

Elegant Evening

Soroptimist International of Tahoe Sierra's Elegant Evening at Harrah's Lake Tahoe, Stateline.

Emergency liaison group meets

The initial meeting of the South Shore service club emergency liaison group is at the American Legion building on Highway 50, South Tahoe. It's suggested two to three representatives from each clubs attend.

Markleeville autumn artists tour

"A Concert of Color" is the theme of the seventh annual Markleeville autumn open studio tour. Seventeen artists will participate in the tour. Artwork on display will include the watercolors of Peter Chope and Sandy Baenan, the creative confectionary of Debra Esteban, the oil paintings of Charles Muench, the topiary work of Jeff Brees (who was commissioned by the Joint Genome Institute in Walnut Creek to create a sculpture for its gardens,) and many others.

The tour is free.

Maps with directions to the Markleeville vicinity homes and studios will be available at the Alpine County Chamber of

Commerce or go to www.MarkleevilleArtists.com for more information.

South Tahoe DUI checkpoint

South Lake Tahoe police officers will set up a DUI checkpoint on Pioneer Trail.

Snowboarding movie premiere

South Lake Tahoe's First Tracks Productions shows the premiere of snowboarding movie "Droppin" at MontBleu casino, Stateline. Doors open at 7:30pm. It's free.

Both sides claim victory in shorezone ruling

By Kathryn Reed

A federal judge on Friday gave the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency what it wanted – the ability to continue the permitting process for buoys and piers at Lake Tahoe, but not allowing construction to continue.

U.S. District Judge Lawrence Karlton listened to arguments Sept. 14 in Sacramento before making his ruling four days later.

Sierra Club and League to Save Lake Tahoe have sued the bi-state regulatory agency over its shorezone regulations. The number of new buoys and piers is a large part of the controversy.

Today there are about 800 piers and 4,000 buoys on Lake Tahoe. TRPA's plan is to allow an additional 128 private piers and 1,822 buoys.

"Not one new buoy will be added to the lake until every buoy is permitted and the illegal ones are removed," TRPA spokesman Dennis Oliver said late Friday night.

He further stated, "At the hearing we argued in favor of a partial injunction."

The shorezone issue has been contentious for 22 years and even more so after the Governing Board of the TRPA adopted a shorezone plan in October 2008.

In the original complaint filed by the League and Sierra Club with Earth Justice attorneys representing the environmental groups, it says, "By enacting the Amendments, TRPA not only violated its duty to protect the Lake from environmental degradation but also its fundamental charter to restore and maintain the health and natural beauty of one of the deepest and clearest lakes in the world."

According to Associated Press reports, the environmental groups are claiming victory after Friday's ruling.

However, in court what Earth Justice wanted was a full injunction – something the judge said no to.

The entire matter should be resolved next year. The trial is scheduled to begin March 16.

Connecting farmer and chef

BY JOHNATHAN L. WRIGHT, Reno Gazette-Journal

The match seems a natural one. Chef and farmer, farmer and chef. One supplies bounty; the other shapes it. As easy a pairing, you'd think, as vodka and olives or designer and muse.

Today, chefs everywhere extol farm-to-table cooking, but traditionally, the relationship between farmers and chefs has often been anything but easy.

That's been especially true in the Truckee Meadows, where climate constrains agricultural diversity and where casino properties have historically ordered food mainly from large commercial suppliers.

To farmers, "chefs haven't always understood that sometimes we don't have a perfect crop, a perfect season. Sometimes, what we can provide is limited," said Gary Romano of Sierra Valley Farms, which lies outside Beckwourth, Calif., about 45 minutes northwest of Reno.

Read the whole story

\$1.4 million home being

raffled

Tahoe Mountain Resorts Foundation in Truckee is raffling a \$1.4 million home in the Village at Northstar.

Proceeds help the nonprofit foundation enrich the quality of life in Truckee/North Lake Tahoe by giving back to various organizations in the community.

The drawing will be Feb. 14. Raffle tickets are \$100 each, and the grand prize winner chooses either the grand prize package valued at more than \$1.4 million or \$1 million.

More information is at www.laketahoeraffle.com.

Clarity of Tahoe – making a difference



Joanne
Marchetta

By Joanne Marchetta

Despite the implication of the term clarity, it has its nuances. It can mean “the quality of being clearly expressed,” which is critical for those of us in the forefront

of the effort to restore and preserve Lake Tahoe. After all, if our intentions are not clearly understood, we have difficulty gaining the support needed for success.

Then, there are secondary meanings such as “clearness in what somebody is thinking,” or, “the quality of being clear in sound or image.”

Finally, clarity can mean, “having a transparent quality.”

A primary meaning of the word “clear” is for something to be “free from anything that darkens or obscures.” All of these definitions and meanings have relevance to Lake Tahoe and its future.

A generation ago, before the development in the 1970s was going unchecked, Lake Tahoe’s water clarity was measured at an average annual depth of about 100 feet. Today, the clarity stands somewhat obscured at approximately 70 feet. Much of the collective effort over several decades at Lake Tahoe has centered around restoring the Lake to that 100 foot standard.

In the first decade of the Lake Tahoe Environmental Improvement Program, initiated for Tahoe in the mid-1990s, about \$1.4 billion has been spent on restoration efforts, about half of it on projects designed to improve water quality. Because of that investment, we appear to have turned a corner toward our goal.

The rate of Lake clarity decline has flattened. Additionally, most of the indicators we use to gauge the overall environmental health of the Basin are moving in a positive direction. With a more clear scientific understanding today of how to tackle the problem, we are confident that we can and will complete the job.

In July, the TRPA Governing Board endorsed the first comprehensive update to the original EIP. The update spells out about \$2.5 billion in added environmental investment

required to continue the commitment over the next decade. Water quality, watersheds and habitat improvements will account for more than half of that continued restoration work. We also are moving forward with an updated Lake Tahoe Regional Plan that will act as a blueprint for achieving environmental standards.

Without a doubt, \$2.5 billion is a lot of money. The states of Nevada and California , the federal government, local jurisdictions and the private sector will be called upon in coming months and years to be financial partners in this effort in much the same way that they stepped up during the first decade of the EIP to invest in environmental projects throughout the Basin. As we move forward, we owe it to all who have a stake in the Lake to clearly articulate why clarity is important, what it will take to get there, and why the investment will be worth it.

Ten years of scientific research now reveals that Lake clarity is a meaningful indicator of how compatibly we are living with the land. Fine sediment and nutrients flowing mostly from already developed sites reach the Lake, reducing water clarity. The losses are tied to our past land use choices. A 50-year-old motel and blacktop parking area built in a stream zone, for example, probably ought never to have been located there. Because of much better scientific information, we know that now. But many of these structures were built in that very fashion during the Squaw Valley Olympics boom period. We built on 75 percent of marshes and 50 percent of natural meadow areas before TRPA had a regional environmental plan in place. This is one reason why land use in Tahoe is so tightly controlled.

There exists a cap on what can be built or added in the Basin, along with incentives to relocate existing development off of sensitive land. Let's be clear: the reason we have policies that incentivize moving structures from old properties to new is for the environmental benefits that are realized when old

buildings are removed from land that can be restored to benefit the Lake. The incentive is not as some suggest to foster new and additional development; it is to foster changes to the existing built environment for environmental gain. This is one way we can promote revitalization and restoration through private investment.

By compelling commercial and residential property owners to do erosion control work or “best management practices” (BMPs), we further benefit the Lake. BMPs also account for most of the private investment in Lake clarity needed under the EIP. We should also be clear that neither revitalization nor BMPs alone can be the panacea to achieve our environmental goals. But these measures to be sure are a critical step that each of us can take toward environmental progress.

The newly updated EIP charts a clear course of environmental investment for the Lake Tahoe Basin over the next 10 years. It includes critically important strategies for keeping the Lake clear of aquatic invasive species such as quagga and zebra mussels. The EIP also spells out our plans to step up efforts to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire by clearing our forests of built up fuel. By realizing both environmental and economic goals, our communities will remain viable enough to meet their part of the commitment to invest in the continued environmental protection of Lake Tahoe.

We must clearly explain now to those who we are asking to re-up (and increase) their financial commitments to the Basin why continued restoration and preservation will be worth it. Would you continue to invest if you held little hope for the vitality of the environment, economy, or social future of Lake Tahoe? The alternative – giving up on clarity after all we have accomplished thus far – is clearly not an option.

Joanne Marchetta is executive director of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency. For more information, visit www.trpa.org.

LTUSD employee in need of assistance

From Angie Keil at Lake Tahoe Unified School District:

Sept. 17 brought some very tragic news for our friend and co-worker, Sierra Soleta, senior accounting assistant. She was notified that her husband, Ben Soleta, had passed away at home sometime during the morning due to unknown causes. He leaves behind his grieving wife, Sierra, and two sons (3 and 13).

An account, "The Soleta Family Fund", has been set up at El Dorado Savings Bank to assist Sierra and her family. Donations may be made at any El Dorado Savings bank and the account number is: 143008985.