Then and now: Developing the Tahoe Keys





John Spinola of South Lake Tahoe provided this mid-1960s aerial photo of Tahoe Keys (left), and Google Earth is the source of the current view (right).

I've inserted 3 white "X" marks in the bottom-left of each photo to provide a common reference point; the water gap at Christie Drive. Diagonal at the very bottom-left is the main artery street Venice Drive which the developers originally had named Sierra Boulevard. Obviously, that had to change.

The developers also succeeded in having First Street renamed as Tahoe Keys Boulevard, although today that name changes again to Ala Wai Boulevard.

The third and concluding Tahoe Keys developer was the Dillingham Corporation which had offices located on the Ala Wai Canal, an artificial waterway in Honolulu.

– Bill Kingman

South Shore criminals keep cops busy

By Kathryn Reed

Gangs, drugs, the threat of violence at schools, parents who are not engaged, and a crime rate that is increasing.

Those were some of the topics South Lake Tahoe Police Chief Brian Uhler, El Dorado County sheriff's Lt. Pete Van Arnum, and Steve Heggen with county probation touched on during this month's Lake Tahoe Collaborative meeting.

(Lake Tahoe Collaborative was founded in 1992. It is leaders of primarily social service agencies who meet monthly to discuss issues pertaining to the South Shore.)



Steve Heggen (probation), Pete Van Arnum (EDSO), and Brian Uhler (SLTPD) talk crime on the South Shore. Photo/Kathryn Reed

On Friday, law enforcement used South Tahoe High School as a staging ground for a mock school takeover. This was done while students were on spring break so as not to disrupt classes,

but some drama students got to participate.

“We are trying to change the mindset of school administration and teachers (to be more proactive),” Van Arnum said of the meetings he and others have been having with Lake Tahoe Unified School District personnel. “You look at school shootings across the country and most of the kids talked to someone and they didn’t come forward. We need good relationships with students because they’ll give us information before it happens.”

SLTPD and probation have armed officers at South Tahoe High at various times. But law enforcement does not favor arming school staff. They relayed how as first responders they are going after the person on campus with a gun, and if a teacher or administrator is armed, that person may inadvertently become a victim of law enforcement.

Van Arnum said his experience is that the middle school is where the attention needs to be placed because that age group is most impressionable.

This is evident with the Norteno and Sureno gangs in town tapping into the younger age group.

“One of the more disturbing trends we are noting is those gang bangers are recruiting mentally challenged kids,” Uhler said.

Heggen said parents need to be watching and listening to their kids. He told a story of a mom he knows who didn’t allow her son to buy red shoes because of potential gang affiliation.

“What are we doing to model behavior we want them to model?” Heggen asked.

He sees kids who behave well in the Juvenile Treatment Center, but once released are back in the environment that contributed to their incarceration and the destructive behavior resumes.

Police K-9 units on occasion go to STHS. Uhler said while

arrests have been made, this type of action is more preventative in nature. “Leave it alone or leave it at home,” Uhler said is the message officers try to convey.

Throughout the community marijuana and alcohol are the most abused drugs, with more locals being arrested than tourists. Uhler said 90 percent of the arrests his officers make are locals.

He will be making a presentation to the City Council this spring about crime stats from 2012.

“The total number of arrests is down, but we are seeing an increase in crime,” Uhler said. He said the bad guys are getting away with more because of staffing issues. “We are seeing alarming trends. Sexual assault numbers are up and aggravated assault.”

Pamela Ross-Osinski – 1950-2013

Pamela Ross-Osinski passed away suddenly March 24, 2013. She was 62.

She was born June 29, 1950.

Before coming to South Lake Tahoe, she worked for AT&T in the Bay Area. Pam lived in South Lake Tahoe for 15 years, and was perhaps best remembered for the tireless, smiling manner in which she responded to members in her position as membership services director for the South Lake Tahoe Chamber of Commerce. She was well known as the friendly face of the chamber, always with a smile and a twinkle in her eye as she

truly listened to the people who visited the chamber and was constantly focused on how to help others.



Pamela Ross-Osinski

She was instrumental in starting the Chamber Ambassadors and the first Leadership Lake Tahoe program. She planned dozens of mixers, including the favorite holiday celebration with Santa and sleigh rides.

Pam continued to help the South Tahoe Chamber of Commerce in recent years and was a valued member of Soroptimist International Tahoe Sierra.

She worked on the political campaigns of Jerry Birdwell and Claire Fortier, and was campaign manager for JoAnn Conner.

Recently, she spent much of her time caring for her mother.

Her family and friends remember her as someone who was always thinking of others and would often give of herself to help someone else or a good cause. Her last act on this earth was the epitome of her spirit. She will be sorely missed.

Pam was passionate about cheering for her favorite teams, the San Francisco Giants and the 49ers.

Pam left behind her beloved husband of 15 years, Andrew Osinski of South Lake Tahoe; mother Nancy Sullivan, two sons and a daughter-in-law – Angus Ross, Andy Ross and his wife Julie, all Bay Area residents. She also had a new grandson.

A celebration of life is planned for a warm day in June.

Tahoe Rim Trail to launch outdoor challenge

The inaugural Tahoe Rim Trail Challenge will officially launch on National Trails Day – June 1.

The Tahoe Rim Trail Association has selected six scenic points on the Tahoe Rim Trail. Participants will hike, bike, snowshoe, ski or ride horseback to each of the destinations and receive invitations to select experiences designed exclusively for Trail Challenge members.

The official kick off is at Van Sickle Bi-State Park in Stateline. The challenge will go through the end of the year.

Registration begins May 15 online.

Cost is $55 for new TRTA members (includes $35 individual annual TRTA membership), $20 for current TRTA members.

All participants will receive an inaugural Trail Challenge T-shirt and access to everything related to the program including exclusive admission to the members-only website where people will track achievements, share pictures as well as access GPS waypoints for the six destinations.

Homewood a contender for environmental award

At the same time Homewood Mountain Resort is being sued by environmental groups because of its proposed development it is a finalist for the National Ski Areas Association's Golden Eagle award. The award is NSAA's highest environmental honor and recognizes exemplary environmental performance in the ski resort industry.

Homewood is being recognized for its watershed management and the water-quality monitoring work performed resort-wide.

Homewood has been selected as one of three resorts in the Small Ski Area category – resorts with less than 200,000 skier visits annually. The other finalists are Beaver Valley Ski Club in Canada and Mt. Abram Resort in Maine.

The winner will be announced May 1.

"Homewood's goal is to build the most environmentally progressive resort in the Lake Tahoe region and set a high bar for the ski industry as a whole. We are honored that the NSAA has acknowledged our efforts with this nomination," Art Chapman, founder of JMA Ventures, said in a statement. JMA owns the West Shore resort.

Placer County supes concentrate on fire issues

Fire safety was a predominant theme at this week's Placer County Board of Supervisors meeting.

In the first action, supervisors approved the permanent expansion of the county's hazardous vegetation abatement ordinance to all county unincorporated areas. In the second action, the board OK'd an update to the Community Wildfire Protection Plan. And the third action was approving an agreement with CalFire for fire protection and other emergency services.

The pilot vegetation management program started in 2007 in select areas in the Lake Tahoe Basin. It expanded to communities in unincorporated areas on the western side of the county.

With the ordinance now permanently in place, owners of unimproved parcels that have no structures can be required to remove untreated fire fuels that create a hazard to adjacent improved parcels.

The ordinance's goals are to encourage property owners to meet state and county requirements through the use of inspections, public education and cooperation. Before compulsory abatement is ordered and billed to a property owner, the ordinance has a process involving inspections and cooperative efforts. The ordinance provides for a formal action to ensure removal of the fire hazard.

"The board's action to approve the HVA ordinance countywide gives our unincorporated fire chiefs a tool to encourage the elimination of hazardous fuels from unimproved parcels when these fuels pose a significant risk to a neighbor's home," said Rui Cunha, Placer County Office of Emergency Services program manager, said in a press release.

The Community Wildfire Protection Plan is a collaborative effort between Placer County and federal, state and local partners in fire prevention and mitigation. The plan lists 46 defense zones or urban lot fuel reduction projects, community preparedness and education projects.

The plan defines specific fire hazards in designated areas, assesses the risk and identifies and prioritizes specific projects.

The CalFire contract covers approximately 475 square miles, or nearly one-third of unincorporated Placer County. The contract pays for the equivalent of 66 full-time firefighters operating from eight fire stations around the clock.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Clean tech means data-crunching alogorithms

By Bryan Walsh, Time

As environmental policy, improving energy efficiency isn't just a no-brainer; it's a no-loser. By limiting wasted energy, we reduce the number of power plants we need—along with their resulting pollution—and we save money.

Cutting energy waste is first and foremost a data challenge. You can't cut waste until you know what you're wasting, and most of us have only the slightest idea. Standard electricity meters take one reading for an entire month. Imagine trying to diet if all you knew was the total amount of food you ate every four weeks. Says Bennett Fisher, CEO of the building-efficiency start-up Retroficiency: "You need data to make energy saving work."

We've got the data, thanks to the growth of smart, Internet-enabled sensors that can read and relay energy use almost in real time. A host of new big-data companies are figuring out

how to crunch that information so energy users from huge factories to individual households can track and reduce waste. This combination of energy technology with the Internet—the industry calls it the Enernet—is the hottest sector in clean tech, in part because it relies on relatively cheap, easily scalable software rather than on the expensive factories needed for, say, making solar panels. “It’s much more capital-efficient,” says Roy Johnson, CEO of EcoFactor, an energy-management start-up.

And efficiency is what the Enernet is all about. Take Virginia-based Opower, one of the oldest and most successful Enernet companies. Opower began by offering homeowners the chance to compare their power use with their neighbors’. Just knowing whether they were energy hogs or energy saints—along with following Opower’s energy-efficiency tips—was enough to reduce waste among homeowners. But as smarter meters taking dozens of readings per day have begun to gather more-granular data, Opower has been able to offer much more. The company sorts through the data collected by smart meters to help customers identify exactly where the waste is occurring and how it can be reduced. “These are things we could never do without big-data analytics,” says Dan Yates, CEO of Opower.

For utilities, big data can be even more powerful and valuable for the bottom line. Smarter energy management can keep overloaded grids running and prevent the need for new, expensive plants. Energy use isn’t constant throughout the day or the year, but because utilities keep power running 24/7, they need to have spare capacity to accommodate spikes. Even if it isn’t needed all the time, that extra power has to be generated, usually by polluting and costly coal or gas plants. Companies like AutoGrid help utilities spread out the demand for energy, smoothing the spikes and reducing the need for unused excess power. AutoGrid’s algorithms sort through the petabytes of data from smart meters—adjusting for variables like weather—and spit out solutions that let utilities and

their customers automatically shift nonessential electricity use to nonpeak times. The Enernet can also help utilities make better use of wind and solar power, compensating when the wind isn't blowing or the sun isn't shining. Amit Narayan, AutoGrid's CEO, estimates that his company's algorithms can help utilities get about 30% more power out of existing resources.

If we're ever going to truly clean up our electrical grid, we'll need to replace coal and natural gas with zero-carbon sources like solar or nuclear while improving efficiency. It won't be easy or cheap. But a smarter, more efficient grid—enabled by the same intelligence that brought us the Internet—can help smooth that transition.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

• Lake of the Sky Outfitters will be hosting Ladies Night with Renee Gorevin of Tahoe Treks on April 26 at 7pm. Gorevin leads women on backpacking trips and provides wilderness education in the Sierra Nevada and other California locations. The talk is free. The store is at 1023 Emerald Bay Road, South Lake Tahoe. Seating is limited, so RSVP to (530) 541.1027.

• Check out this video to see an eagle rehabbed at Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care learning to fly again.

• The Cal Poly Pomona Jazz Band will be performing at the Lake Tahoe Home and Garden Show on April 27 from 3-5pm in the gym in the Recreation Complex on Rufus Allen Boulevard in South Lake Tahoe.

• Here are the weekly Caltrans roadwork schedules for El Dorado-Tahoe and Sierra.

• Elder Options is celebrating its 25th anniversary with an open house May 1 from 4-6pm at the Placerville location, 82 Main St.

Reward offered in missing woman case

By Bill Lindelof, Sacramento Bee

The El Dorado County Sheriff's Office said a $10,000 reward is being offered to find a woman who has not been heard from in more than a year.



Sara Fawcett, (pictured) a Placerville Wal-Mart employee, called in sick Sept. 22, 2011. She was last seen or heard from the next morning, according to a missing person's bulletin.

The investigation into her disappearance continues. Her family is offering the reward.

Fawcett, 53, was reported missing by her father after she did not return home after several days.

Fawcett, who did not own a vehicle, usually borrowed her father's car, but the vehicle was not taken by the woman. Her belongings were also not taken from her residence on the

family’s Pollock Pines property.

At the time of her disappearance, the sheriff’s department said it is unlike Fawcett to leave her home without her purse and cell phone.

She is described as 5-feet, 1-inch tall, about 120 pounds, with brown hair and brown eyes. Anyone with information is asked to call Detective Paul Hadjes at (530) 642.4713.

Time to help plant sugar pines in Tahoe

The Sugar Pine Foundation is preparing to plant thousands of fungus resistant sugar pines and other native tree seedlings throughout the Lake Tahoe region.

The nonprofit based in South Lake Tahoe is working to save Tahoe’s sugar pines and other white pines from the threat of a non-native, incurable fungus called white pine blister rust.

The spring planting blitz began with a planting at the Lake Tahoe Community College on Wednesday. LTCC instructor Sue Kloss’s Botany students helped to plant more than 300 sugar pine seedlings on the LTCC campus. The students enhanced the woods along the footpath on the hillside above Trout Creek.

On April 27, the foundation will be present at the South Tahoe Earth Day Celebration at the Bijou Community Park from 10am to 4pm. SPF staff will be on hand to sell seedlings – $10 each – and talk about the organization’s work.

The SPF is hosting a community planting on April 28 from 1-3pm at Spooner Lake State Park. Members of the Soroptimist

International of Tahoe Sierra will be assisting in the planting, but more volunteers are needed. SPF plans to put more than 500 trees in the ground at this site. The planting is a kid-friendly event and is open to all ages. Seedlings, tools, and instruction will be provided. Volunteers are encouraged to wear boots and sunscreen, and to bring their own gloves, water, and a pointed shovel.

On April 30, the SPF is conducting a special planting at Zephyr Cove Park with employees of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency. TRPA employees approached the SPF and then raised $1,000 to cover the cost of seedlings. For more information about the organization or to order seeds or seedlings, go online.