP offers class to South Tahoe teen drivers

Start Smart is aimed at helping newly licensed and future licensed teenage drivers become aware of the responsibilities that accompany the privilege of being a licensed California driver. The program was created in an effort to preemptively reduce the incidence of teen injuries and deaths resulting from motor vehicle collisions.

Teen drivers and their parents/guardians are invited to attend and participate in a Start Smart class. Recent statistics have shown that in California teenage drivers are injured and are dying in automobile accidents at an alarming rate.

Through candid conversations, officers in attendance will address these facts and provide examples of driving tendencies

that put young drivers at risk. This program will help attendees understand that driving is serious and a poor choice behind the wheel of a car can put a person’s life and the lives of others in jeopardy.

The next class is Feb. 9 at 6pm at the South Tahoe High School Library. All classes are free and last approximately two hours.

To reserve a space in this Start Smart Class, contact the California Highway Patrol at (530) 577.1001.

Local authors at Douglas County library

The Douglas County Public Library in Minden presents, â€œAn Afternoon with Local Authorsâ€ on Feb. 6 from 2-4pm.

This free event will feature an appearance by South Lake Tahoe mystery author Todd Borg. Other authors participating include: Dianna Maria de Borges, Soozie Lewis, Tim Mueller, Stan Paher, Tom Perkins, and Julia Wells.

The authors will sell their books, meet readers and sign autographs.

Borg is the author of the Owen McKenna mystery series set at Lake Tahoe and the surrounding area. His latest book â€œTahoe Nightâ€ was released in August. Borgâ€™s novels have won the Ben Franklin Award for Best Mystery of the Year and won Best Mystery and Best Thriller awards from the Bay Area Independent Publisherâ€™s Association. His series of books have received many accolades and awards and have been praised in major

newspapers and magazines.

De Borges is the daughter-in-law of the late Sam Borges, the founder of Borges Sleigh Rides at Lake Tahoe. She is a storyteller of local lore and legend. In her book she shares the familyâ€™s stories and adventures throughout their years as sleigh drivers and storytellers in the Sierra region.

Lewis has lived in Nevada since 1984 with her husband and family. Her book, â€œThe Bloomingsons of the Nevada Sageâ€ chronicles the lives of a fictional family that relocates to the Carson Valley in 1967. The great joys and heartbreaking difficulties of life, mixed with the beauty and dry rustic essence of a wilderness land, inspired her to create this story of hope, love and faith.

Mueller is a lifelong baseball fan whose love of the game and Nevada led to the book â€œHomeruns & Jackpots: Baseball in Nevada.â€ Mueller learned the nuances of Americaâ€™s favorite pastime through years of watching games at Renoâ€™s Moana Stadium. This led to the overwhelming discovery of the great impact Nevada had on baseball in America. Mueller takes the reader on a ride through history that meets up with players such as Lyle Overbay, Matt Williams, Ray Fosse and Bud Beasley. Muellerâ€™s book will change the way people look at a baseball diamond. Mueller lives with his wife Sue, and two children in Carson City.

Paher wants the story of Nevada to be told. His first book, â€œNevadaâ€™s Ghost Towns and Mining Campsâ€ came out in 1966, and has been reprinted several times with additional photos and information. He continues to share his interest in Nevada history in his newest book, â€œNevada Ghost Towns and Desert Atlas.â€ He is known as the largest collector of Nevada items including rare bonds, coins, documents, and photographs. He is the author of books about Lake Tahoe, Death Valley, and ghost towns and mining camps in Nevada, California, and Arizona. He lives in Reno and Las Vegas.

Wellsâ€™ book â€œBlessed Beâ€ is her testimony and life story. She was born in San Pedro, in 1947. Wells moved to Nevada 40 years ago, spending time in the Reno/Sparks area before moving to Carson City where she met and married her husband. She studied interior design and as a hobby took creative writing classes. Wells has been active in her community through her employment and with a number of service organizations. She was inspired to write her book when her husband was diagnosed with cancer.

The Douglas County Public Library is located at 1625 Library Lane in Minden.

For more information, call (775) 782-9841 or visit douglas.lib.nv.us.

Storm system not packing much moisture

Snow is in the forecast through the weekend for the Lake Tahoe Basin.

The best chance will be Friday â€“ 80 percent likelihood, according to the National Weather Service.

Flurries started falling on the South Shore in the late afternoon Tuesday, with big flakes reported on the West Shore. An inch is expected to accumulate overnight.



Anthony Clark sits in the snow waiting for a bus as flurries fall Feb. 2 in South Lake Tahoe. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Even though snow is forecasted, not much is supposed to come of the storm system that is passing through. This is because daytime temperatures are expected to be in the high 30s to low 40s.

Roads are apt to be slick, with possible black ice as the temperature goes below freezing overnight.