Letter: Heavenly helps keep community fed

To the community,

Continuing with their monthly sponsorship of Bread & Broth's Adopt A Day of Nourishment, Heavenly Mountain Resort generously hosted the Monday evening dinners on Jan. 28 and Feb. 11.



Heavenly volunteers, from left, Kate Tretheway, Sarah Lowman, Jolena Hearn, Colton Terry and David Hellod. Photo/Provided

Tyler Morris, Heavenly's IT manager, and PC techs David Erickson, Kevin Franzen, Aaron Uretsky and Brett Zingaro assisted the B&B volunteers in January. It was the first time that several of the Heavenly volunteer crew members had been involved with setting up and serving a hot, nutritious meal to over 90 B&B guests. They described their volunteering at the dinner to be a "very fulfilling experience".

In February, Heavenly's volunteer crew was led by Jolena Hearn, a frequent Heavenly volunteer at B&B dinners. Jolena was joined by fellow volunteers Kavid Hellod, Sarah Lowman,

Colton Terry and Kate Tretheway, who are members of Heavenly's ski patrol. After spending the evening giving out bags of locally donated food goods to B&B dinner guests, Kate spoke for her volunteer crew. "We are truly grateful to be able to participate in serving our community. A huge thank you to the staff who do this every Monday."

Bread & Broth owes a huge thank you to Heavenly Mountain Resort for their monthly donation of $250 to cover the costs needed to prepare each dinner they sponsor. In addition, B&B is very thankful for and appreciates all of Heavenly's employees who over the years have been giving of their time and energy assisting with the setup, serving and cleanup during Heavenly's sponsorship evenings.

For more information on the Bread & Broth program, please contact me at (530) 542.2876 or carolsgerard@aol.com.

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth

Safeway testing combined loyalty-debit card

By Mark Calvey, San Francisco Business Journal

Safeway introduced a combined debit card and store loyalty card so that it can pull money directly out of a customer's checking account without paying the hefty fees it incurs when customers pay with a bank's debit card.

Those signing up for the program get a new Safeway Club Card that includes the Fast Forward debit feature.



Customers choosing not to carry their Club Card can still pay with Fast Forward debit by using the phone number linked to their loyalty card account and a PIN.

“This is a unique program. It benefits our customers by offering a secure, convenient way to shop and allow them one card for payment, Club Card discounts and ‘Just for U’ discounts,” said Safeway spokeswoman Teena Massingill. “All personal information is kept completely confidential.”

Fast Forward is a separate program from Safeway’s SmartCheck debit program, which doesn’t have the option of punching in the phone number and PIN to pay for groceries.

Safeway’s Fast Forward debit card is only available in Sacramento so far. The program’s debut was recently covered by my colleague Kelly Johnson at the Sacramento Business Journal. Safeway also offers an extensive FAQ on the program at its website.

Safeway isn’t discussing when the program might expand to the Bay Area and other markets.

From the customer’s perspective, the money is simply deducted from their checking account. But the Pleasanton grocer can send it through as an electronic funds transfer, saving substantially on the fees incurred with a bank debit card.

Like a bank debit card, Safeway’s program also has purchase limits.

Those using Fast Forward debit to pay for purchases get two points in the grocer’s Gas Rewards program for every dollar

spent instead of of just one point.

Safeway, led by Chairman and CEO Steve Burd, is not the only retailer creating programs to avoid hefty fees on transactions using bank debit cards. Customers loading cash onto their Starbucks' gold loyalty card get a free drink or food after 12 purchases.

Warden kills aggressive mountain lion in Placer County

By Ed Fletcher, Sacramento Bee

A popular Placer County hiking trail has reopened after authorities say a state Fish and Wildlife warden was forced to shoot and kill a mountain lion Sunday.

Authorities were first alerted to an aggressive mountain lion early Saturday evening, when a hiker on the Stevens Trail near Colfax, fearing for his safety, called 911.



"He noticed he was being followed by a mountain lion," said Mark Michilizzi, a spokesman for the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. "The behavior was consistent with a mountain lion that is stalking prey."

Fish and Wildlife wardens, Placer County sheriff’s deputies and a California Highway Patrol helicopter responded to the call and apparently scared off the mountain lion, Michilizzi said.

Sunday morning, a warden returned to the area to post signs and warn hikers of the threat of an aggressive mountain lion when he noticed a mountain lion, apparently the same one, preparing to pounce on him, Michilizzi said.

While it is illegal to hunt mountain lions in California, at this point the animal wasn’t just a risk to public safety – it was a risk to the warden, who shot and killed the cat.

“The officer acted appropriately,” Michilizzi said. “The mountain lion wasn’t cornered. The mountain lion was actively approaching him.”

Michilizzi said a necropsy will be preformed to help officials learn more about the health of the animal and what might have triggered the behavior.

“Deer are the primary prey for mountain lion,” Michilizzi. “When they start looking to humans, we want to know why.”

He said hikers should not call 911 upon spotting of a mountain lion, but this instance was different.

“Mountain lion attacks are rare. This type of behavior is rare,” Michilizzi said.

He advised anyone who spots a mountain lion not to run. He said to turn and face the lion while making oneself as big as possible and to throw rocks, stick or leaves.

Study: Prescription drugs affecting wild fish

By Amina Khan, Los Angeles Times

A common psychiatric drug may be affecting the feeding behavior of wild fish as it filters out of our bodies, through our toilets and into treated wastewater that is released into natural water sources, according to a new study in the journal Science.

The findings, which examined the effect of trace levels of the anti-anxiety medication oxazepam on wild European perch, have implications for the survival rates of fish and the way in which human pharmaceuticals may affect the delicate food web in aquatic ecosystems.



Scientists have known for years that such “micropollutants” end up in natural waterways like streams and rivers after being flushed through human systems into wastewater. But current research hasn’t really looked at whether psychotherapeutic drugs can affect the behavior of aquatic creatures, the authors noted — which is surprising, because a common class of anti-anxiety medications known as benzodiazepines works by binding to receptors that are found in a wide range of animals.

To test one such drug’s effect, the researchers took fish that were hatched in the wild and exposed them to either low concentrations of oxazepam (1.8 micrograms per liter) or high concentrations of the drug (910 micrograms per liter) for

seven days.

These “personality changes” clearly had an effect on feeding behavior as well – fish on oxazepam ate more zooplankton and did so faster than their peers, quickly depleting the food source. In the short term, this might sound like an evolutionary advantage for the perch – but the increased boldness also means they may be taking riskier behaviors, making them more vulnerable to predators.

And regardless, eating all that zooplankton may allow the zooplankton’s food source, algae, to run unchecked, resulting in algal blooms that suck the oxygen out of the ocean and create dead zones devoid of aquatic life.

The researchers’ findings could well reflect reality in waters worldwide: Their low concentrations in the lab were roughly equivalent to levels found in wild fish in the River Fyris in Sweden. And they found that the fish’s muscle tissue held more than six times that amount, evidence that the drug was building up over time.

The study may require humans to rethink the idea of pollutants, lead author Tomas Brodin, a researcher at Umea University in Sweden, said at a news conference Thursday at the American Association for the Advancement of Science meeting in Boston.

“It’s a global issue,” Brodin said. “We find these concentrations all over the world – and it’s quite possible, even probable, that these behavioral effects are actually happening as we speak.”

Lawmakers want Nevada to be sovereign state

By Matt Woolbright, AP

CARSON CITY – Two state senators and a dozen other Nevadans urged a Senate committee Tuesday to tell the federal government that "enough is enough" and declare Nevada a sovereign state, recognizing federal jurisdiction only in areas specified in the U.S. Constitution.

Sen. James Settelmeyer, R-Minden, presented the resolution to claim sovereignty under the Tenth Amendment, which says powers in the Constitution that are not specifically reserved for the federal government are reserved for the states.

"This resolution seeks to protect the citizens of the Silver State from an overreaching federal government," Settelmeyer told members of the Senate Committee on Legislative Operations and Elections.



Nevada state Sen. James Settelmeyer

Senate Joint Resolution 3 proposes Nevada claim sovereignty as a state and order a cease-and-desist for all federal mandates deemed beyond those enumerated in the Constitution.

Settelmeyer provided examples of the federal government deeming 2,500 acres in Douglas County a flood plain, even though there is no record of flooding in the area, and changing arsenic regulations for water. Those changes put an economic strain on the affected locals, Settelmeyer said.

“I feel our federal government has overstepped and is trampling over our state rights – ours and every other state’s,” said Carol Howell of the Carson City Republican Central Committee.

Any future attempts by the federal government that are outside its enumerated powers would be prohibited, as would threatening civil or criminal action for failing to enact one of the non-enumerated mandates. It’s a practice that one Nevadan said has become too common.

“We need to tell the federal government we’re not accepting blackmail,” Richard Brengman said at the meeting. “Nevada needs to be represented by Nevadans, not the federal government.”

Sen. Mark Manendo, D-Las Vegas, told the Associated Press later in the day that there is an argument that states should be independent from the federal government. But he quickly added some forget the good parts of an involved federal government.

“States do receive a lot of assistance from the federal government,” Manendo said. “Whether you agree or disagree, we do get highway money, we do get federal money for different things.”

He added he is undecided on the resolution, but said it does have merit.

“There are pros and cons to it because states do have some benefit from the federal government,” Manendo said. “I certainly wish Nevada owned more of its own territory here.”

Others sought to ensure that the resolution also rejects the United Nations' Agenda 21, a 300-page proposal suggesting a roadmap for the world in the 21st Century. Opponents fear, if implemented, Agenda 21 will remove individual freedoms and usher in a one-world government.

Jim Sallee urged the committee to serve as a line of defense against any sort of encroachment on personal freedoms by the federal government.

"We are looking for you to stand between them and us, and defend the Constitution of the United States," Sallee told committee members via a video feed from Las Vegas.

If passed, the resolution would be sent to the president, vice president, leaders of both houses of Congress and members of the Nevada delegation to be entered into Congressional Record.

"I think we need to remind them," Settelmeyer said of the federal government and states' rights. "I feel they've forgotten the meaning of the Tenth Amendment."

Sexual harassment awareness seminar

The North Lake Tahoe Chamber/CVB/Resort Association and the Truckee Donner Chamber of Commerce in partnership with the Sierra Human Resources Association are offering The Generations and Sexual Harassment: Awareness and Prevention for Business Owners and Managers on Feb. 26, 9-11 a.m.



The event will be at the North Lake Tahoe Visitor Information Center, 100 North Lake Blvd., Tahoe City.

This workshop, required as per California's AB1825, will bring your business into compliance regarding sexual harassment awareness in the workplace. SHRA President Laura Moriarty, of Tahoe Training Partners, will present this topic in an engaging and provocative way from the perspective of generations working side-by-side.

Registration is $39/person for SHRA members, $49/person for chamber members and $59/person for non-members. Walk-in registration is $49/person for SHRA members, $59/person for chamber members and $69/person for non-members.

To register and for more information about the workshop, call Laura Moriarty at (530) 573.0224.

Smoke from controlled burn filling Lake Tahoe Basin



The controlled burn Feb. 19 from a lookout on Spooner Summit. Photo/Susan Wood

Updated Feb. 20, 2:50pm

U.S. Forest Service fuels management crews continued prescribed fire operations above Glenbrook today. Crews burned approximately 100 acres Tuesday, and have completed the ignition of the remaining 35 acres today.

Operations may continue through the end of the week as weather and conditions allow.

On Feb. 19 smoke impacts to the basin were light, with most of the smoke carried east by the wind. Today, the wind changed direction and smoke is impacting Glenbrook residents on the East Shore of Lake Tahoe. Smoky conditions are expected to last through the rest of Wednesday, with anticipated clearing tomorrow.

Basin residents and visitors may see a significant amount of smoke rising from the project area. Smoke may be visible on highways 50 and 28.

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Updated Feb. 19 4:30pm

Smoke is filling the skies in Carson City. It’s from a prescribed fire in Lake Tahoe.

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U.S. Forest Service fuels management crews are preparing for a possible larger-scale prescribed fire operation above Glenbrook on Feb. 19.

If conditions are favorable, crews could burn up to 135 acres to reduce hazardous forest fuels that could feed a wildfire. The Forest Service is considering staffing a fire information station in the Spooner Summit area for this operation. Updates will follow as more information on weather and fuels conditions becomes available.

Smoke from this operation could be visible in the Reno and Carson City areas, as well as in the Lake Tahoe Basin. The Forest Service strives to minimize the impacts of smoke on local communities.

Smoke-sensitive residents should consider staying indoors and keeping doors, windows and outside vents closed. To directly receive prescribed fire updates, send an email to pa_ltbmu@fs.fed.us.

Forest Service staff will post road signs around areas affected by prescribed fire, and update the local fire information line at (530) 543.2600, No. 6.

Drugs, mental health, no

access to care = South Lake Tahoe's key medical problems

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe has more people per capita dying from Alzheimer's compared to the nation. South Lake Tahoe's suicide rate is higher than California and the country's. More people smoke in South Lake Tahoe compared to the state.

Those were some of the stats dispersed to the South Lake Tahoe City Council on Feb. 19 by Barton Health officials.

In 2012, the South Lake Tahoe health organization completed a community health needs assessment. All nonprofit hospitals will be required to do these studies every three years as part of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act in the health care reform passed by Congress.

Nine main issues came up in the local study:

• Access to healthcare services

• Cancer

• Dementias, including Alzheimer's disease

• Housing

• Immunization and infectious diseases

• Injury and violence prevention

• Mental health and mental disorder

• Substance abuse

• Tobacco use.

While Barton will address all of them, the three that will be the main focus are substance abuse, access to care and mental health.

Drug use in South Tahoe on a per capita basis is about four times what it is nationally.

“The study reaffirms what we are seeing in the emergency room,” Cline Purvance, Barton’s chief medical officer, told the council. “This started in the late 1990s when pain became the fifth vital sign. Assessing and treating pain became a big priority. We have swung too far.”

He said it’s time health care providers look at what they are doing. With online medical records becoming a reality, medical personnel will better be able to know who has prescribed what for each patient.

In addition to prescription drugs being a problem, marijuana, heroin, opiates, synthetic drugs and alcohol are all local issues.

The report shows a steady trend of local drug-induced deaths since 1999.

There is also a high rate of suicides in this area.

Health officials recognize drugs-mental illness-lack of health care can be tied together.

A psychiatrist was added to the payroll last year. And when the community clinic’s expansion is done this summer a psychologist will be hired.

Police Chief Brian Uhler said his officers see the drug and mental health issues every day. He pointed out how the area

does not have a long-term care facility for those with mental issues.

More information about the report may be found online.

Nevada to test groundwater levels in 7 counties

Beginning the first week of March and continuing into April, staff from the Nevada Division of Water Resources, Office of the State Engineer, will be measuring groundwater levels in wells throughout various hydrographic basins within Washoe, Humboldt, Pershing, Lander, Elko, Eureka and White Pine counties.



The data collection is part of an ongoing effort to assess hydrologic conditions throughout Nevada.

Division staff will be measuring water levels primarily in irrigation and stock wells.

Contact Tim Wilson at (775) 684.2873 for more information.

Ski report: Fresh snow



Freshies to be had today.

Ski with a buddy and stay in bounds, and on open runs and terrain.

Here is the Feb. 20 ski report.

— Curtis Fong