Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Kirkwood is hosting a 10-day mountain bike festival Aug. 19-28. More info is online.

• Lake Tahoe has been nominated as the eighth wonder of the world. Voting is taking place through September. More info is online.

• Here are the El Dorado-Tahoe and Sierra roadwork schedule from Caltrans for the coming week.

• For Truckee residents generating large quantities of yard waste, the town has extended the free yard waste drop-off at the Eastern Regional Landfill through July.

• Due to increasing temperatures, fire restrictions in Eldorado National Forest will expand to include the entire forest starting July 1.

Then and now: ZIP codes turn 50

Coming up this Monday is the 50th anniversary of the Zone Improvement Plan.

The what?

It was July 1, 1963, when the U.S. Postal Service introduced its “ZIP Code” – the Zone Improvement Plan – which since has

become ubiquitous in mailing, locating, and shipping.

And now it’s used widely also for non-postal information such as determining auto insurance rates by zone, or pinpointing your local weather forecast, et cetera, all based on your ZIP Code.

In 1942, the U.S. Post Office had established only generalized area address zones, such as “Los Angeles 54, Calif.”

In 1962, a postal employee proposed a Zone Improvement Plan (ZIP) to direct mail to specific offices. For example, the Empire State Building has its own ZIP code. Today, there are more than 43,000 ZIP codes in the United States.



Historically, all South Tahoe mail was delivered only to P.O. boxes at six post offices: one at Stateline absorbed into what became the Crescent V Center; one at what was the main post office at the corner of Takela and Sandy Way in Bijou (now vacant); an Al Tahoe office where Denny’s Diner now stands; plus Tahoe Valley; Camp Richardson’ and Meyers stations.

The Al Tahoe P.O. wood-frame building (now the Denny’s site) was picked-up and replanted on Highway 50 opposite the Sno-Flake Drive In and it now houses the Tahoe Art League gallery. A replacement Al Tahoe post office then opened in what is now The Cork & More.

In 1973 the current large main post office opened diagonally neighboring The Cork & More.

The historic Camp Richardson P.O. (now the “confectionery”) was absorbed into the Tahoe Valley office about 1960.

South Lake Tahoe has had several ZIP code changes since 1963, prompted initially by the 1965 incorporation of the city which needed a ZIP Code. Over the years, we’ve had 95729, 95730,

95731, 95702, 95705 and more.

With the advent of local street delivery, today's South Lake Tahoe ZIP codes are 96150 (street delivery), then 96151, 96155 and 96158 for P.O. boxes at the Al Tahoe main, Meyers and Tahoe Valley stations, respectively. Nevada South Shore is P.O. Box addresses only.

In the mid-1980s, USPS opened Neighborhood Delivery Centers (NDCs) on Alameda Avenue, Eloise Avenue, and Black Bart Avenue to reduce auto travel. These were P.O. box-only satellites, no clerks nor window services. Those NDCs were closed in the early 2000s after the start of street delivery.

– Bill Kingman

Crafting specialty beers one bottle at a time

By Kathryn Reed

Beer. It's one four-letter word that can help make this heat wave tolerable.

And Ray Loehrer has plenty of it right now. The South Lake Tahoe home brewer bottled a couple cases on Friday. And the mugs were already chilling in the freezer.

His kitchen and laundry room look a little like makeshift science labs. Water is boiling on the stove to sterilize the caps. The dishwasher is whirring as the bottles get one last hot rinse and dry.

Two 5-gallon containers sit in the laundry room. Yeast needs to be in a dark room to ferment – and that's the darkest place in the house that has room to move around in.



A stopper allows for the perfect amount of beer to fill each bottle. Photos/Kathryn Reed

The fermentation process takes two weeks – one week to ferment, one to settle. At the bottom of the glass container is what looks an inch worth of yeast. It's important none of that ends up in the bottles that will be consumed.

Those large containers are soon drained into another bucket where corn sugar that has been dissolved in hot water is added. This has to do with the carbonation process.

The brewing part he does outside with a propane tank. He said it smells too much to do it inside. It can take four to five hours to brew.

Loehrer has been brewing his own beer for more than 20 years. He admits they weren't that great to begin with. But experience makes a difference.

In 2009, he entered his first and only competition – the California State Fair. He entered three beers. The Belgian Ale earned a second place and the Amber Ale third place.

The water, yeast and hops all can make a difference in the end

product. He refuses to use tap water because most water companies add chlorine – South Tahoe PUD included. This is why he insists on purified water.

When Loehrer first started he was using dry yeast. Now he swears by liquid yeast.

He whips up a batch of beer a few times a year. The busy season is Christmas because his hobby has turned into a gift for others.

While he likes his Honey Ale, Porter and Belgian Ale the best, he does drink beers that he hasn't made.

A raspberry wheat he made was a big hit with friends. Some people have asked to buy a six-pack or case, but he wants to stay away from the legal issues of doing that. He's good with sharing.

One thing Loehrer says is important is sterilization. From the caps to the bottles to the tubes that transfer that liquid amber – they all go through at least one sterilization process.

He can buy a case of bottles for about $7. The theory of using the brown bottles is that they let less sunlight in.

While Loehrer created labels, he quickly realized that getting them off for the next batch was time consuming. Now he puts a tiny sticker on each bottle cap so people will know what they are about to ingest. Those all get thrown away, while bottles can be reused.

The capping process, while a bit labor intensive, is still easier than what he first used. This is more like a hand press.

In about a month the beer will be great for consuming. The 3-week-old Honey Ale was tasting pretty darn good on this bottling day. Loehrer said a brewer must imbibe while brewing

and that those in the room must do so too – it’s all about tradition.

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Dinner benefits Gatekeeper’s Museum

The North Lake Tahoe Historical Society will host its annual “Gathering at the Gatekeeper’s” fundraiser on July 14 from 4-8pm.

The dinner and auction will take place in Layton Park, just steps away from the Gatekeeper’s Museum in Tahoe City. All proceeds from the event will go toward the ongoing operation of Watson Cabin and The Gatekeeper’s Museums and their cultural and historical events.

The “Gathering at the Gatekeepers” will be an evening of food, refreshments and silent and live auction bidding under the shade of ancient pines on the shores of Lake Tahoe.

The museum will be open to attendees for the evening. The museum is a careful reconstruction of the original Gatekeeper’s Cabin, residence of the gatekeeper who controlled the water flow out of Lake Tahoe. The present-day gatekeeper lives in town. The museum also houses the Marian Steinbach Indian Basket Museum and other exhibits.

Tickets for the “Gathering at the Gatekeeper’s” can be purchased for $65 online or at the Gatekeeper’s Museum in Tahoe City.

More information on this and other events can be found by

calling (530) 583.1762.

Opinion: Power tools can trigger wildland fire

By Teri Mizuhara

Recently there have been a number of wildfires caused by people using gas powered equipment to create defensible space at the wrong time of day.

Using equipment such as tractors, lawn mowers or weed eaters at the wrong time of day can end disastrously. It is best to operate gas powered equipment before 10am and after 7pm when the humidity is higher and temperatures are cooler. This will lessen the chance of sparking a fire.

We understand that many people are taking advantage of this cooler than average weather and are outdoors creating additional defensible space around their homes. We want to encourage this, but at the same time we don’t want folks to endanger themselves or their community.

Here are some tips to do the right thing the right way:

– Operate gas powered equipment before 10 in the morning or after 7 in the evening.

– Maintain your equipment in good working order to prevent carbon buildup which can cause a fire.

– Make sure you have a spark arrester and that is it in good shape.

– Allow all equipment to cool for a minimum of 15 minutes before refueling.

– Remove rocks from the area to be mowed, a metal blade from a mower striking a rock can cause a fire.

– Never mow dry grass with a mower designed to cut green grass, this is a common cause of fires which may not only result in a wildland fire, but often destroys your mower. The dry grass can get caught inside the mower and catch fire, leaving in its wake a trail of wildland fires and a fire in the engine compartment.

– Use a weed eater to mow dry grass and weeds.

– Have a shovel, fire extinguisher or other water source available and phone nearby in case you start a fire. Never hesitate to call 9-1-1, fires can get out of control quickly and threaten life and property in a matter of minutes.

Following these fire safety tips will allow you to work safely in your yard.

Thank you and have a fire safe summer.

Teri Mizuhara is public information officer for the CalFire unit that includes El Dorado County.

Artist’s reception at Bona Fide Books

There will be an artist’s reception for Cherie Pinsky on July 6 from 6-8pm at Bona Fide Books in Meyers.

Her collection titled Bodie will be on display through July 22.

The work is gouache sketches of the historic California mining ghost town and canvases of Tahoe, San Francisco, and the West.

The reception is free and open to the public.

Bona Fide is behind the Getaway Cafe at 1069 Magua St., No. 4.

Recreation photo contest in S. Lake Tahoe

South Lake Tahoe Community Services Department is celebrating July as “Parks Make Life Better” month as recognized by the California Park & Recreation Society .

This measure recognizes the importance of access to local parks, trails, open space, and facilities for the health and development of all California residents. A research study sponsored by the CPRS shows that 98 percent of households visit a local park at least once a year, two in three households visit a park once a month, and 50 percent of households participate in an organized recreation program.

The Community Services Department is inviting people to participate in a “Parks Make Life Better” photo contest in July. Submissions are to include yourself, family or friends enjoying a recreation activity in South Lake Tahoe such as Bijou Park, Regan Beach, Lakeview Commons, STAR Camp, youth or adult sport program or your favorite recreation center class.

For more information, go online or call (530) 542.6056.

Nevada regulators keep eye on Macau casino action

By Christopher Palmeri, Bloomberg

The use of outside VIP room operators by casino companies in Macau limits their ability to prevent money-laundering and other illegal activities, one of Nevada's top regulators said.

"Criminal transactions are widely alleged to take place just out of the direct purview of the casino," A.G. Burnett, chairman of the Nevada State Gaming Control Board, said in testimony before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission in Washington yesterday.

Enlarge image Nevada Regulator Says Macau VIP Rooms Make Compliance Harder

VIP room operators run gambling parlors for high-rollers within larger casinos and provide credit as well as organize trips for mainland gamblers to Macau. The Chinese city, the world's largest gambling hub with $38 billion in revenue last year, gets most of its revenue from Chinese high-stake bettors. Burnett didn't name any individual operators.

I. Nelson Rose, a professor at Whittier Law School in Costa Mesa testified that Chinese government limits on money transfers from the mainland to Macau, at 20,000 yuan or $3,150, create a market for VIP room operators to lend money to gamblers.

"The structure of the casino system in Macau effectively allows people to use the casinos to circumvent these capital controls," William Reinsch, chairman of the commission, said

in his opening remarks.

The commission was created by the U.S. Congress in 2000 to report to legislators on trade and economic issues between the two countries, according to its website.

Spokesmen for Las Vegas Sands Corp., MGM Resorts International and Wynn Resorts Ltd., the three Las Vegas-based companies with operations in Macau, declined to comment on the hearing.

Director Manuel Neves at Macau's Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau, the city's regulatory body, didn't return two phone calls seeking comment.

Slew of programs at Taylor Creek Visitor Center

The Lake of the Sky Amphitheater programs at the Taylor Creek Visitor Center begin July 5 and continue every Friday evening through August.

The series kicks off July 5 with "Wild Things" featuring an educational look at Sierra Nevada native animals live on stage at 7pm.

"Snowshoe Thompson" will be July 12 at 7pm; "Winged flight at Night" on July 19 at 8:30pm ; and "Fly Fishing in the Lake Tahoe Basin" on July 26 at 6:30pm.

Programs in August include "Stargazing on the Beach" on Aug. 2 at 8pm (meet at Tallac Point); an encore presentation of "Winged flight at Night" on Aug. 9 at 8pm; an encore presentation of "Wild Things" on Aug. 16 at 7pm; "An Evening with Mark Twain" on Aug. 23 at 7pm; and "Geology Rocks!" on

Aug. 30 at 8pm.

These programs are sponsored by the U.S. Forest Service and the Tahoe Heritage Foundation. The Tahoe Heritage Foundation encourages a $5 donation, per person for these programs.

The Taylor Creek Visitor Center is located approximately three miles north of South Lake Tahoe on Highway 89. For more information, call (530) 543.2674.

Workshop about ADA laws

South Lake Tahoe building official Dave Walker, Patterson building official Jim Swanson and local architect Brian Shinault will discuss the new ADA laws and how they apply to businesses.

All three are certified access specialists by the Division of the State Architect.

The meeting is July 11 at 7:30pm in the City Council chambers at 1901 Airport Road, South Lake Tahoe.