Property owners told to tear out would-be house



This property at 1348 Wildwood Ave. will be restored and not be built on in the future. Photo/LTN

South Lake Tahoe property owners are going to have rip out the foundation and walls they had put in for a house because it has been ruled they did so illegally.

Thang Vu and his now ex-wife Jennifer Khuu bought the Wildwood Avenue property in 2002, were issued a building permit in 2007, had that revoked in 2008 when the easement blocking the building surfaced, and sued the city in 2009. Khuu now owns the property, but Vu based on court records, was the plaintiff.

The permit was revoked because the lot is unbuildable. A 1981 agreement made it so this parcel would always be open space. The plaintiffs knew this, but chose to build any way. Then they sued the city when they were told construction must stop.

The City Council earlier this year opted to not settle the case, but instead take it to court.

The case has been settled with the city winning and all charges against it and individual employees being dropped.

The property owner must remove all evidence of construction and restore the site per Tahoe Regional Planning Agency regulations by July 2014. Because dirt cannot be disturbed in the basin again until May, that is why they have so much time to rectify the problem.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Thanksgiving wine – a bottle for each course



Dessert and sparkling wines are perfect on Thanksgiving. Photos/Après Wine Company

By Barb Tenney

With so many dishes on the table, it can be challenging to find the perfect wines to pair with Thanksgiving dinner.

And with only five days until the big meal, now is the time to

figure out what you will be drinking.



There is still time to sample wine before Thanksgiving.

Since the only turkey on the table should be the bird, here’s a simple guide to help you find the right wines to serve.

White wines are the usual “go to” Thanksgiving selection, but there are a number of reds that work well for the occasion. The best red wines for Thanksgiving are fruit forward varieties like Pinot Noir, Zinfandel or Grenache/Rhone blend. They don’t overwhelm the day’s star (Mr. Turkey) and marry well with the sweeter side dishes like cranberries and sweet potatoes.

Suggested whites include Riesling, Gewürztraminer, Pinot Grigio or Chardonnay. They also complement the main dish and pair nicely with savory sides like green beans and Brussels sprouts.

To add festiveness on Thanksgiving, don’t hesitate to add bubbly and dessert wines to the mix. Champagnes and sparkling wines go with every course and are the perfect vehicle to

toast your hosts.

Like pumpkin pie, dessert wines are a sweet way to end the day.

In the end, pick the wines you like best whatever the varietal. It’s a celebration of thanks and a day of enjoyment. Cheers!

Thanksgiving wine pairing suggestions:

• **Turkey, Stuffing, Gravy and Cranberries**

White: Riesling, Gewürztraminer

Red: Pinot Noir, Zinfandel, Grenache/Rhône blends

Bubbly: Champagne, Sparkling Wine, Prosecco

• **Potatoes, Yams, Sweet Potatoes and Corn**

White: Chardonnay

Red: Zinfandel, Grenache/ Rhône Blends

• **Green Beans, Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts, Other Greens**

White: Pinot Gris, Pinot Grigio

• **Pumpkin Pie, Apple Pie, Pecan Pie, Desserts**

Dessert: Port, Ice Wine

Bubbly: Champagne, Sparkling Wine, Prosecco.

For specific suggestions please see us at Après Wine Company. Many wines are available to sample before you buy to ensure they’re the perfect match.

Barb Tenney is owner of Après Wine Company on Ski Run Boulevard in South Lake Tahoe.

Editorial: California needs to rethink water rights

Publisher's note: ***This editorial is from the Nov. 22, 2013, Los Angeles Daily News.***

When someone says that there are two Californias, the reference these days is usually to the political differences between coastal and inland residents rather than the historical split between north and south.

But there is a third and even more telling divide in this state, and it has to do with the water wars that create some of our most bitter intra-state rivalries.

While the rest of the nation and the world may imagine that California is all Silicon Valley and Silicon Beach, Sierra Nevada vistas and Hollywood stars, the reality is that we are also America's greengrocer. There is no more fertile place on Earth than our Central Valley.

This comes at a cost for the West's precious water supplies. That's because it comes at very little cost the to state's largest water user by far: agriculture.

Farming accounts for more than 80 percent of the state's water usage, while providing less than 5 percent of its gross domestic product. That economic reality drives wasteful and even unsustainable agricultural practices, like flooding fields for rice cultivation in a state whose urban population constantly is hectored about water conservation.

How can farmers afford to flood? Because inherited 19th-century water rights make their water costs a tiny fraction of

what the state’s residential and commercial users pay. Sometimes those rates are even use-neutral; farmers pay the same flat rate per year whether they use one drop or a thousand acre-feet.

Should we therefore stop farming? Of course not. It’s just that conservation of this precious resource must come from all Californians.

Read the whole story

South Tahoe Olympian’s mom going to jail

By Buffalo News

The mother of Olympic snowboarder Elena Hight pleaded guilty Thursday to marijuana trafficking.

Myra Hight, 52, of South Lake Tahoe was accused of being a member of a nationwide marijuana-distribution ring when she was picked up last year and found with more than $77,000 in cash in her vehicle.

She pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute marijuana before Chief U.S. District Judge William M. Skretny. She faces between 12 and 24 months in prison.

Read the whole story

Stateline casinos drop health care plans

By Kathryn Reed

The bulk of MontBleu casino employees will be getting their health care through the Affordable Care Act – and not by choice.

The company put a letter in employee boxes that said, "… it became clear to us that the modifications to the medical plan that are mandated by the ACA will drive up the cost for both you and the company. As such, most of our employees would be better served economically if we were to eliminate medical coverage and allow you to purchase your 2014 medical coverage on the health insurance exchange, where many employees would quality for federal subsidies."

Medical and prescription insurance through the Stateline casino will end Dec. 31. Dental and vision will remain.

Stephen Ditchkus, general manager of the casino since the beginning of the month, chose not to speak to *Lake Tahoe News*. Brett Hunn, the marketing manager, also did not return a call. Employees did not want to talk for fear of retribution.

MontBleu has more than 200 employees, many of whom are low-wage earners and not college graduates.

Part of the federal law mandates companies provide health insurance starting in 2015 if they have more than 50 full-time employees. If they don't, the company is subject to a penalty of $2,000 per employee. That penalty, though, in many cases is less than what it costs to provide health insurance to an employee.

The casino's human resources department is set up to help

people with getting on either the Nevada or California health exchange, depending where they reside.

MontBleu is not alone in forcing employees to the health exchanges. Darden Restaurants Inc., Home Depot Inc. and Trader Joe's Co. will stop offering health insurance to part-time workers starting Jan. 1.

Caesars Entertainment, parent company of Harrah's and Harveys at Stateline, is also eliminating health care for all part-time staff.

The ACA mandates everyone have health insurance starting Jan. 1. If they don't, the Internal Revenue Service will penalize them.

A study released in July by Deloitte found that about one in 10 employers in the U.S. intended to ax company plans in favor of the ACA.

The *Wall Street Journal* reported, "Deloitte's findings differ from estimates by rival firm McKinsey & Co. last year that found 30 percent of employers say they would 'definitely or probably' stop offering health insurance after 2014, as well as calculations by the Congressional Budget Office that estimated around 7 percent of workers could lose coverage under the law by 2019."

Convicted serial killer sentenced to death

By Gary Klein, Marin Independent Journal

Calling him "an evil and disturbed man," a Marin County judge

sentenced convicted serial killer Joseph Naso to death Friday for the murders of six women, including one from the North Lake Tahoe area.

Judge Andrew Sweet said the evidence proved that Naso inflicted “abhorrent and repugnant levels of suffering and cruelty” on the victims, and humilitated them even more by meticulously documenting the crimes in his diaries and photographs for more than two decades.

“You being in this world, Mr. Naso, has made this world a worse place,” Sweet said.

Naso, who turns 80 in January, insisted that the prosecution had not proved its case, that the DNA evidence was “planted,” that he was the victim of media bias, and that District Attorney Edward Berberian took the case to score political points in Marin.

The case broke open in 2010, when authorities conducted a routine probation search at Naso’s home in Reno. Naso retired there after spending much of his career as a nomadic photographer and property manager in Oakland, San Francisco and rural Northern California.

The probation check revealed piles of incriminating writings and photographs, including a diary that documented a half century of rapes and sex crimes.

In April 2011, Naso was arrested in South Lake Tahoe following his release from the El Dorado County Jail in an unrelated case.

To support their case for the death penalty, prosecutors Dori Ahana and Rosemary Sloat introduced evidence that Naso also killed two other women: Sharileea Patton, whose body washed up in Tiburon in 1981. Patton, 56, was security guard from the North Lake Tahoe area. Police reported she was strangled and stuffed into two garbage bags. Sara Dylan, a nomadic Bob Dylan

groupie who was killed in 1992 in or near Nevada County. The prosecution did not have all the evidence in place to charge Naso with those two murders in time for his trial.

Read the whole story

Douglas libraries to close for Turkey Day

The Douglas County Public Library in Minden and Zephyr Cove will be closed Nov. 28-29 for Thanksgiving.

Both libraries will close at 5pm Nov 27.

The Minden library will resume its regular schedule on Nov. 30 at 10am. The Zephyr Cove library will reopen Nov. 30 at 9am.

For more info, call (775) 782.9841.

Cyclist dies; Tahoe man remains in custody

The Colorado bicyclist who was hit Nov. 15 by a vehicle has died.

James Hulett of Boulder was on his bike on Highway 28 going up Dollar Hill when he was struck from behind by a vehicle driven by 53-year-old Vicente Araujo of Kings Beach.

Araujo fled the scene of the accident, but then turned himself in later that night. Initially he was charged with felony hit and run. More charges are likely.

Araujo is on a “no bail hold” because authorities are investigating his immigration status.

— Lake Tahoe News staff report

Costco labels Bible as fiction

By Jason Wells, Los Angeles Times

A Costco in Simi Valley found itself in a flap this week after a local pastor posted a photo on Twitter showing Bibles at the big-box store labeled as fiction.

Caleb Kaltenbach, pastor of Discovery Church, came across the Bibles while shopping for a gift and tweeted the picture on Friday with the comment: “Costco has Bibles for sale under the genre of FICTION Hmmmm…”

That didn’t sit well with members of his congregation.

Read the whole story

Heavenly delays opening day until Saturday



Wind on Nov. 22 prevents Heavenly's gondola from running. Photo/LTN

Opening day didn't happen for Heavenly Mountain Resort today. Wind prevented anyone from getting on the Gondola, despite a couple dozen people braving the 20-something degree weather in hopes to getting on the mountain at 9am.

William Rust of Marina and Steve Luiz of Hollister came up Thursday night in anticipation of starting the ski season Nov. 22.

"We chose Heavenly because it always has the best grooming, especially in early season," Luiz told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The two friends hadn't decided if they would spend the night in Tahoe in hopes the winds die down and Heavenly can open Saturday.

George Awad of South Lake Tahoe was on the phone in his car in Harrah's parking lot Friday morning trying to find out what else was open.

Boreal is it for Tahoe resorts – as least on this Friday.

Mother Nature will dictate when other resorts open. Heavenly and Northstar are shooting for Nov. 23.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report