People not slowing down on sending gifts

By Kathryn Reed

Little packages, big packages, light ones, heavy ones, cards in colorful envelopes â€“ you see it all this time of year at the post office.

Toni Passot, postmaster in South Lake Tahoe, said Dec. 14 was the busiest day of the holiday season, with next Monday likely to be the second busiest.



Lines at post offices are normal this time of year. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Normally one semi-truck takes mail from the South Shore each night to the regional center in Reno. On Monday, the letters and packages heading to destinations near and far filled two semis.

Cristina Martin of South Lake Tahoe was standing in a line about 10 people deep on Tuesday afternoon waiting to send items to her mom in Los Angeles and sister in Arizona.

â€œEvery year I mail packages the week before Christmas,â€

Martin said.

A woman in front of her mailed off a half dozen boxes that all looked like it might be Seeâ€™s Candies inside. But the woman sending them wouldnâ€™t reveal what was inside.

Some people needed the front door opened for them because the boxes they were carrying were so cumbersome.

Passot said the amount of mail being sent is about what it was last year. She said it didnâ€™t appear the economy was affecting the volume of packages and letters being sent.

Just like last year, the post office is not having extended holiday hours.

To reach the recipient by Christmas Day, itâ€™s suggested all priority mail be sent by Dec. 21. Letters should go out the same day or Dec. 22 depending on the destination.

Research is still being conducted to know if the Bijou post office in South Tahoe will be open this time next year. The U.S. Postal Service is researching the possibility of closing offices throughout the country as a means to save money. Locally, a decision could come at the end of January.

Budget gifts: Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care calendar



Publisherâ€™s note: *Get in the spirit and share your idea for a gift valued at $20 or less. Click here for details.*

The first Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care wall calendars are hot off

the presses.

All pictures were taken by Dan Thrift, who has volunteered to make this his project and donation to LTWC. The design was donated by Svadhyaya Yoga Studio and the printing by a longtime volunteer of LTWC, Ken Konchalski who is now the owner of Pine Tree Printing in Stateline.

The calendars sell for $15, add another $5 if you want it shipped.

For more information, go to www.ltwc.org or call (530) 577.2273.



Las Vegas megaresort opening may tell Nevada's future

Publisher's note: *This is an editorial from the Reno Gazette-Journal first published on Dec. 15, 2009.*

(Today's) opening of the newest megaresort in Las Vegas, the first in quite a few years, could tell us a lot about the future of casino gaming in Nevada.

For its owners, MGM Mirage and Dubai World, the debut of Aria, one of four hotels in the massive CityCenter project, couldn't have come at a more difficult time.

Casino revenues have been on a steady decline in Nevada for about two years, thanks to the spread of casinos around the country and the worst recession to hit the nation, and much of the rest of the world, since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Read the whole story

Sounds of Christmas by Truckee Tahoe Community Chorus

By Kathryn Reed

OLYMPIC VILLAGE – Growing up next door to Chris Nelson I knew he did something with music. But kids aren't supposed to really know what the adults around them do.

It wasnâ€™t until Sunday that I finally saw and heard him in action. It took 36 years after my family moved in next his in the Bay Area and years after we both had moved to the Sierra.

Nelson is one of three conductors of the Truckee Tahoe Community Chorus. He founded the ensemble in January 2002.



Truckee Tahoe

Community
Chorus

When he didnâ€™t have the baton in his hand, he was singing with the group.

The community chorus is made up of students and more seasoned vocalists from the North Shore. It is affiliated with Sierra College.

The â€œClassically Christmasâ€ performance was at the Resort at Squaw Creek on Dec. 12-13. The group also has a spring performance.

Non-traditional selections started the night â€“ â€œDing-a Ding-a Dong,â€ â€œAdoramus te Christe,â€ â€œTomorrow Shall be my Dancing Dayâ€ and â€œNanita Lullaby.â€

Some songs had a piano accompaniment, others had a string ensemble, and others were sung a cappella.

The second half of the night the audience could sing along to tunes like â€œJingle Bellsâ€, â€œRudolphâ€ and â€œSilent Night.â€

For more information about the choir, go to www.signttcc.org.

Prescribed burn on West Shore

U.S. Forest Service fuels management crews will be conducting prescribed fire operations on an urban lot in the McKinney area located on the West Shore of Lake Tahoe beginning Dec. 16 and continuing throughout the week as weather and staffing allow.

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

Other fire protection agencies, state and local, may also be conducting prescribed fire operations during this period.

Heavenly Village sends woman on $1,000 shopping spree

The Shops at Heavenly Village awarded the $1,000 shopping spree giveaway to South Shore resident Debi Schild.

Her name was drawn out of hundreds and sheâ€™ll now have some extra money to spend this holiday shopping season.



Debi Schild

The Shops at Heavenly Village are working hard to encourage local residents to come down and enjoy all that the Village has to offer. Many merchants are offering discounts and special coupons along with the free parking to entice residents to visit the Shops.

â€¢All locals need to do is sign up for the new shoppers club program. Just enter online to receive email coupons from the shops at www.theshopsatheavenly.com.

â€¢Every other month, coupons are emailed to program members and there is no cost to join. In addition, members are eligible for the bi-monthly $100 shopping spree giveaways.

These coupons can only be accessed by signing up for the local shoppers club program at www.theshopsatheavenly.com.

Reno’s snow plowing ineptness strands residents

By Susan Voyles, Reno Gazette-Journal

Morgan Olson hasn’t been able to get leave her northwest Reno house for six days because of unplowed roads.

Because she lives on a cul-de-sac, her circle won’t be plowed at all, city officials say. Olson wonders how many other people are in her situation.

City spokeswoman Michelle Anderson said cul-de-sacs are not large enough for snow plows to maneuver without hitting vehicles or enough space to pile the snow. She said the storm hasn’t been bad enough to call for an emergency help from Associated General Contractors, whose crews must be paid during a severe budget shortfall.

Read the whole story

Original attorney to represent Nancy Garrido

By Sam Stanton, Sacramento Bee

An appellate court in Sacramento moved to return defense attorney Gilbert Maines as Nancy Garrido's lawyer today.

Maines had been removed as Garrido's attorney on Nov. 5 by an El Dorado Superior Court judge over allegations that he had boasted about writing a book about the case.

But the 3rd District Court of Appeal in Sacramento today ruled the trial court must reinstate Maines or explain why he shouldn't be on the case.

Read the whole story

LTCC hires VP of business services

By Kathryn Reed

Lake Tahoe Community College's next vice president of business services will have some adjustments to make when she starts her job, but learning to handle the cold won't be one of them.

Susan Niehoff has been a budget finance officer at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis for the last six years.



Susan Niehoff

The LTCC board of educations at a special meeting Monday morning unanimously picked Niehoff over the other finalist.

This is the second go-round of applicants for this position. The board said no one in the first batch met the needs of the two-year school.

Guy Lease, who had the job when the college opened 30 years ago and then rose to be president of the college before retiring in 2007, has been the interim VP for most of this calendar year. He will finish his duties this month.

Niehoff will come on board in January.

Niehoff has an MBA from UNLV.

She has been at the university level for the last 20 years. Previous positions include cost analyst and assistant to the controller/treasurer of Northwestern University, a budget officer at UNLV, and the business operations manager and chief financial officer for the UNLV William S. Boyd School of Law.

In Minnesota, the finance department is much larger than at LTCC. She was one of a handful of people with the same title. At LTCC, Niehoff will just have President Paul Killpatrick over her.

Report: Reno drinking water some of the country’s worst

Publisher’s note: *The Environmental Working Group tested water districts in cities with populations of more than 250,000. More information may be found by clicking here.*

Jeff Delong, Reno Gazette-Journal

Officials of the Reno areaâ€™s primary water purveyor are disputing an environmental group report that ranks the tap water fifth-worst in the nation.

Truckee Meadows Water Authority executives insist the water is some of the best.

The dispute follows release of a report from the Washington, D.C.-based Environmental Working Group that concluded tap water in many metropolitan areas is fouled by a â€œcocktail of chemical contaminants.â€

Read the whole story