Terror in Paradise

15th Annual “Terror in Paradise” Haunted House runs through Halloween from 6-10pm each night.

It’s in the Bijou Center at 3446 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe.

Cost is $7 for adults, $4 for ages 6-12, free for those who are younger. Money raised goes to Christmas Cheer.

For information, call (530) 542.3934.

STHS building may be finished in spring



By Angie Keil

A lot has happened since Nov. 4, 2008, when almost 60 percent of South Lake Tahoe voters approved Measure G for $64.5 million.

The Master Plan that was developed by a group of citizens, staff, and others between December 2007 and February 2008 outlines plans for new construction and modernization at all schools through fall 2013. The original time line was already pretty adventurous, but Joe Stewart of SMC Contracting announced Tuesday night that they have a new goal of having

the CTE Building ready for occupation after spring break next year.

Superintendent Jim Tarwater went chronologically through significant events that have occurred since 2007, when the district began to apply for matching funds from the state. To date, approximately $27 million has been promised to the district, with the first $6 million being released in the next couple of weeks. In order to get the funds, the district needed to pass a bond measure. The first attempt, Measure A for $87 million was unsuccessful, but Measure G ensures that the district qualifies for the matching funds.

South Tahoe High recently applied for another $2.2 million for a Sports Medicine component. It will find out in February if thatâ€™s a go or not.

Stewart and Steve Morales, district facilities director, reported that things are going well on the two buildings currently under construction.

CTE (Career Technical Education) is a two-story 29,860-square-foot building, which will house the auto-transportation classes on the first floor and the construction-art-architectural design classes on the second floor. Students from the latter classes have been visiting the site, hard hats and all, regularly to study the construction.

The other 29,240-square-foot two-story building will be mainly for classrooms, mostly in the math department.

While all of this construction is going on, Morales said the planning team is working on the media arts and design expansion which will be a dramatic improvement to the entry of the school and will go out to bid in spring 2010.

South Tahoe Middle School projects will also get under way with a new permanent sixth-grade building, which will replace those old portables.

In case youâ€™re not familiar with the all of the projects which were included in the Measure G Bond Program, you can view them and a lot more at www.ltusd.org/bond.php.

Stewart addressed some recent concerns from Carpentersâ€™ Local 1789 about hiring local workers. He said that approximately 30 percent of the work on the CTE building, and 40 percent of the work on the ORG building has gone to local workers. He is making every effort to encourage the use of locals, but subcontractors have difficulty finding qualified workers in particular trades who can handle such a volume of work within the time lines.

Morales said he will be meeting with Mike Berg of the Carpentersâ€™ Union in the near future to discuss this further.

Student board rep David Stewart echoed the excitement about the new construction. He summarized it in two words, speaking for his fellow seniors, â€“ â€œpure jealousy!â€ However, he said that itâ€™s a painless process and itâ€™s great to watch the buildings come together.

Angie Keil is executive assistant to the LTUSD superintendent.

Music tribute to veterans

South Tahoe High School music teacher Casson Snowcroft invites everyone, and particularly veterans, to the Performing Arts Department’s â€œA Veteransâ€™ Musical Tributeâ€ on Nov. 9 at 7pm at South Tahoe Middle School Multi-purpose Room.

The event is free.

Activities are planned to honor veterans and those currently

serving in all branches of the military.

Alder Inn fiasco threatens LTCC students



By Kathryn Reed

Eleven Lake Tahoe Community College students may be evicted from the Alder Inn because the man who for several years represented himself as the owner of the Ski Run Boulevard property has allegedly absconded with their money and that of the real owner's.

No one is sure where Joseph Balius is – or his wife, Kira, and their children.

When he was president of the Ski Run Business Improvement District he represented himself as owner of the Alder Inn.

The truth is June Stefani owns the hotel-apartment complex. Balius had a lease option to buy the property. That option expired Sept. 30.

Stefani, who lives out of the area most of the year, had allowed Balius to be delinquent in his lease payments for about a year, which amounted to an undisclosed five-figure amount. She didn't find out about issues with the students until this month.

Until this month people were still using the inn as a lodging facility. Students said it was packed during Labor Day weekend. They don't understand why Stefani has cut off this revenue source.

The rooms the students are living in look like a basic hotel room, not even like a normal studio apartment. A dorm size refrigerator, coffee maker and microwave are the kitchen. A bed, television, table and chairs are the room, with the bath in the back.

The converted rooms still look very much like a 1970s-era hotel room.

LTCC students react

Students should be studying, glued to computers. It is midterm week, after all.

But the Internet access that was supposed to be part of their rent was turned off this month when Stefani came to town.

Several students were gathered in one room Wednesday talking about their uncertain future, saying how the "for sale" sign went up on the complex that day, and that Stefani has threatened to give them a three-day eviction notice if they don't pay $200 to cover utilities for October and November.

The students and parents say they have contracts stating utilities are included in the fees they have already paid.

"We paid for an entire year, all through until June. We have the documentation, we have the receipts, we have the contract," Donna Hall, a parent of one of the students told *Lake Tahoe News*. "I do object that we are supposed to walk away because (Stefani) is unhappy."

Six students have paid through the fall quarter, two through the spring quarter in March, and three until the end of the school year in June.

Hall has paid about $6,500 for her daughter to live at the Alder Inn.

Steve Addison, 21, is in the college's EMT program. He described it as a "pretty messed up situation." He added, "It's not our issue."

That's what the students keep harping on – they shouldn't be kicked out when they haven't done anything wrong and especially because they've already paid to live at the Alder Inn.

"I'm sorry (Stefani's) business practices are bad, but I shouldn't get screwed," said student Katy Manoff.

College's role

Students and parents don't believe the college is doing its part to help in the matter.

"We were under the impression they endorsed this place," Manoff said.

Until earlier this month, the Alder Inn was listed as student housing on LTCC's website. When the Alder Inn started allowing college students to live there in fall 2007, the college did a huge public relations push to promote the relationship. Officials were even bragging early this fall about the number of students at the Alder Inn.

The inn is mentioned in several of the board minutes during the last two years.

Minutes from the Aug. 31, 2007, board meeting state, "Susan Middleton informed the Board that we only have eight students in four rooms taking advantage of the off campus student housing offer at the Alder Inn."

The Aug. 5, 2008, minutes reflect college President Paul Killpatrick having taken a tour of the Alder Inn.

On Wednesday night www.tahoecollegehouse.com still listed the inn as LTCC housing. The site says, “Our goal here at the Alder Inn is to provide students with a secure and safe living environment while attending our beautiful campus at Lake Tahoe Community College.” The number listed on the site is disconnected.

Killpatrick on Wednesday said the college’s housing site “functioned as a bulletin board, as a listing.”

“On advice from our legal counsel we have not gotten that involved,” Killpatrick said. “We think the only bad guy in this is Joe, who ran off with the funds.”

Finger pointing

But students want more. They don’t feel like the college is helping them at all, and yet, it was through the college that they ended up at the Alder Inn.

“We can’t get a straight answer out of anyone,” Manoff said.

Stefani acknowledged to *LTN* that she has been the owner of Alder Inn for about 30 years and that Balius had the lease option for the last five years.

It was former South Lake Tahoe City Councilman Ted Long who had the original lease option.

“What it was is I had loaned him the money to do the deal so it was in my name,” Long said. “I sold the option to him for a buck.”

Long said he last heard from Balius, who he describes as a good friend, about a month ago via email saying he was leaving the Alder.

Stefani said Balius told her the property was in escrow, but it fell through. All she knew is that she would get paid and the property would no longer be hers.

“I had nothing to do with the property. Zero. I had not been on it for five years until Oct. 1,” Stefani said. “He has run off with a lot of my money and lot of the students’ money and students’ money who are not even here yet. I’ve been getting calls from parents.”

Stefani says she never received a penny of the money the students paid in rent.

Legal matters

Rick Martinez with the South Lake Tahoe Police Department is investigating the matter. He would not provide *LTN* with any information Wednesday.

Martinez and Assistant District Attorney Hans Uthe met Wednesday to discuss the case.

Uthe told *Lake Tahoe News* on Thursday that they are in the information gathering phase and not looking for Balius at this point.

“It is going forward as an investigation. It’s too early to tell where it is going to come out,” Uthe said.

The students say Martinez told them they don’t have a case, it’s Stefani’s fight – unless they are evicted.

Attorney Bob Henderson is representing Stefani.

“We have not decided what we are going to do. We have been in contact with the community college,” Henderson said. “We are going to try to solve the problem, but I don’t know what solution will be reached until we reach it. We can’t let the property sit there and the utilities, and no money exchanging hands.”

LTCC board President Kerry David would like to find a way for the students to stay and to have Internet access turned back on – which would probably cost less than $2,000 for the rest

of the fall quarter.

“We are concerned for them,’ David said of the students.

He said the college acted as a referral service, but received no monetary compensation from doing so.

“This guy should be in jail. He basically took money from students and has run,” David said. “We are supportive of the students and sympathetic to the students, but their contract was with the Alder Inn, not the college.”

At Tuesday’s college board meeting, trustee Fritz Wenck commented how he and his wife are providing housing for a LTCC student who was homeless. Perhaps other doors could open to the 11 students at the Alder Inn if Stefani does not honor their contracts.

No longer ignoring chronic fatigue

By Hillary Johnson, New York Times

Earlier this month, a study published in the journal *Science* answered a question that medical scientists had been asking since 2006, when they learned of a novel virus found in prostate tumors called xenotropic murine leukemia virus-related virus, or XMRV: Was it a human infection?

XMRV is a gammaretrovirus, one of a family of viruses long-studied in animals but not known to infect people. In animals, these retroviruses can cause horrendous neurological problems, immune deficiency, lymphoma and leukemia. The new study provided overwhelming evidence that XMRV is a human

gammaretrovirus â€” the third human retrovirus (after H.I.V. and human lymphotropic viruses, which cause leukemia and lymphoma). Infection is permanent and, yes, it can spread from person to person (though it is not yet known how the virus is transmitted).

Read the whole story

Snowboarding film “Forever” at LTCC

Lake Tahoe Community College presents the work of snowboard photographer Tim Peare on Oct. 30 in the Duke Theatre.

Take an intimate look into the world of professional photography and a special showing of Forum Snowboards â€œForever,â€ its sixth team-inspired snowboarding film starring Peter Line, Joni Malmi, Eddie Wall, Jake Blauvelt, Pat Moore, John Jackson, Stevie Bell, Jake Welch, Nic Sauve, and up-and-comers Daniel Ek and Niko Cioffi.

“Forever” documents the life and times of the Forum Team from 5a backcountry calls to midnight street sessions, and everything in between.

Tim Peare is a professional photographer and former Lake Tahoe Community College photography student.

A special three-minute film preview to announce LTCC’s upcoming Winter Quarter DMA class offering; “Action Sports Winter Filmmaking”will also be shown to kickoff the evening.

This event is free and open to the public.

Complimentary food, beverages at 6:30pm in the theater foyer. Presentation will begin at 7:30pm.

Controlled burns in Zephyr Cove area

US Forest Service fuels management crews will begin prescribed fire operations in the Zephyr Heights area (Zephyr Cove urban lots) and near Zephyr Shoals, north of Zephyr Cove Resort, starting Oct. 29, as weather and staffing allows.

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.

This and other prescribed fire projects are designed to reduce wildfire risks to communities and critical resources. Smoke management is part of every prescribed fire burn plan, and efforts will be taken to reduce actual or potential smoke impacts on community areas.

Hope for ridding Lake Tahoe of Asian clams

Jeff Delong, Reno Gazette-Journal

STATELINE â€” Experts have identified an effective way to kill Lake Tahoeâ€™s Asian clams, a promising development to control an invader spreading around the landmark Sierra lake, land-use regulators were told Wednesday.

Scientists briefed governors of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency on studies concerning invasive species at Tahoe and said that under proper conditions, the use of plastic â€œbottom barriersâ€ laid atop clam beds results in 100 percent mortality of Asian clams within 28 days.

â€œIt worked incredibly well. We know how to kill the clams,â€ said Geoff Schladow, director of the University of California, Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center.

Read the whole story

Garridos go back to court

Martha Bellisle, Reno Gazette-Journal

A pre-preliminary hearing is scheduled Thursday in Placerville for Phillip and Nancy Garrido, Pierson.

At the hearing in El Dorado Superior Court, prosecutors may seek a date for a preliminary hearing or continue the case, said Nancy Anderson, executive secretary for El Dorado District Attorney Vern Pierson.

Read the whole story

Colorado to honor skier who lived in the Sierra

Publisher's note: *Spider Sabich was born in Sacramento and raised in Kyburz along Highway 50. He is buried in Placerville.*

By John Meyer, Denver Post

For those who didn't know Spider Sabich or see him race, he usually is remembered for the way he died â€" shot by girlfriend Claudine Longet at their home in Aspen, the tragedy then lampooned in a "Saturday Night Live" skit so insensitive the show had to offer an apology a week later.

But for those who knew and loved him, Sabich was an outstanding athlete, a fantastic racer, a charismatic personality and a great friend. Those are the qualities that will be recognized Nov. 7 when Sabich is inducted into the Colorado Ski Hall of Fame.

Read the whole story