Houses selling as prices drop

The median price of single-family home in Lake Tahoe has dropped 18 percent in 2009.

Chase Internationalâ€™s third quarter report also shows overall inventory is being depleted at a fast rate in the Lake Tahoe and Reno markets.

The Reno-Sparks area has seen the greatest increase in the number of units sold. Year to date, total units sold in Reno have increased 35 percent over last year, and in Sparks the increase has been 54 percent.

â€œThese are extremely encouraging numbers for the overall health of the real estate market,â€ Sue Lowe, corporate vice president of Chase International, said in a press release.

The number of homes sold at the lake has increased 12 percent this year.

Chase points to the low median price being a reason houses are selling. In the Reno-Sparks area, the median price of single-family home has declined 28 percent since 2008.

Incline Village remains the most expensive basin location with an average price of a home sold in 2009 at $1.3 million.

Winemaker dinner at Fresh Ketch

South Lake Tahoe’s Fresh Ketch hosts an Oct. 21 Winemaker’s Dinner with Raymond Vineyards of Napa Valley. The dinner will

feature a five-course dinner with a pairing of five varietals from Raymond Vineyards.

Bob Cooper will host the dinner and describe the various wines served with the courses. Each course will feature the freshest ingredients.

Seating is limited. Call (530) 541.5683. Cost is $65/person.

Tahoe mildly represented in Ski survey

By Kathryn Reed

Five California resorts ranked in the top 20 for best North American ski area by readers of *Ski* magazine.

This is the 22nd annual survey. All the info is in the October issue.

Deer Valley took top honors.

The top California resort is Squaw Valley. They call it a skiers' ski mountain with "unlimited challenges." It came in No. 8 overall.

Next is Mammoth at No. 9, Heavenly No. 13, Northstar-at-Tahoe No. 16, and Alpine No. 30.

In specific categories Tahoe area resorts scored in:

Grooming – Northstar No. 4, Mammoth No. 6;

Terrain-variety – Squaw No. 2, Mammoth No. 4, Kirkwood, No. 19;

Value – Alpine No. 8;

Lifts – Mammoth No. 1, Squaw No. 8;

Access – Alpine No. 10;

Apres ski – Heavenly No. 3;

Off-hill activities – Heavenly No. 2;

Family programs – Northstar No. 4

Scenery – Heavenly No. 1, Squaw No. 7;

Terrain parks – Mammoth No. 1, Northstar No. 2.

Clearly the readers of *Ski* magazine are not considering Sierra-at-Tahoe, Homewood, Mount Rose or Sugar Bowl. They all deserve to have a spot in some of the above categories.

What seems more alarming is the categories the Tahoe resorts didn't score in, like weather. With more than 300 days of sunshine, how can Tahoe resorts be excluded?

Other categories where Tahoe resorts didn't measure up according to *Ski* readers are: snow, service, on-mountain food, lodging, dining, and overall satisfaction.

But then I don't know anyone who has taken one of these surveys, so how authentic are the results?

Council lends support to Kindertown



By Kathryn Reed

A handful of Kindertown supporters gave their spiel to the South Lake Tahoe City Council on Oct. 6 in an effort to get the elected officials involved in keeping the day care-preschool open.

“If there were a better facility out there, I would take my daughter there,” Allison Borta told the council. “It’s not just day care. She does wonderful things with these kids.”

Maria Barrows-Crist, who has run the center since the 1970s, has been told by the state she must cease operating Oct. 15 because of a slew of allegations that run from drug use by employees to spilling hot soup on a child.

Two of the state’s key witnesses are former employees of Kindertown.

Barrows-Crist’s attorney is fighting the closure.

“I was contacted by several parents and interested parties over the last week regarding this closure, and I forwarded information to State Sen. Dave Cox and Assemblyman Ted Gaines asking for their review and assistance,” City Manager Dave Jinkens said in a comment posted Oct. 4 on LTN.

The council unanimously agreed to support the center remaining open until further information can be obtained. The council directed the city attorney to gather more information.

Incline homicide victim identified

Washoe County authorities are still investigating the stabbing death of Charles Baymiller, 73, of Incline Village.

Mary Baymiller, 71, was taken to Renown Medical Center in Reno. Her condition has not been released.

The couple was found in their Lakeshore Drive home when Washoe County deputies responded to check on their welfare the night of Oct. 5.

Baymiller’s cause of death will be determined pending the autopsy. Deputies do not believe this is a random act.

Detectives are asking anyone with information to call (775) 328.3320 or Secret Witness at (775) 322-4900.

Bike-pedestrian open house in Tahoe City

Lake Tahoe Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Drop-in Open-House at the TCPUD Administrative Board Room, 221 Fairway Drive, Tahoe City, on Oct. 22 from 2:30-8:30pm.

For more information, go to www.TahoeMPO.org.

Bike-pedestrian open house on South Shore

Lake Tahoe Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Drop-in Open-House at the South Lake Tahoe Senior Center, 3050 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe, on Oct. 19 from 2:30-8:30pm.

SLT convention center in bankruptcy



By Kathryn Reed

Randy Lane's Lake Tahoe Development Company filed for bankruptcy Monday in regards to the largest development project ever to break ground in South Lake Tahoe.

The more than $400 million convention center near Stateline sits idle – concrete and rebar now slightly dusted with snow.

Lane on Tuesday said this is just the next chapter of the saga that has plagued the project when financing could not be secured. He owes creditors about $54 million.

He said he opted for Chapter 11 because this means the court will have to approve a restructuring plan with the consent of creditors. Chapter 7 would have meant the sale of assets.

With the 11-plus acre site being appraised at $105 million in April, Lane said equity remains in the project and he is confident one day it will be a profitable endeavor.

“It’s just a way for us to come up with a plan. We have a couple of new concepts we are exploring. We need the time to do that,” Lane said of the months it is likely to take to settle things in federal bankruptcy court. “There are some sources of capital out there that are non-traditional. Some of them are a byproduct of the of the stimuli programs.”

With the news just reaching city officials this week, they are not sure what their course of action will.

The contract doesn’t have a caveat in it if the developer files for bankruptcy.

City Manager Dave Jinkens said City Attorney Patrick Enright, who was hired to specialize in redevelopment matters, will take a look at the issue and get back to staff and the council.

Mayor Jerry Birdwell did not want to comment on the bankruptcy.

Tahoe embraces officers who broke the Dugard case



Lisa Campbell and Ally Jacobs talk to South Tahoe residents Tuesday. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

“It’s so rare to have a happy ending.”

Those were the words of UC Berkeley police Officer Ally Jacobs as she spoke with a throng of people gathered Tuesday outside South Lake Tahoe City Council Chambers.

The council brought Jacobs and Lisa Campbell, UCPD special events manager, to town to honor them for their quick thinking that eventually led to the capture of Phillip and Nancy Garrido and the release of Jaycee Lee Dugard.

The two were humble – saying they were just doing their job.

This is the first time any city or entity has honored the two women together.

Even though their captain, Margo Bennett, said the duo is done doing interviews, the truth is they left Lake Tahoe Airport yesterday morning en route to Chicago to tape a segment with Oprah Winfrey. (Winfrey is itching to be the first to interview Dugard, the now 29-year-old who was freed from 18 years of captivity in an Antioch backyard after having being

been snatched from a Meyers bus stop in 1991.)

Jacobs, 33, was in high school in Orange County (where Dugard lived before moving with her parents to the South Shore) when Dugard was kidnapped from Lake Tahoe. She didn't know anything about the case when Garrido and two young girls walked onto the UC Berkeley campus in late August.

But Jacobs was suspicious.

"I just knew something was not right," Jacobs said of that day. "We as women get that feeling."

As the crowd dissipated and she had changed from her uniform to travel clothes, Jacobs said, "It's just weird to be called a hero. It's what I do every day."

But she also knows the importance of her intuition and police training.

"It's a huge case. It affects so many people," Jacobs said.

The Garridos' next court hearing is scheduled for Oct. 29 in El Dorado County Superior Court, Placerville.

LTCC Hispanic Heritage Celebration

Lake Tahoe Community College's Diversity Committee is hosting its first Hispanic Heritage Celebration with a photographic exhibit, dancers, and movies Oct. 12-17

In the college commons on display will be â€œLuces de Una Memoria Compartida: Historia Grafica de Ameca 1895-1968â€Â

by Enrique Curiel, a doctoral candidate from La Universidad de Guadalajara, Jalisco, MÃ©xico. This exhibit will highlight aspects of rural Ameca, a city located outside Guadalajara.

On Oct. 16, from 6-8:30pm the Community Youth Folkloric Ballet, composed of high school and college students, will perform traditional folkloric dances from different regions of Mexico that includes modern Mexican dancing such as â€œquebraditaâ€ and â€œbanda.â€

Oct. 17 is movie night. From 7:30-9pm “Rudo y Cursi” (Rough and Cheesy). The movie is a drama/comedy about two brothers from a rural lower class Mexican family; it is also a parody of contemporary Mexico’s “narco-society” perceptions of life and values. This film is rated R.

In addition the library has an extensive repertoire of written works by and about Hispanic figures.

All events are free and open to the public.