Former US poet laureate to speak tonight

Former U.S. poet laureate Robert Hass will from his work and sign books tonight at Sierra Nevada College in Incline Village from 7-9pm.

Brenda Hillman, an award-winning poet, will also read.

The event is in Room 139 of the Tahoe Center for Environmental Sciences at the college, 999 Tahoe Blvd., Incline.

Prostate researchers convene in Incline

Nearly 300 of the worldâ€™s leading researchers focused on the problem of prostate cancer are in Incline Village for three days to discuss the latest scientific data and breakthroughs in prostate cancer.

The 16th Scientific Retreat sponsored by the Prostate Cancer Foundation concludes Saturday.

It is projected that prostate cancer will take the lives of 27,000 U.S. men, while 192,000 new cases are diagnosed. While the death rate from prostate cancer has been reduced by nearly 40 percent from what was once projected, the number of new cases diagnosed each year continues to rise. By 2015, the annual number of new cases may grow to 300,000.

â€œThis meeting takes on additional urgency as it has been more than two years since there has been a government-

sponsored meeting of this kind,â€ Howard Soule, executive vice president and chief scientist for the PCF, said in a press release. â€œThis annual meeting is a catalyst for scientific exchange and has helped accelerate scientific discovery for prostate cancer during the past decade. Some of the most promising developments on the field have come out of this meeting and the work of PCF-funded scientists.â€

A total of 81 scientific presentations on new research on treatment and prevention of early and advanced prostate cancers from 98 cancer research centers will be featured. The new data to be discussed originate from research programs in nine countries.

Thirst for liquor licenses in Placer County

Mark Anderson, Sacramento Business Journal

The imbalance in supply and demand for liquor licenses in Placer County continues leaning toward the demand side â€” but itâ€™s getting better.

California Alcohol Beverage Control recently held its 2009 lottery for new licenses. There are still more people seeking them than there are new licenses available in Placer County.

The state gets $12,000 for a newly minted liquor license. If a restaurant or store wants to get one from an existing business, the price is quite a bit more.

Read the whole story

Drug, car ramming suspect caught

Jamaal Mansoor Eslami, the man accused of ramming a Douglas County sheriff's car as he fled from officers Monday, is behind bars.

Officers on both sides of the state line helped in arresting the 27-year-old Wednesday in South Lake Tahoe.

The suspect was originally being sought for methamphetamine charges. Eslami will be extradited to Nevada.

Quarterly loss widens at Heavenly's parent company

Publisher's Note: *Vail Resorts owns Heavenly Mountain Resort on the South Shore of Lake Tahoe.*

Mark Harden, Denver Business Journal

Vail Resorts Inc. Thursday posted a loss of $38.7 million for the most recent quarter, deeper than the $11.1 million loss for the same quarter a year earlier, as real estate revenue sharply declined.

It posted a profit of $48.95 million for the fiscal year, down from $102.9 million the previous year, also with real estate a big factor.

Read the whole story

Learn about teen behavior on KTHO

Hear Bret Stephenson, case manager with Rite of Passage, talk about adolescents on KTHO AM-590 or www.KTHOradio.com on Saturday at 10am or Monday at 6pm.

Retiring airport manager honored



Rick Jenkins was surprised by the plaque. Photo/SLT

Publisher’s Note: *These are the words of City Manager Dave Jinkens on Wednesday during the plaque dedication for Rick Jenkins, who has retired as manager of Lake Tahoe Airport.*

There are many people we meet who seek the recognition of others in their lives and their work, and there is nothing wrong with this perfectly human trait. After all, as the adage goes; â€œgod helps those who help themselves.â€

Rick jenkins is one of those rare individuals who does not seek glory, fame, and recognition. He has been a devoted resource person and leader for the airport, as airport director and as a resident of the community. He spends a great deal of time working with others to make the airport a success.

For this reason, it is with all the more pleasure that all of us are here this afternoon to give rick jenkins recognition, whether he wants it or not, for what he has done for the airport and our community. I have no doubt whatsoever that without his help, support, guidance, knowledge, dedication, inspiration and care, we would not be on the current path we are on today to return scheduled air service to south lake tahoe soon. We look forward to that day with optimism because of his work.

Rick has had support in this endeavor from the City Council, Airport Commission, assistant city manager and his team of fine airport employees, but without him, we would not have made the progress we are making today.

Thank you Rick for caring so much about the airport, air fest, and our community. Thank you for the dedication, skill, and the diplomacy you have shown in gaining support for and recognition of our airport. All of us in Lake Tahoe have benefited and will benefit in the future from your work here. This airport is your gift to us and our posterity.

While you do not seek recognition and glory, we as your

friends and colleagues owe it to you to do so.

DavidÂ Jinkens, city manager

Aspen restoration near Tallac Site



By USFS staff

The U.S. Forest Service is restoring aspens at Kiva Point in South Lake Tahoe through the fall.

The project area is near the lakefront behind the Taylor Creek Visitor Center and Tallac Historic Site.

The Forest Service asks the public to stay on the trails or beach while this project is under way. Forest Service personnel may temporarily restrict trail access for public safety, because the project involves felling trees. Forest Service crews will remove conifers that are encroaching on aspen stands and limiting their growth. Downed conifers will be chipped and removed or piled and burned after the piles dry in one or two years. Large, old conifers will not be cut, and conifers may also be retained if they are helping to stabilize the shoreline.

Aspen are ecologically important to many species of plants and wildlife, but they are relatively scarce on the landscape. The

health and survival of many local aspen stands are threatened by encroaching, shade tolerant conifers. Aspen need abundant sunshine to thrive. Removing conifers from aspen stands will improve their health and provide important habitat for plants and wildlife. The treated forest may appear disturbed and thinned until understory vegetation and aspen trees respond, reproduce and grow, but the eventually the aspen and associated plants and wildlife will grow and prosper.

The work at Kiva Point is part of the Aspen Community Restoration Project, approved in July. For a complete description of the project, go to http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/ltbmu/projects/local/aspen-rest.shtml.

State forcing Kindertown to close



Maria Barrows-Crist, right, receives one of many hugs of support Wednesday night. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

Tears were flowing and words of anger uttered as more than a 100 parents stood in the play yard at Kindertown on Wednesday night to hear owner-director Maria Barrows-Crist explain that the state plans to close the facility Oct. 15.

It means 130 children who attend the South Lake Tahoe day-care center will be displaced and the 20 employees will be without a job.

None of the parents at the 30-minute meeting said anything negative about the center. Most looked dumbstruck.

“I am sorry this slander has hit your employees too,” Ian Baker told Barrows-Crist afterward. “I think it’s all fabrication. I come here all the time and everyone is coherent.”

Baker was referencing the state’s charges that employees have been at work under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Rebecca Westmore, administrative law judge, handed down her decision Aug. 17 in a 28-page document. However, it was just last week that Barrows-Crist found out her state license was going to be revoked. It came in the form of a condolence letter from Choices from Children about the impending closure.

The directive also says Barrows-Crist, who has run the 36-year-old facility since 1978, must not work with children for two years.

Two of the key witnesses for the state are former Kindertown employees who had been fired by Barrows-Crist.

Barrows-Crist’s attorney on Monday applied for a stay and reconsideration of the decision.

“The judge said I didn’t show remorse. Both of the girls who complained cried,” Barrows-Crist, 57, said of the May 14-15

and July 20 hearings in Sacramento.

Judge's ruling

In Westmore's decision she cites Kindertown giving a peanut product to a child who is allergic to substance. The judge ruled Barrows-Crist tried to "minimize the gravity of the situation."

To the charge of removing a child without parental consent, Barrows-Crist said the child was taken to her daughter's home – who at the time was an employee of Kindertown – because no one picked the child up, nor were they reachable and the center was closed. The judge said that showed poor judgment.

Accusations against Dee Dee Crist, the owner's daughter, relate to her allegedly being under the influence of alcohol or other drugs while working. The judge ruled Crist should never be permitted to work with children again.

In an incident from 2003, the judge believed Diane Brown, a licensing program analyst, over Barrows-Crist when it came to whether a child was burned by hot soup.

"I find the testimony of LPA Whitmire to be credible. Respondent Barrows-Crist's testimony was an obvious attempt to minimize the misconduct, and reflects a continued pattern of denial related to her management and operation of the Kindertown facilities," Judge Westmore wrote.

Lake Tahoe News can only surmise the judge got the LPA's name wrong. LPA Whitmire is referenced in other testimony, but not this particular item.

Part of Kindertown's license revocation includes 2.5 pages about Miss Marcia, aka Marcia Sarosik, not being fingerprinted, but teaching a class at the preschool-day care-infant center.

The fence has been 3-feet high for 30 years. Suddenly,

Barrows-Crist was reprimanded for it not being 4-feet high.

The judge’s decision goes on to say Barrows-Crist retaliated against former employees. The judge sided with the former employees.

Parents react

After Barrows-Crist read a one-page letter last night to parents, many of whom had little ones with them, one after another said they’d do everything they could to keep Kindertown open. Some talked of staging a protest march in the coming days.

“You can’t find anything like this in Tahoe,” Stephanie Yuzbick said as she held one of her two daughters who attend Kindertown. “I know what she has done for this community. This needs to stay open.”

One person shouted, “If we wanted to be somewhere else, we probably would be.”

Other parents worried it might mean needing one spouse to quit their job to be able to care for a toddler.

“I’ve noticed Ryan is ahead of kids who don’t come here,” John Cocores said of his son who is about to turn 3.

Tiffany Reid said her 2-year-old daughter is thriving at Kindertown, and that Barrows-Crist and the staff are incredible.

Laura Barber with the South Lake Tahoe Women’s Center said Barrows-Crist has always allowed their clients access to her facilities at a reduced rate.

Future for kids

If Kindertown is not able to stay open under Barrows-Crist’s leadership or possibly by an employee, it means losing the

$386,000 the state Department of Education gives the center to pay for low-income families to have child care.

The El Dorado County Office of Education has said it will open a center at the old Al Tahoe Elementary School if Kindertown closes. It would be eligible to receive those state dollars.

More than 6,000 kids have attended Kindertown. The center cares for those ages 6 weeks to 10 years.

Barton initiates furlough weeks

By Kathryn Reed

Barton Health employees are being told this week they must take three weeks off â€“ one in October, one in November and one in December.

The 25 percent cut in pay comes on the heels of 43 employs being laid off earlier this year. At that time it left the medical conglomerate with 946 employees.

Reached late Wednesday night, Barton public relations head Monica Sciuto did not have the number of full-time employees who will be affected by the latest cutbacks. She did say it does not affect people who administer patient care.

Doctors are not employees of Barton, so therefore were never

going to be part of the latest round of cuts. Some nurses will, however, be taking three weeks of furlough for the last quarter of 2009.

Sciuto said the numbers are still being crunched as to what the exact savings will be. She found out about the forced leave on Wednesday morning.

She said a number of the employees have accrued paid time off so they can use those hours to offset the forced leave. This would essentially mean no reduction in pay for some, but no paid vacation or sick time down the road either.

It will be newer employees and those without accrued time off who will feel the financial hit the most, as well as couples who work for Barton.

The furlough hits CEO John Williams and the administrative team, the PR department â€“ anyone who doesnâ€™t work directly with patients.

Some employees and community members question why Williams, who makes close to a half million dollars a year, has not taken a pay cut. More than a dozen Barton workers make more than $100,000 a year (not including benefits or bonuses) â€“ but salaries have not been tweaked.

With the next fiscal year beginning Jan. 1, itâ€™s not known if the 25 percent reduction in work will be enough to keep the hospital financially healthy.

Besides the number of patients continuing to decline, the number of uninsured seeking medical care keeps escalating. Sciuto said in August the patient census was done 13 percent from a year ago and September is expected to be that bad or worse.

This time last year the hospital had accrued $1.8 million in charity care â€“ people who donâ€™t pay their bill. In 2009,

that figure is $3.6 million.

Sciuto said people accessing Barton services should not notice a difference. In fact the community clinic has added Saturday hours to accommodate the number of people needing it.

Asked if the health care system regretted buying all the medical practices in the last couple of years, Sciuto said, â€œThat is a question better answered by John (Williams), but I have not heard any regrets.â€

As for consolidating services like the multiple physical therapy practices, Sciuto could see the subject being broached in the future, but has not heard talk of it.

It will be up to department managers to schedule the days off so it runs smoothly â€“ meaning employees might work half days, take Fridays off or some other creative way to account for working one less week a month for three months.