Smoke, wildfire protection go hand-in-hand

By Mandy Kendall

With the effects of wildfires evident all around us during the last few days, it is not easy to ignore the potential threat that is on our very own doorstep, and in our own backyards.

The smoke is an ever present reminder that we live in a potentially hazardous place that requires respect and preparation.



Mandy Kendall

With that in mind, I decided to devote this week's *Qwik-e* tips for prevention of, protection from, and preparation for wildfires. Many of these will be familiar, common sense tactics but it doesn't do any harm to go over them.

Prevention

• Defensible space – Far too much information to go into here but CalFire have a great website with information about defensible space preparation, emergency kits etc.

• Chipping service – Keeping your yard clear of dead, dry foliage can be a huge help in preventing possible fires around your home. Your local fire prevention team may offer a service where they will come to your property and turn shrub and tree debris into wood chip (and some offer to haul the chip away

too).

• Open flames – It goes without saying that any open flame is an accident waiting to happen. Candles, barbecues, fires, etc should certainly not be left unattended (or even lighted in the first place), but you should also consider things like cigarettes that you think you may have extinguished but are really still smoldering and just waiting to catch something on fire. Think about having a fire bucket with sand in it for proper outside disposal of things like cigarettes and matches.

Protection

• Masks – Many are not designed to filter out much more than large particles of dust (during construction, etc.) so do not rely on them to protect you from the smoke particles unless the packaging indicates otherwise.

• Exercise – Any exertion outside will increase the amount of smoke inhalation and potential lung damage. Keep activity to a minimum. Try exercising in a gym, or taking your walks in an enclosed area like a shopping mall.

• Portable air purifiers – These can be very effective at clearing the airspace in your home. At least two are suggested. One for the living area and one for the bedroom, as it can take up to two hours to clear the air in a room so it would not be effective immediately if you were to take it from your living room to your bedroom with you.

• AC – In the house and in the car, can be effective in helping to recycle air indoors rather than keep bringing fresh polluted air from outside. Just make sure that you keep the fresh air intake closed so you just recycle air only. Also be sure to check the filters, as they will likely need changing more frequently.

• Children and pets – These two groups are potentially more vulnerable than others. Their respiration rates are higher

than adults so they breathe in more air, especially when active. Try to keep them indoors as much as possible. Keep a look out for running red eyes, sneezing or coughing. Doctors and vets can offer advice on how best to treat the effects of smoke inhalation.

• Cleaning – Dust surfaces with a damp cloth to help prevent stirring the settled ash up into the air again. Some vacuums will also just re-distribute the ash into the atmosphere so limit vacuuming if possible.

Preparation

• Supplies – A large supply of water contained near your house may help extinguish a fire as well as provide drinking water in an emergency.

• Personal documents – Keeping important personal and family documents in one place will make emergency evacuations quick and simple.

• Family exit plan – Have a practice run with your family to make sure everyone knows the quickest way out of the house from every room. Agree on a meeting place, away from the house, for everyone to gather at following an evacuation. Appoint someone you know, who lives away from your area, as a central contact point. Should you be unable to connect with any of your family during an emergency you will at least have one person that everyone calls to let them know they are safe.

Until next time.

Mandy Kendall operates Health Connective in South Lake Tahoe, which aligns wellness seekers with their ideal wellness provider. If you have questions, would like some advice, or would like to request some Qwik-e tips on any health and well-being topic, drop her an email at connect@healthconnective.com or keep an eye out on Lake Tahoe News for regular Qwik-e tips on how to make healthy changes one Quick and Easy step at a

time.

It was downright Fun – period



Fun's high-energy music kept people on their feet all night Aug. 27 at Harveys. Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Susan Wood

STATELINE – Against a hazy, blood-orange Sierra Nevada sky, indie band Fun lived up to its name with a red-hot performance that energized a youthful crowd at Harveys Lake Tahoe this week.

The electric production is one of the last of the outdoor concert series as the summer winds down.

John Packer, Harrah’s spokesman and entertainment director, was optimistic Tuesday night before the show because the poor air quality from the massive Rim Fire raging in the Yosemite area had improved. He promised a “smokin’ good time” based on the promise of Fun, with the help of opening synthpop act Tegan and Sara of Canada.

And boy, Fun delivered – period.

After a stunning performance by sister duo Tegan and Sara, the three core members of Fun, the high-energy New York-based band led by vocalist Nate Ruess, entered the dark stage in tuxedos and quickly tore them off as if stripping themselves of all inhibitions.

Take the bellowing vocal chords of U2’s Bono, the perfectly synchronized ’70s rock band Yes with Rick Wakeman and the pulsating rhythms of David Byrne’s Talking Heads – and throw in Styx, Queen and Electric Light Orchestra – and you’ve got a new generation’s modern-day band with a dynamic stage presence, diverse music style and even a civil rights conscience. (The band has brought the Ally Coalition and Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays on tour with them to support LGBTQ equality.)

“It’s really important for Jack (Antonoff, Fun guitarist) to cultivate a safe space (for the LGBT community),” Michael White of Boston, who has toured with the band in 15 cities, told Lake Tahoe News. He was joined at the Stateline concert tables by local volunteer Betti Christensen of Minden who was there in support of her gay nephew “to protect him from the big bad world.”



Sara and Tegan are destined to be headliners.

Serious activism aside, Fun soon showed how the band raked in last year's Grammy Award for Best New Artist and another for Song of the Year, "We Are Young" – which had the Harveys crowd roaring and mouthing all the words near the end of the show. In the bridge where the song stops before the chorus, one could hear a rare silence.

For the entire show, the audience stood in anticipation of what would happen next on stage and on the flashy giant video screen behind it.

Ruess, with Antonoff and keyboardist Andrew Dost, wove a web of recognizable and lesser-known tunes and fed off the enthusiasm of the audience.

Their hit single "Carry On" had the entire crowd dancing, swaying and singing. They even brought out their version of an old favorite, the Rolling Stones' "You Can't Always Get What You Want." The baby boomers danced and sang in unison to that number.

They were often personable and seemed so enthused to be in Tahoe that Ruess pledged to bring the band back during another tour. This one, which started July 6 and ends in September, is expected to be followed by the making of another album to follow the ever-popular "Some Nights." The title track was the encore of the night, upon the demands of thousands of dedicated, screaming fans.



Nate Ruess rarely stops moving on stage.

The adoration and respect was reciprocated when, in so many words, Ruess and Antonoff broke between songs to tell the locals among the crowd how lucky they are to live in paradise – despite the residual smoke. He reminded those who may fret over the smoky haze that he was unsure he could even sing a few days ago. But Ruess was so spot on with the melodies his vocals could fill Yosemite Valley.

“I’m so sorry it smells like a wilderness campfire,” Ruess said, after declaring it was the first time the band spent time in the Tahoe region. The band apparently took full advantage of the three-day experience, going out on Jet Skis and golfing. He added the band members liked Edgewood Tahoe so much they let the cost of the activities cut into the show’s proceeds.

Fun was not alone in their fun that night.

The up-and-coming band Tegan and Sara – with a loyal following of their own electro-induced sounds and deep, angst-filled lyrics – insisted a few times how they enjoyed coming to Tahoe.

Tegan Quin especially liked watching some people chair

dancing.

“We are thrilled to be here,” she yelled out to the crowd. This was a notable tip of the hat to Tahoe from a duo that country sensation Taylor Swift singled out as a favorite act of hers to listen to. The Quin sisters have enjoyed a diverse appeal through the years, touring with the Pretenders, Neil Young, The Killers and Cyndi Lauper. They recently performed for a Major League Baseball Fan Cave online concert.

The Harveys show was a testament to vibrant, synthesizer-driven keyboards in concert with flashy images on the video screen behind the duo and the three-member backup band.

Mostly, it was the dark side of the lovelorn that the Quin sisters belted out in their self-written lyrics. They both seemed to be in a perpetual breakup. But in the music world, that’s what so many in the fan base can relate to. In their popular “I Was a Fool,” the lyrics appeared to bleed down the video screen. It was almost reassuring between sets when they smiled and seemed jovial.

The show turned a little torchy with their hit “Closer,” with lyrics highlighting the excitement of sexual energy between two people. Anyone who’s lived through puberty, high school or even the exhilaration of the pursuit could relate.

“There’s something so liberating about their music. It’s amazing with an ’80s influence. I feel they’re charismatic and honest on stage,” said Taylor Gaddy of Reno, who has listened to Tegan and Sara for three years.

And yet there is more to come before the summer closes its doors at the Harveys Lake Tahoe outdoor concert series.

Country superstar Brad Paisley hits the arena tonight, the Dave Matthews Band comes to Tahoe Sept. 4 and rock band Journey follows 10 days later.

Opinion: Barton paying attention to what patients want

By Christine O’Farrell

Hospitals can be scary places for many. Patients are usually in pain or scared and friends or family members worried. You are also putting your care (and sometimes your life) in the hands of experts who are unfamiliar to you.

Except in an emergency, people have a choice of where they trust their health care. In a consumer perception survey done in the region in 2009, over 90 percent of respondents said they would travel over 40 miles for care if they felt it was better elsewhere. Barton recognizes this and has taken it to heart by making significant investments in patient safety, quality of care, and patient satisfaction.

Barton Memorial Hospital was recently recognized as one of the most improved hospitals in California in patient safety by the California Hospital Engagement Network. Focusing on 10 clinical areas of improvement against 174 other hospitals in the state, Barton showed a 75 percent improvement in patient safety over the last three years and has won three awards that recognize these great efforts. The benchmark for California hospitals was 40 percent, so we are proud of our great progress.



Christine
O’Farrell

Barton is a learning organization that takes a critical look at adverse events in order to identify opportunities for improvement so we can significantly reduce the risk of harm to future patients. We do this by implementing evidence based best practices. To promote our transparency and to learn more, Barton has dedicated a section of our website to quality measures.

Barton utilizes a nationwide patient satisfaction survey to gain feedback on a number of patient experience factors including communication, pain, food, quietness and cleanliness. The hospital has made significant strides in patient perception, improving from 53.4 percent of patients rating Barton a 9 or 10 out of 10 in late 2009, to 78.5 percent of patients rating Barton a 9 or 10 out of 10 as of March 31, 2013.

The latest score brings Barton into the top 17 percent of all hospitals in the United States and well above the California state average for patient experience.

Patient satisfaction improvement initiatives continue and we are proud of our achievements that have gained attention from several hospitals nationally and internationally who have come to visit us to learn best practices.

Last year, Barton Memorial Hospital once again earned the Joint Commission’s Gold Seal of Approval for accreditation by demonstrating compliance with the Joint Commission’s national

standards for health care quality and safety in hospitals. This voluntary process and accreditation award recognizes Barton's dedication to continuous compliance with the Joint Commission's state-of-the-art standards.

A team of Joint Commission expert surveyors arrived unannounced and evaluated Barton Memorial Hospital for compliance with standards of care specific to the needs of patients. In achieving Joint Commission accreditation, Barton has demonstrated its commitment to the highest level of care for its patients.

Barton is making a significant investment in quality on a daily basis and continues to put an emphasis on maintaining excellence and continually improving the care we provide. Barton is proud to be a leader in initiatives that improve patient care. While I hope that you will never have to come to Barton in an emergency, I wanted to share the good work and positive steps so you can feel comfortable and proud of your hometown hospital.

Christine O'Farrell is director of quality for Barton Health.

Park City told to leave; calls Vail 'bully'

By Christopher Smart and Mike Gorrell, Salt Lake Tribune

Park City Mountain Resort (PCMR) took a broadside Wednesday in its legal dispute over ski terrain and is pointing at Vail Resorts as the "bully."

Toronto-based Talisker Land Holdings LLC, which recently

leased Canyons Resort near Park City to Vail, served an eviction notice to PCMR, giving it until Monday to vacate 2,800 acres of ski terrain.

Salt Lake City-based attorney Alan Sullivan, who represents PCMR, said his client will respond aggressively to the eviction notice. “We aren’t leaving the property.”

Park City, like all ski resorts, is now selling season passes and vows to continue operations throughout the upcoming ski season.

“Vail’s eviction notice is nothing more than a bald-faced attempt to circumvent the litigation already in process and interfere with our business,” Jenni Smith, president and general manager, said in a statement. “We will not give in to Vail’s bullying.”

John Lund, Talisker’s attorney, downplayed the eviction notice and its timing. He called it a procedural matter and said Vail has no interest in disrupting PCMR’s business.

Read the whole story

Sporting events canceled because of smoke

The NIAA on Thursday afternoon canceled all school sporting events on Aug. 30-31 for schools in El Dorado, Douglas, Mono, Carson, Washoe, Storey, Lyon and Churchill counties.

This is because the air quality is so poor. Most of the smoke that is lingering in these areas is from the Rim Fire burning near Yosemite.

The NIAA contests could be scheduled in a county other than one of the eight mentioned.

South Tahoe High School will play Friday's football games at El Dorado High School in Placerville.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Liberty Utilities issues scam warning

Liberty Utilities is warning the public that individuals claiming to represent Liberty and demanding payment over the phone have been reported by its customers.

Liberty Utilities representatives do not place calls to customers for payment.

Liberty encourages customers who receive such a call 800.782.2506.

Minimum wage an ongoing issue

By Eleazar David Melendez, Huffington Post

Even as he'd confidently promised before television cameras in January that he would deliver an astounding increase in the minimum wage, the president knew it would be a difficult

fight. Unprecedented federal debt and thorny unemployment weighed heavily on Washington, both cautioning against forcing businesses to give low-paid workers a raise.

The president’s own top economic expert had told him the government shouldn’t further distort the dynamics of the free market. Big business was adamantly against the plan.

And Congress? That lot of obstructionist conservatives and their “do nothing” attitude would relish any chance to get in the administration’s way, especially if its members could call him a “socialist” and once again bring up his controversial universal health care plan.

So it was in 1949, when President Harry Truman declared the federal minimum wage ought to be nearly doubled, from 40 cents an hour to 75 cents. Using a measure of what minimum-wage earners could purchase with that amount compared with the rest of society, the 1949 increase is roughly the equivalent of a wage today jumping to $10.70 from $5.70.

As labor activists across the U.S. begin a round of Labor Day strikes this week in a bid to increase the wages of low-paid workers, raising the minimum wage from $7.25 to $15 has become a rallying cry of the boldest proposals. With most political forecasters declaring President Obama’s more modest call for a minimum wage raise to $9 dead in the water, the idea of more than doubling the minimum wage is generally dismissed as fanciful.

Read the whole story

Tahoe National Forest closures remain; 1 road to open

The Tahoe National Forest intends to reopen the entire Mosquito Ridge Road to all traffic at 8am Aug. 30.

A portion of the road has been closed for public and firefighter safety as a result of the American Fire burning in Placer County northeast of Foresthill.

To ensure continued public and firefighter safety during wildfire suppression and rehabilitation activities, the entire fire area, including all roads and trails within the following described area, remains closed: west of Deadwood Ridge Road, south of Foresthill Divide Road, east of Flat Ravine Road, and north of Mosquito Ridge Road.

The following Forest Service Roads on the American Fire area perimeter are still closed until further notice:

· Deadwood Ridge Road (FSR 6149) from Foresthill Divide Road (FSR 0088) to the road's end.

· Foresthill Divide Road (FSR 0088) from the intersection of Humbug Canyon Road (FSR 66) to Robinson Flat.

· Flat Ravine Road (FSR 43) from Robinson Flat Campground to Mosquito Ridge Road (FSR 96).

Popular recreation sites within the fire area that remain closed are:

· The Western States Trail (Forest Trail 16E10) from the Michigan Bluff trailhead to Robinson Flat.

· Trail Loop 6 (FSR 11-44, the Codfish Loop) at its

intersection with Tie 5-6 (FSR 11-38) on Mitchell Mine Road (FSR 88-11).

· Robinson Flat Campground.

For more info, call (530) 367.2224.

Ex-El Dorado resident going to prison for 4+ years

Former El Dorado County resident Daniel Chartraw, 40, was sentenced today to four years and nine months in prison and was ordered to pay $2.8 million in restitution.

Chartraw pleaded guilty to wire fraud charges in January.

According to court documents, between Jan. 1, 2007, and Nov. 31, 2011, Chartraw defrauded investors through false representations regarding a variety of investments, including investments in mines, mining and refinery equipment, oil commodities, precious metals concentrate, and multimillion-dollar certificates of deposit.

In one instance, Chartraw stole $1 million by fraudulently posing as an owner and manager of a company selling “dore” bars, which Chartraw claimed contained precious metals. Chartraw arranged for an investor to tour the company and managed to limit the investor’s interaction with the company’s true owners and prevent discovery of the scheme. When the investor placed $1 million into an escrow account for the purchase of the dore bars, Chartraw used a forged letter to get the escrow company to send the money to accounts he and others controlled.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

North Shore musician releases third album

Lake Tahoe's Jeff Jones has released his third full-length album, "The Rooster Crows – The Bank Sessions."

The album features Jones on vocals, acoustic and slide guitar, Eric Matlock (Jelly Bread) on keys and the three members of the Italian Afro-Disco band The Bank (Francisco Brini, Domenico Loparco, Emanuele Zullo).

"The album was recorded as 'full band' live sessions over three spring days at my home on the North Shore of Lake Tahoe. Because each member of the band was present and actively crafting each song in the moment, the personalities and musical styles pushed and pulled in real-time and came through more effectively than if we isolated everyone in a recording booth," Jones said in a press release. "Each song is a single take. I think that is what makes it feel so alive and puts the listener in the front row."

The remastered version of "The Rooster Crows – The Bank Sessions" will be available Oct. 1 on Jones' website and through iTunes, CDBaby and Amazon.