# 9 gardens on Incline tour

Tahoe Treasures Tour is a peek at nine unusual Incline Village homes, alpine gardens, and art collections.

Tea and tapas will be served at two locations. Raffle and boutique also.

The event benefits AAUW Nevada Tahoe college scholarship fund.

The tour begins at North Lake Tahoe Demonstration Garden, Sierra Nevada College, 999 Tahoe Blvd.

The event is Aug. 10 from 11am-4pm.

Tickets are $35 or $40 after Aug. 1; email nicholas89451@gmail.com.

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# NV Energy plots path to make money without coal

**By Andrew Doughman, Las Vegas Sun**

Sen. Harry Reid arrived in Carson City on a Wednesday in February, commandeered an office at the Legislature and sat down with state Sen. Kelvin Atkinson to hatch a plan.

A sweeping proposal to move coal out of Nevada's energy mix had incubated for months among a group of powerful and influential politicians, business executives and lobbyists before they stepped forward and selected Atkinson to help execute it – at least publicly.

What emerged from that meeting was a legislative power play

reaching from D.C. to Nevada that illustrates how consummate insiders can dictate energy cost and policy for every Nevadan for the next decade.

The big idea: Nevada would cease its investments in three coal-fired power plants and NV Energy, the state's energy monopoly, would get to build expensive gas and renewable energy power plants – a cost that ratepayers would have to bear.

In a state with nearly the highest energy costs in the Mountain West region and a growing renewable energy sector, a potentially risky shift from coal to gas and alternative-energy plants could have been momentous or disastrous for Nevada residents, businesses, energy providers and politicians.

**Click here to read the whole story**

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# Grocery Outlet helping to stop hunger

Grocery Outlet is putting on the third annual Independence from Hunger food drive.

During the past two Julys, Grocery Outlet stores and their customers collectively donated more than half a million dollars

**Here's how to help:**

Look for specially-marked food items at Grocery Outlet. These are items that the local food assistance agencies have requested. Purchase those items and place them in the

collection bin at the front of the store.

Tell a Grocery Outlet cashier that you'd like to make a cash donation at the register. Donations will go directly to the local food assistance agencies in your community.

Pick-up information at a Grocery Outlet store about hunger, food insecurity and local/national resources for people in need.

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# Weber grills much more than a kettle of briquettes

**By Bryan Gruley, Bloomberg**

Sixty-one years ago, George Stephen got tired of wind and rain messing up his cooking on an open-air grill, the main barbecue tool of the day. He grabbed a buoy made where he worked, Weber Brothers Metal Works in Illinois. He sliced it in half and fashioned a tight-fitting dome lid. It didn't work very well until a neighbor suggested he poke holes in the kettle so air could fuel the fire. The Weber grill was born.

Stephen eventually bought the Weber metal shop, creating Weber-Stephen Products of Palatine, Ill., which is now the world's largest grill manufacturer. The privately held company doesn't disclose financials, but Euromonitor International says Weber-Stephen claims 35 percent of the $2.5 billion U.S. market, with rival Char-Broil a distant second.

In 1971, Stephen hired Mike Kempster, Weber-Stephen's current chief marketing officer. He calls himself the "godfather of

the brand.” In a warehouse adjoining a plant in Huntley, Ill., Kempster gestures at thousands of shrink-wrapped boxes of grills and smokers stacked in 20-foot towers. “Looks like a big supply, right?” he asks. “It’s probably less than a week.” He won’t specify how much the factory produces, but around 80 trucks haul stuff away daily. Shipments peak at about 110 semis a day just before July 4.

That’s a lot of barbecues, but grill sales have flattened over the past few years, partly because of the U.S. housing downturn, Kempster says. While the company sees that turning around, it still faces challenges from Europe’s financial struggles, volatile commodity costs, and low-cost overseas manufacturers.

Weber-Stephen has changed more in the past decade than it did in the previous half-century. It contracted to have grills built in China to go with production in Huntley and Palatine. It agreed to stop labeling products “Made in USA” to settle a class-action lawsuit that accused it of buying components from China and Taiwan suppliers. (The company denied wrongdoing.) It also introduced a line of compact grills designed for dense urban areas such as those sprouting up across Southeast Asia.

The biggest change was financial: In 2010 the Stephen family sold a majority stake to BDT Capital Partners, the Chicago merchant bank run by Byron Trott, the former Goldman Sachs executive known for his close ties to Warren Buffett. Kempster says BDT’s investment will help Weber-Stephen push overseas. The first nonfamily member to run the company, Thomas Koos, formerly of Jacuzzi Brands and Black & Decker, took over as chief executive officer in April.

The grill maker emulates General Motors’ Chevy-to-Caddy range of products, targeting consumers as they climb the income ladder. Weber-Stephen hooks college kids with the $29 Smokey Joe, a miniature kettle, then keeps them buying until they can afford a $799 Genesis gas grill or — if they need a backyard

kitchen – a $5,000 Summit Grill Center, a behemoth with six gas burners, a built-in smoker, and an infrared rotisserie. There's no fridge, just a cooler. "Consumers told us all they really needed is ice," Kempster says.

When gas grills grew popular in the 1970s, the company offered a kettle fitted with a propane tank. "The shape was so associated with charcoal grilling, it just never caught on," Kempster says. In 1985, Weber-Stephen introduced the rectangular Genesis gas line with triangular "Flavorizer" cooking bars designed to minimize flare-ups while mimicking the mouthwatering effect of meat and fish juices sizzling on hot coals. Today, four of Consumer Reports' top seven midsize grills for 2013 are Webers, and the company's new cookbook is an Amazon.com bestseller. Its U.S. call centers handle 500,000 questions a year, from how long to cook a pork tenderloin to the best way to grill a squirrel.

The new Weber-Stephen CEO has asked Kempster, 66, to stay for at least two more years. Kempster has nine Weber grills and smokers in his backyard, including a pair of 36-inch kettles he uses to cook for crowds. His go-to dishes are beef tenderloin and Alaskan king crab legs. He suggests snipping off the thicker ends of the crab legs and cooking them for 10 to 12 minutes before putting the thin ends on the grill.

Meathead Goldwyn, the barbecue impresario (given name: Craig) who runs the website Amazingribs.com, has more than a dozen grills and smokers in his suburban Chicago backyard—and a beat-up Weber kettle he bought for $50 about 20 years ago, Goldwyn says. "For what I do, which is help people learn to cook, you have to have a Weber kettle, because it's ubiquitous."

# Fire causes substantial damage to Tahoe Vista house

Firefighters are still investigating what caused a cabin in Tahoe Vista to erupt in flames on Friday afternoon.

North Tahoe crews got the call about the fire in the 300 block of East Agatam Avenue at 3:39pm June 28.

“It was going pretty good when we go there,” North Tahoe Fire spokesman Dave Zaski told *Lake Tahoe News*. It was controlled and knocked down by 3:50pm.

Zaski said the small house sustained significant damage. There were no injuries.

*– Lake Tahoe News staff report*

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# Tips to keep pets safe during fireworks

As public fireworks displays begin thundering on the Fourth of July, the phones start ringing at Regional Animal Services. Every year, animal services sees a sharp increase in stray dog calls during the 24-hour period around July 4-5 as dogs attempt to flee from the noisy fireworks.

Fourth of July fireworks are no fun for dogs. Some will go to extreme measures, such as jumping through open windows, in their effort to escape the noise. Once out, these dogs may wander many miles from home, or hide themselves under decks or sheds for days. This includes cats as well.

**To help keep pets home and safe over the Fourth of July holiday, Washoe County Regional Animal Services offers the following tips:**

- Before the fireworks start, bring and keep your dog inside.
- Keep windows and doors closed.
- Take steps to lower outside noise such as leaving a radio, television, fan, or air conditioner on.
- If you know your dog does experience extreme anxieties to loud noises, it may be worthwhile to contact your veterinarian to see what recommendations they may have.
- If you're going to a firework display, the best way for everyone to get the most enjoyment is to leave your pets at home.

Regional Animal Services staff also encourages pet owners to make sure their pets have identification tags and are microchipped just in case they do get lost. This will expedite getting pets and their families reunited.

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# Teen paddleboard camp in South Lake Tahoe

STAR Teen Camp's stand up paddleboarding is July 8-10.

Preregistration is required.

The camp will leave kids with skills and confidence needed to continue paddling all summer.

Bring swim-beach gear, sunscreen, water bottle, lunch. Personal floatation devices will be provided.

Cost is $175.

For more info, email Jen Menzel at jmenzel@cityofslt.us.

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# Learn how to cook using fresh ingredients

Lake Tahoe Community College instructor Steve Fernald is putting on a demonstration July 16 at 6pm on how to cook with ingredients from a farmers market.

The free event is at the South Lake Tahoe library, 1000 Rufus Allen Blvd.

It is sponsored by the Barton Foundation.

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# El Dorado County probation employees tired of workplace harassment

**By Kathryn Reed**

Chaotic could be one word to describe the El Dorado County Probation Department. Discriminatory, dysfunctional and secretive would be other words.

“The kids aren’t the problem, management is,” said one person who recently severed ties with the department.

Rank and file employees are fearful of talking to *Lake Tahoe News* on the record and most higher ups won't even talk.



The Juvenile Treatment Center in South Lake Tahoe is one place county probation officers say is less than ideal to work. Photo/LTN

When word got out last week that *Lake Tahoe News* was asking questions, interim Chief Probation Officer Vince Janette sent the following email to all probation staff, "Recently a few staff members were contacted off duty by the media. I would like to take this opportunity to remind all staff of policy IV2 Contact with the News Media. Please take a moment to review the policy and report any contacts via the chain of command. If you are contacted at home or in the community this policy still applies."

He then attached the policy in the email, which was given to *LTN* by someone other than Janette. Part of the policy says only the chief of the department or a designated manager may speak with the media.

It also says, "Staff is prohibited from writing letters to the media or otherwise communicating with the media as a representative of the Probation Department."

When *Lake Tahoe News* asked Janette if he thought there is a

morale issue within the department, he said, “I will not comment on that.”

When asked to comment on whether harassment issues are ignored, he said, “I haven’t heard that.”

According to the people who spoke off the record with *Lake Tahoe News*, Janette is one of the harassers.

**Change in leadership**

Janette is now in charge of probation because Greg Sly, who is still technically the chief, is out on leave until he officially retires Sept. 13. Sly is getting full pay and medical benefits until then.

At first Janette said, “I’d rather not comment” – in response to whether he applied to be the chief permanently. Then he added, “I will not be our next chief.”

When Sly was asked to explain what is really going on today at probation, he emailed *LTN*, “Current direction from the CAO and County Counsel is that all media questions are referred to them. Therefore, I need to refer you to their offices.”

Terri Daly is the county’s chief administrative officer and Ed Knapp the county counsel. Neither is communicating with *Lake Tahoe News*.

In an email obtained by *LTN* written June 7 to staff Sly says he is remaining out on medical leave.

Sly’s email says, “I wish my career and term as your chief would be ending under different circumstances, but sometimes doing the right thing pays off a little differently than one would like. During my entire 29 year law enforcement and community corrections career, I always pushed for true justice on all fronts. But as I have often said, ‘Sometimes Justice just isn’t Just.’”

Sly was out on administrative leave from Sept. 28-Dec. 12 as well. At that time Gary Hudgeons, then assistant chief probation officer, was put in charge of the department. He abruptly left when Sly returned to work.

Sly has not always gotten along with the current CAO, but the truth to why he keeps being put on leave is not forthcoming because officials say it is a personnel issue.

**Feeling threatened**

Those who are left to do the work at the South Lake Tahoe and Placerville detention centers say there is a culture of harassment and discrimination within the department. This includes workers at the facilities housing the youths as well as those working in the field.

And it's not just women who have been harassed. One guy chose to take a demotion to get away from a harassing boss. Another left to work at a coffeehouse.

"Within the department retaliation is alive and well and strong. If you speak out, you will absolutely be gone," one employee said. "There is no personality conflict; it's a power and control issue."

Sometimes the harassment is because a person is outspoken, sometimes it's for having a quirky personality, sometimes for just not fitting in with the established older-white-male power structure, and other times it's for reasons that are not obvious.

But it's predominately women who are subjected to the hostile work environment – unless they are having an affair with one of their male superiors or their husband is a cop.

Several people have left the department this year. They are fed up with the treatment, filing grievances and getting nowhere but being retaliated against.

Harassment, according to those who spoke with *LTN*, is verbal and sexual – and ongoing.

Some complaints are investigated, some are not. But even when they are, they often end with the harasser not being reprimanded and the employee reaching a financial settlement with the county so they will go away.

One employee said they look around and ask, "Why is the person who all complaints were directed toward still here and the person who instigated the investigation now gone?"

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# Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Olivia

Olivia is one of eight small dogs that just arrived in Tahoe from other shelters in the Central Valley looking for a new home.

She is a sweet Jack Russell mix, about 2 years old, very active and playful.

The other dogs include an Australian terrier, a miniature Pinscher, a Tibetan terrier, several cute Chihuahuas, and a rat terrier. All are young, less than 2 years old, and all are very sweet natured.

Stop by the shelter to see them all playing in the yard together!

Olivia is spayed, microchipped, and vaccinated. She is 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 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*