Safety concerns remain at American Fire site

The snow and rain that fell on the American Fire area over the weekend did not put the fire out. Smoke is still evident, especially in the northeast corner of the fire near Cavanah Ridge and Robinson Flat.

The area near Foresthill is still hazardous, and consequently the closure order is still in place. Officials are citing multiple violators daily and escorting them from the fire area.

Private landowners are being issued day passes on a case-by-case basis based on current fire activity and location.

Crews are extinguishing hot spots near containment lines and patrolling the perimeter. The first stage of suppression repair work is finished. The initial Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) emergency stabilization measures within the fire area will begin as soon as possible.

Smoky conditions will fluctuate with weather changes. People traveling on open roads near the fire area for recreation or other purposes may also experience extra traffic and intermittent smoke.

Petanque growing in popularity in S. Tahoe

Tony Lyle won Lake Tahoe Petanque Club’s inaugural competition.

After a tightly fought game, Lyle beat Steve Heslop in the finals of the adult singles class.

In an ironic coincidence Scott Heslop (son of Steve Heslop) defeated Noah Lyle (son of Tony Lyle) to be crowned champion in the junior class. The competition was Sept. 22.



Jessica Williams plays a round of petanque. Photo/Provided

Petanque takes about 20 minutes to learn, is not too physically demanding and can be played on a range of surfaces, except grass, concrete or asphalt. Petanque or boules, as the game is also known, are not the same as bocce ball, but similar. Bocce is of Italian descent and is more of a bowling game. The French game of petanque is more of a tossing game. Bocce balls are rolled palm up whereas petanque balls or boules are thrown palm down to get a backspin. Petanque boules are about the size of an orange.

The club has been meeting weekly during the summer at members' private homes. The goal is to create a public location for the club to meet and play.

The club is affiliated with the Federation of Petanque USA and the International Federation of Petanque and Jeu Provencal (FIPJP). The Lake Tahoe Petanque Club is an informal, casual club and welcomes players of all abilities, ages and nationalities. For more information visit the club website.

Time for Tahoe to be a hub for the arts

By Robert Schimmel

On Sept. 17, the City Council addressed the recent issue of the ordinance regarding Temporary Arts and Crafts Fairs, and it was heartening to see how the process went. With the council apparently leaning (3-2) in committed fashion to cutting the fairs from 12 to four per summer starting in 2014, speakers in defense of the status quo spoke passionately against the change.

I added my comments at the end in support of the "big picture" of the Arts in Tahoe and will come back to that.



Robert Schimmel

The heartening part during the council's discussion and was that one member appeared open to new information and a consequent altered position. Hal Cole, in humorous fashion, accepted responsibility for this issue coming to the floor circuitously, so his questions and responses appeared to be

quite sincere as he weighed facts and opinions. The ultimate act of wisdom came from Mayor Tom Davis when he made the motion to back off the draconian cut of 12 to four and moved that it be 10 for 2014 with a reduction of two per year until four is reached in 2017, supposedly.

This motion was seconded and approved 3-2 (Conner, Davis and Cole), which showed Cole's willingness to adjust in response to the evidence, and needs of the parties affected, including the city's future loss of revenue from this reduction.

In recognition of the case made for a "high end" image to which I also aspire, there is no reason that arts and crafts fairs can't be upgraded to help make and sustain an everyday economy that means "Tahoe = Art+". Fears that such fairs and/or larger festivals compete with galleries, etc. has some merit, but it's lopsided in that different clientele patronize each venue.

The "pie" is not static or limited. The competing art venues actually create more business for each other, and the more people we attract, the more adjacent spending occurs within the community. Art Meccas all around the country have very successful outdoor festivals on a regular basis, but they didn't get that way overnight. We need to work with those making the fairs possible, create or delegate a city liaison to work on a long term image/vision with such people, and make this a town known for its ongoing cultural life supported by local, professional talent and others. Taos, Jackson Hole, Park City, Scottsdale, Santa Fe, etc. have less natural talent and resources and have done it. Why not Tahoe?

This addresses the big picture of how Tahoe itself needs to come together and promote a vision that attracts visitors based on what is here and God given: our rare, stunning geography plus its resulting unlimited recreational possibilities. Arts and culture tied to geo-tourism sound like a winner to me in response to our needs for diversification of

our economic base that has too long depended on the casinos. In South Lake Tahoe, are we willing to build a foundation for long-term growth that can include all the areas represented by environmental, medical, geo-tourism, the arts and clean industries? Will we strive to build up our communities around cultural excellence and an educational system that has incredible potential in its improving elementary magnet schools' programs, its impressive South Tahoe High School TADA and extensive Lake Tahoe Community College arts, music, theater programs and facilities?

Currently, too many rules and regulations squelch creativity and make it impossible for artists and promoters to put Tahoe on the map as "the place to shop for and experience amazing art exhibitions, public art happenings, etc." We have lost and will continue to lose participating artists even if they remain in the area. Why not encourage our own and attract other world-class artists, musicians, performers, etc.? Many new ideas and opportunities are already here and the upscale direction is right under your noses with redevelopment, new technologies, etc. Regulations are part of the problem; we must corral them and put energy into developing an attitude of how to succeed not you can't.

Let's join with the countless efforts to create such change through citizen-based groups like the lake Tahoe Sustainability Collaborative, which is working around the lake to build common ground and opportunities for year round stability and a place for families to grow with a real future ahead. And what should our city and local governances be doing? Laying the pathways and groundwork for making such efforts viable by allowing individuals to create and compete.

Robert Schimmel is a professional artist in South Lake Tahoe as well as host of "Lake Tahoe Art Scene" on KTHO radio on Thursdays at 5:15pm.

Tahoe docs offer solutions for low back pain

By Kathryn Reed

Two doctors with different approaches to low pain spelled out options for people last week during a lecture at Lake Tahoe Community College.

Michael Fry and Peter Costa are part of Barton Health's team. Fry is an orthopedic surgeon focusing on the spine and sports medicine. Costa is a physiatrist, specializing in physical medicine and rehabilitation.

About 75 percent of adults will have low back pain at some point. It doesn't mean it will be serious or require surgery. But according to stats presented at the Sept. 19 lecture, low back pain is the No. 2 reason people visit their primary care physician. In the United States, 25 million people miss at least one day of work each year because of low back pain. The direct health care cost of low back pain is $25 billion a year.



Peter Costa, a doctor with Barton Health, talks about

his approach to low back pain. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Some of the causes are hereditary. Smoking is a contributor because the nicotine reduces the flow of blood and discs in the back naturally lack a good supply of blood.

Sitting hunched over – like many people do at a computer – is a huge stressor on the low back. Or sitting like many of the nearly 70 people did at the talk in the college desks is another example of how posture is key.

“While we sit here all of our discs are degenerating,” Costa said. “As a disc degenerates, it gets sloppy in there. That’s when you get instability.”

Yet at the same time bending forward often decreases the pain because the canals open up and the symptoms go away.

But the problem is not always where the pain is. Kidneys, stomach and liver issues can cause low back pain, as does constipation, urinary tract infections, and uterus and ovary problems.

“You want to make sure you don’t miss a hip problem when you have back pain,” Fry said.

A series of exams and tests are regular protocols with Fry. Pain meds, epidurals and surgery are all possible treatments.

“An operation treats the symptoms of spinal stenosis. Degeneration is ongoing,” Fry said.

He said with surgery one can expect about 85 percent decrease in butt and leg pain and 65 percent decrease in back pain.

For Costa, as a physiatrist, he is treating the whole person and not just where the pain is. It’s a nonsurgical approach to medical care.

“I definitely take an educational approach. I believe the more you know about the problem, the more control you have,” Costa said.

Costa talks to patients about the medications they are on to determine if that could be the source of the pain. He asks about life issues to analyze how stress may be physically affecting a person.

“Epidurals control the pain. They don’t fix the problem,” Costa said.

When the pain comes on the doctors say don’t stay in bed all day. Do some gentle stretches and take anti-inflammatory meds. If pain lasts for a few weeks, see a doctor. And see a doctor immediately, they said, if there is a fever, numbness in the legs or uncontrolled bladder.

Letter: High praise for South Tahoe High School

To the community,

On Sept. 19 I attended the South Tahoe High School Fall Term Welcome. Wow! To say I was amazed and impressed would be to put it mildly.

This is my second freshman year as a parent, with a 15 year gap between my boys. Last school year was our first year back as parents of an LTUSD student. My youngest attended St. Theresa’s from K-7. He, and we as a family, had a wonderful experience and recommend it highly. My oldest attended LTUSD

schools from K-12 and had a wonderful experience, as did I as a parent. So as my youngest entered STMS, I had high hopes and expectations for his and our experience. Well, needless to say my expectations and hopes were not only realized, but were far above my expectations.

And then last Thursday I went to the Fall Term Welcome. At the risk of being redundant, let me say it again (capitalized), WOW! What I saw and heard floored me. A state of the art facility occupied by a teaching staff that would make Dan Wilvers and I coaching together look like we were dormice standing still. (Inside joke, ask Dan about, he tells the better version.) I'm talking some serious passion and commitment within the hearts of those that are helping to shape and guide our children towards the future, and that future is a large part of the emphasis in this curriculum and those that teach and administrate it.

I'm totally stoked and looking forward to these next four years!

Toogee Sielsch, South Lake Tahoe

P.S. Ivone [Larson], I knew you were destined to achieve great things when you were Justin's teacher at Al Tahoe, and when you put together that Summer Spanish Immersion program.

Climate change scientists on the spot

By Monte Morin, Los Angeles Times

It's a climate puzzle that has vexed scientists for more than

a decade and added fuel to the arguments of those who insist man-made global warming is a myth.

Since just before the start of the 21st century, the Earth's average global surface temperature has failed to rise despite soaring levels of heat-trapping greenhouse gases and years of dire warnings from environmental advocates.

Now, as scientists with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change gather in Sweden this week to approve portions of the IPCC's fifth assessment report, they are finding themselves pressured to explain this glaring discrepancy.

The panel, a United Nations creation that shared the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize with Al Gore, hopes to brief world leaders on the current state of climate science in a clear, unified voice. However, experts inside and outside the process say members probably will engage in heated debate over the causes and significance of the so-called global warming hiatus.

"It's contentious," said IPCC panelist Shang-Ping Xie, a professor of climate science at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego. "The stakes have been raised by various people, especially the skeptics."

Though scientists don't have any firm answers, they do have multiple theories. Xie has argued that the hiatus is the result of heat absorption by the Pacific Ocean – a little-understood, naturally occurring process that repeats itself every few decades. Xie and his colleagues presented the idea in a study published last month in the prestigious journal Nature.

Read the whole story

Al Goldberg – 1937-2013

Albert N. (Al) Goldberg, a resident of South Lake Tahoe since 1994, died Aug. 15 after a battle with colon cancer.

A memorial service will be Sept. 29 at 1:30pm at Temple Bat Yam, 3260 Pioneer Trail, South Lake Tahoe.

Al moved to Lake Tahoe from Los Angeles to become public relations manager of Harveys Resort Hotel & Casino after an extensive career in public relations and journalism. He retired in 2006 after 12 years with Harveys and Harrah's.



Al Goldberg

He had been active in Temple Bat Yam, the Jewish congregation serving Lake Tahoe, Carson City and the Carson Valley, serving as president from 1998-2000. He also served as treasurer and as a board member for many years.

Born Dec. 16, 1937, in Toledo, Ohio, he graduated from Bowling Green State University in Ohio with a joint degree in public relations and journalism. He worked as a reporter and editor for 18 years for the Associated Press and the Toledo Blade for which he served as a political writer and business editor in the 1970s. He also won a fellowship in business and economics from Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh.

After leaving the field of journalism in 1978 Goldberg began a second career in public relations, serving as public relations manager of Jeep Corporation in Toledo from 1978-1981 after

which he moved to Los Angeles as a senior vice president of Hill & Knowlton, then the world's largest public relations agency. His major clients were Mazda Automobiles, Bridgestone Tires and Hitachi Electronics, he founded and was co-director of Hill & Knowlton's Japanese business division which served public relations needs of then-burgeoning Japanese companies moving to the United States.

Al moved to Lake Tahoe from Los Angeles to become public relations manager of Harveys Resort Hotel & Casino after an extensive career in public relations and journalism. He retired in 2006 after 12 years with Harveys and Harrah's.

He had been active in Temple Bat Yam, the Jewish congregation serving Lake Tahoe, Carson City and the Carson Valley, serving as president from 1998-2000. He also served as treasurer and as a board member for many years.

Goldberg is survived by his wife Ellen, who is active in several Lake Tahoe women's organizations, and by his daughter Lauren and grandson Dean of Las Vegas: son Andy of Los Angeles, and granddaughter Michelle of Denver.; step children Debra Silverman (Chris Hebert), Gregg Silverman (Carolyn) and Lauren Wilson (Nathan), and six step-grandchildren.

Gaming Expo lacking on innovation

By Ed Komenda, Las Vegas Sun

Call it the year of movie-themed moneymakers.

Gambling insiders expect this year's Global Gaming Expo to be light on breakthroughs but heavy on pop culture. The convention's most-anticipated games this year center around popular movies and pop stars of the last century.

And while the subjects are wildly popular, analysts say manufacturers' growing reliance on such a tried-and-true formula dampens investors' interest in the industry.

"The show is becoming a little less mandatory," said Chad Beynon, an analyst with Macquarie Research in Manhattan. "Now, so many of the companies are coming up with products similar to their peers."

G2E opened today at the Las Vegas Sands Convention Center.

Read the whole story

Kids fun runs part of annual marathon events

As part of the Lake Tahoe Marathon, the Optimist Club is putting on a free set of Kids Fun Runs at Pope Beach on Sept. 28 starting at 2pm.

The kids start at the finish line gantry of the regular finish line of the Sunday marathon races.

Age divisions are 1 to 13. Distances are from 30 yards for the toddlers to one mile for 13 year olds. Boys and girls have separate divisions.

Sign up at Pope Beach starting at 1pm. Races start at 2pm with the toddlers.

Optimists will supply finishers medal to all kids, hot dogs and drinks. All of this is free.

There is limited parking inside Pope Beach for this event.

Most will have to park outside and walk in or bike in.

Home canners should have equipment inspected

With people choosing to grow more of their own food, they are also doing their own canning. And, “pressure-canning,” using a pressure canner, is becoming increasing popular.

However, in order to ensure food safety and prevent botulism, those using this canning method should have their pressure canners inspected each year, including having the canners’ dial gauge that measures the pressure tested.



University of Nevada Cooperative Extension encourages those using pressure canners to have their canners inspected. Photo/Melody Hefner

This fall, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension is offering this service at its Washoe County office.

It is recommended that those using pressure canners make an appointment with to have canners inspected and the canner’s pressure gauge tested.

If a pressure gauge is found to be faulty, the canner can make adjustments in cooking time to make up for the inaccurate gauge; or, better yet, the canner can replace the gauge for about $10 to $20. Pressure canners can also have other problems, such as cracked seals.

The inspection and the testing of the pressure gauge takes five to 10 minutes.

The inspection and pressure gauge testing costs $5 and is conducted at the Washoe County Cooperative Extension office, 4955 Energy Way in Reno. Call (775) 336.0274 or email turnerc@unce.unr.edu for an appointment.