Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• The Optimist Club will be allowed to continue using the Lakeview Commons parking to sell Christmas trees.

• Terri Arnold of South Lake Tahoe will be the Carson Valley Visitors Authority's spokeswoman for its "Rugged. Relaxed. Reachable." ad campaign that will have her on horseback from Topaz Lake and the Pine Nut Mountains to the Tahoe Rim Trail.

• "Holiday Inn" will be shown at the South Lake Tahoe Library (1000 Rufus Allen Blvd.) on Nov. 23 at 10am for free.

• Truckee Aquatic Center's design is nearly complete. It will be on the Dec. 17 6pm agenda of the Truckee Planning Commission.

• Here is the El Dorado-Tahoe roadwork schedule from Caltrans for this week.

South Lake Tahoe salutes veterans



A gentle breeze has Old Glory swaying during the South Lake Tahoe Veterans Day ceremony. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Under partly sunny skies, the mood was somber as nearly 100 people gathered in South Lake Tahoe to honor veterans from near and afar.

Before the ceremony Monday morning, members of the local Moose Lodge placed 445 flags at Happy Homestead Cemetery to honor those who have served and since passed on.

Traditional words of sacrifice, honor and respect rang through the speeches given by those who have served, as well as local politicians who spoke.

Many in attendance at the American Legion carried small U.S. flags as symbols of their loyalty and gratitude for those who have served in the military.

Soroptimist International of Tahoe Sierra will be honoring female veterans at the Nov. 14 7:30am meeting at the South Lake Tahoe Senior Center.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

2013 Veterans Day

Maria DeLallo with the Black Bear Pipe Band plays during the Nov. 11, 2013, Veterans Day services in South Lake Tahoe at the American Legion.

Controlled burns at Meeks Bay, Taylor Creek

U.S. Forest Service fuels management crews will begin prescribed fire operations on South and West shores Nov. 12.

Weather and conditions permitting, operations will take place near Glenridge Parkway at Meeks Bay and near Taylor Creek on Highway 89 across from the sno-park. The Meeks Bay unit total is 42 acres and crews may burn as much of the unit as possible. At the Taylor Creek unit, crews will burn 10 acres. Both operations are likely to continue through the end of the week and possibly through the weekend.

Because of the project size at Meeks Bay, a significant amount of smoke may be seen rising from the project area and smoke will be visible on Highway 89. Smoke can also be expected in the Taylor Creek area. Smoke from prescribed fire may continue for several days after the initial ignition.

Forest Service staff will post road signs around the areas affected by the prescribed fire, send email notifications, and update the local fire information line at (530) 543.2600, ext. 6.

Calif. to help Ma Nature with cloud seeding

By Matt Weiser, Sacramento Bee

As California concludes a second drought year and water managers hope eagerly to avoid a third, utilities across the state are poised for that first mass of pillowy gray clouds to drift ashore from the Pacific Ocean.

When it arrives, if conditions are right, they'll be ready with cloud-seeding tools to squeeze out every extra snowflake, with the goal of boosting the snowpack that ultimately feeds the state's water-storage reservoirs.



Cloud seeding in the Sierra Nevada. Photo/DRI

Once viewed by some as a fringe science, cloud seeding has entered the mainstream as a tool to pad the state's crucial mountain snowpack. New technology to manage the practice, and research that points to reliable results, have cemented cloud seeding as a dependable and affordable water-supply practice.

"The message is starting to sink in that this is a cost-effective tool," said Jeff Tilley, director of weather

modification at the Desert Research Institute in Reno, which practices cloud seeding in the Lake Tahoe Basin and Eastern Sierra Nevada. “The technology is better; we understand how to do cloud seeding much better. And because we know how to do it more effectively, it’s definitely taken more seriously.”

Cloud seeding is often misunderstood as a kind of magic that conjures rain from thin air. In reality, it is simple chemistry combined with careful weather monitoring.

As practiced in California and elsewhere in the West, cloud seeding involves spraying fine particles of silver iodide into a cloud system to increase snowfall that is already underway or about to begin. Silver iodide causes water droplets within the clouds to form ice crystals. As the crystals grow larger, they become snowflakes, which fall out to create more snow than the storm would have generated on its own.

Read the whole story

El Dorado County has vacancy on ed board

Gene Rasmussen’s resignation from the El Dorado County board of education on Nov. 6 has created a vacancy for the Lake Tahoe region.

The board wants to appoint someone Dec. 10 to fill out the term which expires in November 2016. Residents of District 5 may apply. The deadline to submit an application is Dec. 3.

For more info, contact Janet Maruniak at (530) 295.2217 or jmaruniak@edcoe.org.

Holiday music at S. Tahoe library

The South Lake Tahoe Library will be filled with holiday music on Dec. 14 starting at 2pm.

Festive music will be provided by Dream Spirit. They will feature traditional Christmas tunes, and popular classics. Refreshments provided by Friends of the Library.

Entry is a non-perishable food item for Christmas Cheer.

The library is at 1000 Rufus Allen Blvd.

Impossible not to be wowed by Chef Irvine



Chef Robert Irvine proves he has a soft side at the South Lake Tahoe Food and Wine Festival. Photos/Jessie Marchesseau

By Jessie Marchesseau

STATELINE – Chef Robert Irvine's down-to-business attitude on "Restaurant: Impossible" can make him seem intimidating and unapproachable. In person, he is just the opposite.

An intimate dinner of less than 150 people gave guests an opportunity to interact personally with the chef. Irvine called the experience "bonding time" as he made it a point to stop at every table to chat, answer questions, take photos and sign copies of his cookbook.

At the various events, dressed in his signature jeans and T-shirt, Irvine took time to sign hundreds of autographs and have his photo taken with just as many fans.

Eating and drinking were the main activities at the 4th annual South Lake Tahoe Food and Wine Festival Nov. 9-10 at Harrah's and Harveys casinos. The sold-out two-day festival offered

guests a variety of experiences to choose from. Seven events allowed attendees a chance to learn something, taste something, drink something and/or rub elbows with a celebrity chef.

This year's star was Irvine, host of the Food Network television show "Restaurant: Impossible". Each year the festival highlights a different celebrity chef. Past years have brought names such as Martin Yan and Anthony Bourdain.



A chocolate sculpture by pastry chef Cathy Haynes featured at the Grand Market.

Saturday evening's Chef in the Kitchen event was a chance for diners to enjoy a three-course meal created by Irvine. He said he wanted the menu to be simple and classic.

"Doing the simplest thing and doing it well always wows people," Irvine said.

Harrah's pastry chef Cathy Haynes said Irvine came into the kitchens to introduce himself and shake hands with the rest of the staff, something that does not always happen when the celebrity chefs come to town.

“Robert Irvine was incredible. He went way above and beyond what we asked him to,” said John Packer, director of entertainment and public relations for Harrah’s and Harveys, told Lake Tahoe News. “He’s just really a great performer.”

At Saturday night’s Chef on Stage, Irvine on multiple occasions wandered through the audience of more than 700. He answered cooking questions, personal inquiries, business questions and spent time joking with audience members. One heckler was asked to join him on stage and stand there holding a fire extinguisher for several minutes. Another he brought up and asked to do an ape impression, but not before Irvine did one himself.

When he wasn’t mingling with the guests, Irvine was on stage cooking. Chef on Stage was an hourlong cooking demonstration. The night’s lesson was seared halibut with haricot verts potato salad. Steam rose from his saucepans as the smell of sautéing garlic and onions wafted through the South Shore Room. The fish, on the other hand, did not smell. Irvine even walked around asking people to smell the raw halibut fillet in his hand to emphasize his point: fresh fish does not smell fishy.

The finished product was what Irvine called “sexy food.” Just the smell in the room could make you salivate.

“Food is supposed to be fun and fictional, or factual, or just good,” he told the audience.

Irvine said he chose halibut for the Chef on Stage demonstration because he gets more questions on how to cook good fish than any other cooking inquiry.

“I tried to show everyone something simple and how to do it well,” he said.



Braised veal breast with balsamic fig conserve and candied bacon by chef Eric Vaughn.

Irvine calls himself a simple cook, with comfort foods being his favorite things to cook, and eat.

But Irvine was not the only chef serving up delectable delights during the festival. While he may have been the headliner, Saturday's Grand Market is the anchor event for the entire weekend. More than a thousand people filed into the Harrah's special events center for a chance to sample the selection of gourmet food, wines and liquors.

The market is a chance for Caesars Entertainment, the company that owns Harrah's and Harveys, to showcase chefs from various properties. Small booths lined the walls of the event center, each one offering a different tapas-sized treat or tasting-sized beverage.

Chefs from Caesars properties in Las Vegas, Reno and Tahoe demonstrated their creative talents with dishes specially invented for the event. More than one person, including my companion, declared the braised veal breast with balsamic fig conserve and candied bacon the best food there. Prepared by

Eric Vaughn, executive chef for Paris, Bally's and Planet Hollywood casino-hotels in Las Vegas, the dish is something he described as incredibly labor-intensive. Even though it had rave reviews from tasters, will never make it onto the menu at any of his restaurants.

By far the most popular food station of the market, and my personal favorite, was Haynes'. It was the only one offering sweets, and unlike most tasting stations which only offered one dish, she and her staff prepared more than half a dozen bite-sized options for guests to try. In this case, Haynes said some of the more popular ones might actually make their way onto menus.

Also on her table were two chocolate showpieces created by Haynes and her pastry staff: a crate of "South Lake Tahoe Wine" bottles surrounded by fall leaves and a tall steam punk-esque sculpture with various gears and parts, both made entirely of chocolate.

"This is such a fun event," she said of the festival. "It's the one time of year we get to be creative."

In between tastings, visitors were entertained by cooking demonstrations with Andy LoRusso, "The Singing Chef," and an appearance and photo opportunities with Irvine. The aroma of LoRusso's Bellini's Pasta Norma filled the air, as did the sounds of him singing Italian songs while he cooked.

We spent nearly two hours tasting gourmet delights and mouth-watering wines, and though the Grand Market is just the kickoff event for an entire weekend of culinary affairs, we left feeling satisfied and humming the old-world Italian tunes of The Singing Chef.

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Believe it or not, Cheerio and Chex are from the same litter. Their mother is an Italian Greyhound, and their father is a Border terrier.

They are 11 months old, and both weigh about 10 pounds and need to gain some weight.

Cheerio looks like a purebred Italian Greyhound, while Chex has the body of a Greyhound with the wiry fur and head of a terrier. Both are nice little dogs with long legs who are a bit nervous in the shelter. They would love to go home soon, either together or separately.

Cheerio and Chex are spayed/neutered, microchipped, and vaccinated. They are at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many other dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes.

Go online or check out the shelter's Facebook page to see photos and descriptions of all pets at the shelter.

Call (530) 573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet.

For spay-neuter assistance for South Tahoe residents, go online.

– Karen Kuentz

Opinion: Time to discuss the cost of war

By Jackie Speier

I know someone who worked 15 straight months without a vacation. This isn't that remarkable, perhaps, save for the fact that this person was a platoon sergeant in Iraq. He didn't want to leave his men, although some left him on a gurney. He says point-blank, "If I'd been over there for my country, I would have left sooner, but I stayed because of my men."

This attitude of protecting those who fight with you is an aspect of being a veteran that is not easily understood by the public. I sometimes get the impression that, viewing war from the comfort of a living room, people believe our troops are waving the flag while they search for terrorists in the desert. The reality is much different.

Our men and women in Iraq and Afghanistan were solidly committed to keeping each other alive. The same could be said for those who served in Vietnam.

Ari Sonnenberg is an Iraq platoon sergeant who says he excels at getting his unit out of an ambush. He left combat four years ago and the ambush-evasion skills are as strong as ever – it's the other coping skills (marriage, a job, sleeping) that remain a challenge. He's turned to artistic expression to help him regain his life.

Last month the Commonwealth Club of California hosted a public forum in San Francisco to share the experiences and views of those who have served in our military services. I put together

the program for “The Art and Soul of Combat Veterans” because I firmly believe we need a stronger dialogue on the cost of war – not simply the dollars spent but the taxing of the human soul.

We hear talk of limited wars and political pledges to avoid putting boots on the ground, but still our troops are killed or suffer lifelong injuries while the regions where we sacrificed lives – our troops’ and those of innocents – often return to their lawless state after we leave.

The American public, especially Congress, should hear more about combat from those who aren’t paid to represent a point of view. We need to hear directly from the unsung heroes.

Take Korean War veteran Pete McCloskey Jr., who served in Congress from 1967 to 1983. He is a former Marine, awarded the Silver Star for heroism and twice awarded a Purple Heart. He told me recently that if more members of Congress were military veterans, we’d be less likely to send our troops into harm’s way.

But veterans are fading from Congress – in 1977 there were 412 in Congress compared with 104 today.

I’ve never served in the military, although I know violence, having been shot by a People’s Temple cult member. I went to Afghanistan in 2010 to see the civil turmoil. The message I heard was simple and direct: the Afghan people wanted us out of their country.

It is unrealistic to expect our citizenry to witness the dialogue first-hand in war zones. But there are opportunities in our country to at least hear perspectives from those who have taken fire, seen death and destruction, and returned home to live with their memories.

Our program featureed three veterans who have turned to art to deal with their struggles. Sonnenberg, the platoon sergeant,

paints and takes photographs related to the burdens and the hope he brought home with him. His personal goal is to get through each day.

Michelle Wilmot was both an Army medic in Iraq and a member of an elite women's unit – Team Lioness – that conducted high-risk house raids and searches for explosives. But some of the hostile forces were women who served with her. She endured ridicule and harassment over her ethnicity – Pacific Islander. What she has to say is conveyed in her paintings and writings.

Drew Mendelson was an artillery officer in Vietnam. He's had more than 40 years to adjust to life at home, but Vietnam, at times, is still as vivid to him as yesterday. That comes through loud and clear in his new book, "Song Ba To." He teaches writing as a means to personal recovery for those seeking help at the Sacramento Vet Center.

The perspectives of these three combat veterans are but a few of the divergent views coming from our veteran community. I know that some who served might not agree with parts of the dialogue. And I expect dissent among the public, from those who fear more terrorist attacks and the continued threat of weapons of mass destruction, to those who think we've overstepped our role as global enforcers of peace.

But I trust there is strong agreement that there is a tragic cost to our engagement in global wars and that we, as a free society, must devote more resources to understanding the full ramifications of that cost. As we know, it will be with us for generations to come.

Rep. Jackie Speier, D-Hillsborough, represents the 14th Congressional District. She serves on the House Armed Services Committee.