Audio workshop in South Lake Tahoe

Tahoe Production House is hosting real audio workshop Feb. 24-26.

Audio 101 is a three-day workshop with six-hour sessions. Topics include how the ear perceives sound, acoustics and sound travel. Hands on learning include setting up a sound system with speakers, basic connections, equalization, mixing and routing of signals, as well as power management.

The sessions are from 9:30am-4:30pm each day. It includes lunch at TPH – 2291 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe.

Workshop is $315 per student, with preregistration required. Download the registration form or email info@tahoeproductionhouse.com for more information.

Amador residents lose Indian casino challenge

By Peter Hecht, Sacramento Bee

A federal appeals court on Jan. 29 rebuffed an Amador County citizens group challenging federal recognition of a tribe seeking to build a casino near Ione.

In a nine-page memorandum, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a lower court ruling affirming that the Buena Vista Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians is a federally recognized tribe.

The citizens group is trying to stop the small tribe from building a casino with 950 slot machines and 20 table games on a 67.5-acre parcel near Ione.

Read the whole story

Lake Tahoe fisherman reels in lost images

By Brett Prettyman, Salt Lake Tribune

For a few minutes after the splash, Jana LeVitre hoped she could get her camera back from the bottom of the amazingly clear waters of Lake Tahoe.

The Pentax camera was, after all, waterproof.



Jana LeVitre thought this and more than 1,000 other images were gone forever. Photo/Jana LeVitre

But when somebody on the sailboat told her the water below was 150 to 200 feet deep, she reluctantly bid adieu to a collection of more than 1,000 photos and videos taken over

five years. This was in September 2011.

But last week, she saw an image she had lost – on her Facebook page.

“Is this you? Or a very close look-alike?” asked the Facebook friend who posted the photo.

Stephen Garnett was just hoping to catch a lake trout when he ventured out with a friend for some fishing Jan. 19 on Lake Tahoe. He ended up hooking a fishing story that stretched all the way to South Jordan, Utah.

Read the whole story

Science expo geared toward youths

The Family Science Expo is March 19 in Incline Village.

Science Expo is open to children of all ages and their families. The theme is Earth and Space Science and will feature interactive science experiments, activities, and demonstrations emphasizing concepts in geology, climate and weather, and astronomy.

The free event is from 4-6pm at Tahoe Center for Environmental Sciences, 291 Country Club Drive, Incline Village.

Punxsutawney Phil predicts 6 more weeks of winter

By Jason Samenow, Washington Post

On a raw, cloudy and damp Sunday morning, Groundhog Phil saw his shadow in the small town of Punxsutawney, Pa.

The appearance of Phil's shadow means winter will extend well into March according to folklore. Had Phil not seen his shadow, it would have meant spring is around the corner.

Since the Groundhog's first prediction in 1887 (through 2013), Phil has seen his shadow 100 times and not seen it on just 17 occasions. There are nine missing years in the record, but Phil has issued a forecast without exception.

No one questions Phil's dedication to prognostication, but his accuracy is an unending source of controversy.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

• Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce's Feb. 4 Tech Tuesday is designed for newbies to social media. The 8am session will focus on the basics of social media and the unique benefits of each social media site yields its users. The meeting is at the chamber's conference room in Stateline.

• Jessica Satre has joined Tahoe Regional Planning Agency as

associate counsel.

• Gov. Jerry Brown reappointed Michael Villines, 46, of Placerville to the Central Valley Flood Protection Board, where he has served since 2010.

• Here are the El Dorado-Tahoe and Sierra roadwork schedules for this week from Caltrans.

• South Tahoe Public Utility district is having a workshop Feb. 6 at 6pm to discuss the water and sewer system upgrades and rates. No action will be taken. The meeting is at 1275 Meadow Crest Drive, South Lake Tahoe.

Then and now: Truckee looks the same after 80 years



Truckee in the 1930s. Photo/Lake Tahoe Historical Society Museum



Modern day Truckee. Photo/Bill Kingman

The 1930 image is a single frame from a 16mm silent movie travelogue.

The color photo is from last November.

The second-story windows and the protruding blue center L-beam to the sidewalk match in both pictures, confirming the location of today's popular Cabona's clothing store on the main street of Truckee.

Even the parking spaces are still there.

– Bill Kingman

Clarity for Lake Tahoe's near shore being sought

By Kathryn Reed

Lake Tahoe's clarity is stabilizing and improving, but it is hard to tell just by walking along the shore. That's because all of the attention has been placed on what is going on in the middle of the lake and not at the edge of the lake.

But now the focus is expanding to include what is called the near shore. For several years the water people most often come in contact with has been going from pristine to looking at times like any other lake – brown and murky.

Regulating bodies and scientists are trying to figure out why this is happening and what can be done to stop it.

Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board on Feb. 13 will take up the issue at a meeting in South Lake Tahoe. A draft of the Lake Tahoe Nearshore Water Quality Protection Plan was unveiled Jan. 30 at a meeting hosted by Lahontan, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, Nevada Division of Environmental Protection and U.S. Environmental Protection. Those are the four agencies that makeup the Near Shore Agency Working Group.



Dan Sussman with Lahontan on Jan. 30 discusses efforts to understand Lake Tahoe's near shore. Photo/Kathryn Reed

The near shore for Tahoe is defined as 350 feet from existing lake level or 69 feet deep whichever is greater.

Those who attended the Thursday meeting – which ranged from scientists to water purveyors to environmentalists to marina owners to agency employees to the general public – were asked to rate what they thought the focus of limited manpower and financial resources should be spent on.

With everyone getting two votes, there were 27 votes for trophic status, 15 for clarity, 12 for community structure and nine for human health.

Trophic status deals with the fertility of the lake. Tahoe is an unfertile lake. Something that would be studied is periphyton, which is the algae people see sticking to rocks and boats. Phytoplankton is the floating algae. Chlorophyll would also be something to look at. It is an indicator of lake productivity.

Community structure has to do with plant and animal life.

One of the reasons the near shore has not gotten the same attention as mid-lake is that it is more complex. Aquatic invasive species like certain areas more than others, periphyton is more common in some spots than others, and then there are parts of the lake that don't seem to have problems.

Fine sediment has long been a known contributor to the overall degradation of lake clarity. That is one of the main focuses to upgrade the mid-lake clarity. It is likely to be something to look at for the near shore, too.

"Small particles have more reflecting power. It means light can't penetrate as deeply into the water," Jason Kuchnicki with Nevada Division of Environmental Protection said.

An audience member asked why groundwater and stormwater drains were not being looked at. Besides the time and money constraints, they are not constants and would be harder to measure effects.

It was brought up how the regulating agencies have not partnered with the water purveyors who are always testing the water so it meets drinking water standards. Some of their intake valves are within the definition of the near shore.

Climate change impacts are also going to be considered. The

temperature of the lake has been increasing. With the near shore being shallower, it will be even warmer. This then allows for better habitat for non-native warm water fish as well as algae.

Lahontan hopes to have a pilot monitoring plan in place starting this year. The problem is that estimates are that it will cost $450,000 a year to monitor the near shore and only $150,000 has been secured. Officials are trying to find ways to close that gap.

Opinion: Truckee optimistic about 2014

By Tony Lashbrook

I kicked off the New Year by cleaning up my desk and office so that I can think more clearly about the coming year. While 2013 was a banner year for the town of Truckee, 2014 has the potential to be even better.

Our economy has more than stabilized – transient occupancy tax collections are at a record pace, sales tax, while not back to pre-recession levels is growing at a healthy clip, and property tax, the stalwart of the town budget, is headed in a positive direction.

We are building significant new facilities for our community. With our partner, the Humane Society of Truckee Tahoe, we just opened the new animal shelter which will serve the needs of our community for decades.

We are halfway through widening Glenshire Drive from downtown

to Glenshire to enhance traffic safety and provide class II bike lanes. Responding to a community goal identified nearly 20 years ago, we are also completing the Truckee River Legacy Trail from the regional park to Glenshire.

These two projects are game changers for our community as we create viable non-vehicular connections between Downtown and the Glenshire neighborhood. Both of these projects will be completed next fall.

We have come out the other end of the bureaucratic maze created in Sacramento by the elimination of redevelopment with our “bond” funds intact and looking to partner with the Brickelltown property owners and businesses to dramatically improve the Donner Pass Road streetscape with sidewalks, plazas, enhanced parking, landscaping and pedestrian lighting. The prototypes for this project are the recently completed streetscape improvements on Bridge Street and at the Depot. The completion of these improvements will bolster downtown Truckee’s status as the preeminent visitor destination in the region while improving mobility and functionality for us locals.

This strategy is already bearing fruit as exciting new businesses are opening downtown and vacancies are at the lowest level in several years.

In concert with this effort, based upon leadership provided by the Town Council, we are launching unprecedented programs to push our economic recovery through partnership investments to incentivize job creation, revitalize the Truckee River corridor and spur private investment. These tools provide an ability to strategically support community improvements and private investment in areas that the community has prioritized.

The portion of our economy traditionally supported by growth and development has been effectively shut down during the

recession. There are some positive signs of life stirring. The Truckee Building Division has reviewed plans for 112 dwelling units in 2013. Although significantly less than the boom years, housing construction at this level would help improve the health of our economy and be sustainable for a number of years, assuming market support. Construction of new commercial buildings has been limited to a few owner occupied projects like Dickson Real Estate and the Kelly Brothers Painting, which is not surprising considering the vacancies that have cropped up through the recession. Larger projects like the Truckee Railyard have their land use planning in place and are seeking the right economic time to begin construction.

While others, like Planned Community – 1 (Coldstream), Planned Community – 3 (Joerger Ranch), Canyon Springs and Pollard Station continue to work through the environmental and entitlement process. The town will continue to work hard in a transparent manner to ensure that these projects are fully vetted, comply with Truckee's adopted policies and standards and if built, that they actually make our community better, not just bigger.

I am excited and optimistic as the town moves into its 21st year as a municipal government. To improve service and efficiencies the town continues to fine-tune our organizational structure. Animal services and parking are now part of the police department, which consolidates our field services to maximize our outreach and enforcement efforts.

In response to strong community sentiment, the Town Council has adopted a single use plastic bag ban that will become effective in June and has placed a measure on the June ballot so Truckee voters can consider a stable funding source for trail construction and maintenance.

There will be ample opportunities for community engagement in 2014 as we move forward with an update to the Trails and Bikeways Master Plan, consider a trails funding mechanism,

design the details of the Brickelltown Streetscape, update the Housing Element of the General Plan, implement economic development programs and review development proposals. I urge you to get engaged and be a part of making Truckee a better place.

Tony Lashbrook is Truckee's town manager.

State OKs funding for South Shore highway project

A project on the South Shore is part of the $138 million allocated this week by the California Transportation Commission.

The money will fund 32 projects that are designed to improve highways, bridges, and passenger rail and further strengthen the state's economy.

The $13.7 million coming to Lake Tahoe will provide improvements to the drainage facilities on Highway 89 between Highway 50 and Cascade Road in South Lake Tahoe. This project will replace drainage systems, install sand traps and replace an existing arch culvert with a box culvert.

The allocations include approximately $25 million from Proposition 1B, a transportation bond approved by voters in 2006. The remaining $113 million in allocations came from assorted transportation accounts funded by state and federal dollars.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report