Ski report: Not many layers needed

Spring conditions prevail.

Here is the March 15 ski report.

— *Curtis Fong*

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• LPA Inc. was recognized with an Award of Honor in the Modernization/Reconstruction category from the Coalition for Adequate School Housing/American Institute of Architects California Council for the design of the Tahoe Arts and Design Academy at South Tahoe High School.

• The March 23 TedX South Lake Tahoe is postponed, but a new date has not been set.

• Sierra Nevada College in Incline is celebrating homecoming April 3-6.

• Mike Cathcart has been appointed to the Fallen Leaf Lake Community Services District board.

• April 22 marks the 43rd anniversary of Earth Day – a day intended to inspire awareness and appreciation for the Earth's natural environment. The day came from reaction to a massive oil spill in waters near Santa Barbara in 1969.

Embassy backpedals – employees will be fired

By Kathryn Reed

Lake Tahoe Resort Hotel, aka Embassy Suites South Lake Tahoe, has changed its tune. Instead of keeping all 220 employees, there will be about a 5 percent reduction in staff.

On March 1 all employees were told how the 400-room hotel was dropping its affiliation with Hilton and instead the owners would fly solo, change the name and keep everyone employed.



Ten Embassy Suites employees will lose their job in two weeks. Photo/LTN file

A week later that message changed – at least about their

employment status.

General Manager John Steinbach told *Lake Tahoe News* four managers and six line workers will be out of work starting April 1. That's when Hilton is out of the equation.

But an employee who will be retained told *Lake Tahoe News* the number being fired is higher than that. "Some have been with the hotel for 15-plus years," the person said.

The reason for the ousting of the 10 workers, according to Steinbach: "Lake Tahoe Resort Hotel is initiating a few different procedures – attributable to specific service needs, more operational independence and streamlined reporting."

Employees will receive a severance, but to what amount is not known. Hilton, according to Steinbach, is helping find the displaced workers jobs. But that would require moving out of Lake Tahoe.

Truckee chef one of the best in U.S.

By Kathryn Reed

Jacob Burton thought taking a chef's job in the mountains would take him off the grid in terms of mainstream exposure.

He didn’t care. Growing up in the foothills (Cool in El Dorado County) he knew he wanted pines over cement.

But then the chef at Stella in Truckee got a call last month from *Food + Wine* magazine. He has been nominated as one of the People’s Best New Chefs.

“I was surprised to be honest with you. Just the fact that Truckee is on *Food + Wine’s* radar was a surprise,” Burton told *Lake Tahoe News*. “I cut my teeth in San Francisco, but I love Truckee. I knew I could be sacrificing big time awards that are saved for bigger area restaurants.”



Jacob Burton of Stella in Truckee is considered one of the country’s top new chefs. Photo/LTN file

Whether he wins is up to the public. Voting is open online through 2pm March 18. The country is divided into 10 regions, with Burton in the California section.

The California chefs are:

• Matthew Accarrino (SPQR, San Francisco)

• Kim Alter (Haven, Oakland)

• Jacob Burton (Stella, Truckee)

• Justin Cogley (Aubergine, Carmel)

• Jordan Kahn (Red Medicine, Los Angeles)

• Thomas McNaughton (Flour + Water, San Francisco)

• Evan & Sarah Rich (Rich Table, San Francisco)

• Ari Taymor (Alma, Los Angeles)

• Michael Voltaggio (Ink, Los Angeles)

• Kris Yenbamroong (Night+Market at Talésai, Los Angeles).

One of Burton's nominators said, "The young chef is doing some of the most inventive yet simple and delicious food I've had in a long time."

"*Food + Wine* gathers the list of nominees from our national network of trusted food insiders – other journalists, chefs and local experts around the country – and we're always on the lookout for innovative chefs who are pushing culinary boundaries," magazine spokeswoman Erika Gable told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Burton said he is humbled to be on the list with the other nominees.

"Those two guys in San Francisco are easily two of the hottest chefs on the West Coast," Burton said of Accarrino and McNaughton. He's eaten at both restaurants.

The 29-year-old Burton is a graduate of the California Culinary Academy in San Francisco. For the past three years he has been cooking at Stella, which is part of the Cedar House Sport Hotel.

His concept is to use as much locally sourced food as possible.

"Gardening is a large part of what we do. It's great to grab fresh herbs," Burton said. "You can run a quick special with a squash harvest. But (the garden is) not big enough to grow

squash or tomatoes all summer long to sustain the restaurant."

If Burton wins, he's well on his way to being a celebrity chef. And those chefs are often featured at the various events the magazine sponsors. Burton isn't sure he's ready for that. He doesn't have a large staff, and every day Stella has been open he has been on the line cooking.

"For me, Stella always comes first. My job is to ensure the ongoing success of Stella," Burton said. But if he could find a way to balance the restaurant work with promoting Stella and Truckee on the road, he would give it a-go.

The chef with the most votes in each region will be named a finalist and the finalist with the most votes overall will be named The People's Best New Chef. The People's Best New Chef finalists and winner will be revealed on March 19 online. The winner will be featured in the July issue of *Food + Wine*.

Bartering can bring people together

By Mandy Kendall

Since the beginning of the New Year we have had, like many others, our share of trials and tribulations. I have to admit that there were many times I wanted to feel sorry for myself, but you know what put a stop to that? This wonderful community of ours.

I thought I knew how generous people could be, but I really found out when we were in need. Friends rallied round, even strangers, who are now friends, did what they could to help.

I’ve being aware of how generous our community is to local organizations and charities, but the random acts of kindness we experienced was just as overwhelming. Is there anything more heartwarming than a home cooked meal brought to your door or an errand run for you because you just can’t do it yourself?



Mandy Kendall

So now as we are on our way back to some kind of normality we are starting to return favors, which has led to an organic kind of bartering. That got me wondering what ever happened to good old-fashioned bartering? And why can’t so much more be done this way?

How about a homemade apple pie for a haircut? Monetarily it might not be of equal value, but in the barter system the true value is in the satisfaction of both parties. Why are we so hung up on money being the scale against which we measure our worth? Surely the value of a service or goods is in the eye of the beholder.

So, I am going to propose an experiment in this wonderful community of ours.

I have set up a Facebook group called Barter Tahoe and I invite anyone who would like to exchange a service or goods for another service or goods to post on the group. Maybe you make fabulous baked goods, but can’t clean out your gutters. Maybe you don’t use your pressure washer very often, but really could use a good carpet cleaner once in a while. If you don’t know what you’d like to get in exchange for your service

or goods, you could just ask “what would anyone offer me in exchange for this?” You get the idea. I think we could get really creative with this, what do you think?

So, I’m going to start, we have two kettle bells and a set of kettle bell DVDs that have been sitting in our garage for ages. I’m not sure what I would take in exchange but I’m open to offers. Check out my post on the Facebook group.

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.

Editorial: El Dorado County needs to deal with grand jury

Publisher’s note: *This editorial is from the March 13, 2013, Sacramento Bee.*

Civil grand juries investigate the nuts and bolts of local government. When they work well, they can shine much-needed light on the inner operations of cities, counties, schools and special districts. Using their subpoena powers, grand juries interview witnesses under oath, tour public facilities and

review records. In their local government watchdog function, they are sometimes the first to spot mismanagement, waste, inefficiency and sometimes even criminal malfeasance.

Not all grand juries work well. There are times they become politicized, captured by one faction in a community and used to embarrass a rival faction or to push a preconceived agenda. But at their best, grand juries serve as a healthy extra pair of eyes and ears for the benefit of the community.

So what happens when a grand jury implodes? Apparently, that is what has occurred in El Dorado County. Fourteen of 19 members of the county grand jury abruptly resigned last month. The five remaining are far short of the minimum 12 jurors required for deliberations.

With no alternates left, the supervising judge who oversees the grand jury for the El Dorado Superior Court said that he had no choice but to dissolve the 2012-13 panel. The jury was already eight months into its term, much too late, the judge said, to select and train new grand jurors and to allow them enough time for the level of meaningful deliberation needed to produce a credible report.

That means that this year there will be no El Dorado County grand jury report, an unprecedented development that the court should investigate.

Rumors are rife about what may have led to the breakdown. According to accounts in the *Lake Tahoe News* that were later verified by the *Bee's* Cathy Locke, one member of the jury violated confidentiality of closed-door sessions. The investigation reportedly involved a member of the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors. But no one privy to the grand jury's secret deliberations has disclosed the reason for the dissension within the panel, which grand juror may have violated confidentiality or exactly who or what was being investigated. So, at this point, all remains conjecture.

That seems unfair to the possible targets of investigation whose names have been bandied about, to grand jurors who did nothing wrong, to the community and to the grand jury process itself. Still, while the court should try to find out what happened, any probe that leads to sanctions for a grand juror may be counterproductive – likely discouraging future good potential candidates for the grand jury from serving.

Ultimately, given the secrecy surrounding grand jury deliberations, the details of what went wrong this year may never be made public.

Nonetheless, the unsettling experience can serve as a useful lesson for El Dorado County's next grand jury. The presiding judge has said she is already taking steps to make sure no future grand jury is rendered incapable of carrying out its duties. Changes may include overlapping grand jury terms, more alternates and, most important, grand jurors better prepared for their responsibilities.

LTUSD expanding two-way immersion program

The class of 2019 is dictating, to some extent, the curriculum that is being offered in Lake Tahoe Unified School District.

Some of today's fifth-graders back in 2007 were the first two-way immersion class at Bijou Community School.

What started as a parent movement led by Kathy Haven turned into a much sought-after program. Parents have since lined up to get their child enrolled in the program that has a goal of teaching students in Spanish and English.

But when it started it was just supposed to be a Bijou offering. Since the inception of the program there have been 11 TWI classes.

On March 12, the school board voted to expand the program to South Tahoe Middle and High schools. The first class will be in middle school in the fall.

To expand the program a teacher will need to be hired to teach a social science class in Spanish. In the following two years a native Spanish 1 class will be added at STMS.

At the high school by the time these students arrive there will be several course offerings taught in the TWI format for lab science, history-social science, and visual and performing arts.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

LTCC president talks repeatability

Lake Tahoe Community College President Kindred Murillo on March 13 speaks to Soroptimist International South Lake Tahoe about why classes cannot be repeated an unlimited number of times.

Young professionals meeting in Round Hill



Tahoe Regional Young Professionals' March mixer at On the Rocks Bar & Grill is March 20 from 7–10pm.

It's all about networking, volunteer opportunities and announce TRYP's professional development and scholarship program for its members.

The post St. Patty's Day themed mixer (i.e. wear green) at On the Rocks Bar & Grill in the Round Hill Shopping Center (behind Anytime Fitness) will also include appetizers and a free beverage.

Admission is free for TRYP members and $5 for non-members. Annual TRYP memberships cost $40.

Sign up at the next event or email TahoeTRYP@gmail.com for additional membership information.

S. Lake Tahoe, Tahoe City set record highs

Lake Tahoe’s seesaw weather pattern will continue. Last week it was snow. Now there are record highs. Next week plan for rain and snow.

South Lake Tahoe on Wednesday and Thursday hit record highs. On March 13 the high was 69, while the previous record of 64 was set in 2007. On March 14 the mercury hit 66. The previous record was 62, also set in 2007.



Flowers are already blooming on the South Shore. Photo/LTN

Tahoe City also hit a record on Wednesday at 63. The previous high was 58 from 2005. The March 14 high is 63 from 2007. But with the temps not called into the National Weather Service in Reno until the morning, it’s not known if Tahoe City hit a high Thursday. The forecast, though, called for a high of 64.

Reno on Wednesday broke a long-standing record with its 77 degrees. The previous high of 76 was set in 1888. Cloud cover prevented Reno from hitting consecutive highs.

The normal high for South Lake Tahoe this time of year is 48 degrees.

“We’re going to see the ridge flatten by the weekend and see a cooling trend,” Jessica Kilhorn, meteorologist technician, with the National Weather Service in Reno, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Rain is expected to roll into the basin on Tuesday night, with snow dropping to lake level on Wednesday.

While the Weather Service isn’t predicting precipitation amounts at this point, Kilhorn said, “It could be very moist.”

– Lake Tahoe News staff report