Funding for national parks threatened

By Raju Chebium, Gannett

WASHINGTON — Unless Congress prevents $85 billion in across-the-board budget cuts before March 1, iconic national parks like Yellowstone, Yosemite, the Grand Canyon and the Great Smoky Mountains will take a financial hit.

A memo by National Park Service Director Jonathan Jarvis tells park officials nationwide to prepare to make $100 million of cuts if the budget sequester becomes a reality.

Like most agencies, the park service would have to cut 5.1 percent of its budget this year as part of the congressionally approved process to trim the national debt. The Defense Department faces spending reductions of about 7.3 percent.

California parks that face the ax include Yosemite ($1.43 million in potential cuts), the newly re-designated Pinnacles National Park ($172,000), Death Valley ($435,000) and Sequoia/Kings Canyon ($820,000).

“We expect that a cut of this magnitude … will result in reductions to visitor services, hours of operation, shortening of seasons and possibly closing the areas during periods when there is insufficient staff,” Jarvis wrote in the Jan. 25 memo.

The Coalition of National Park Service Retirees obtained the memo and related documents and released them.

The park service declined comment and referred reporters to the Office of Management and Budget. The OMB didn’t return an email.

The Park Service Retirees’ spokeswoman, Joan Anzelmo, said the documents spell out just what changes and service reductions millions of visitors can expect this summer when they visit a national park, monument or heritage area.

“We’re just trying to raise the alarm to let the citizens of our country understand what (the cuts) mean,” said Anzelmo, the former superintendent at the Colorado National Monument. “Right now, it’s been sort of theoretical. … What we’re doing is we’re trying to explain it with more specifics.”

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., said last week that he’s working on an alternative to the automatic cuts but warned that Congress may not get it done before March 1. If Congress misses the deadline, the Obama administration can take steps to soften the blow for a few weeks.

Plane wreckage found in Pinenut Mountains

Updated: Feb. 7 4:35pm:

Douglas County sheriff’s officials have confirmed the plane located in the Pinenut Mountains is the one belonging to Keith Jorgenson of Gardnerville.

There is one body in the plane. Identification of the remains is pending.

Updated: Feb. 7 3:35pm:

KRNV-TV in Reno is reporting aircraft wreckage was found today at 2:40pm in the Pinenut Mountains about 10 miles east of Minden. FAA says there is no confirmation yet on the fate of the pilot, who was the only person on board.

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Search crews are looking for a Gardnerville pilot who did not return with his plane to Minden on Wednesday as expected.

A red and white Cessna 172 left Minden Feb. 6 at 5pm. The plane was piloted by Keith Jorgenson, 46. He was the sole occupant of the plane.

Douglas County sheriff’s deputies said Jorgenson had planned to return to the airport by dark, however he never returned. A check of surrounding airports in Carson City and Mono County revealed that Jorgenson did not land there either.

The tail number is N328SP.

Douglas County’s search and rescue team has been deployed to assist. They will be using an emergency locator transmitter to search for any signals from a distress radio beacon.

— Lake Tahoe News staff report

Creating whole wheat bread at home

By Mark Bittman, New York Times

Those of us who cook believe that you have to cook to eat; baking bread is different. With so many relatively decent loaves readily available in stores, bread-baking is more of a hobby.

The result, of course, will be eaten and enjoyed — and bakers know the rewards of blowing people’s minds with a good loaf:

“You made that?” — but baking is not mandatory. (I say that having just paid four bucks for a “baguette” that would serve better as a kitchen sponge.)

As with any practice, baking gets better over time. But the odd thing about bread-making is that any epiphanies you have along the way are only temporarily gratifying. You always make progress, but then your standard rises, and in the end baking provides that oddly addictive combination of satisfaction and frustration.

Producing a great baguette is an art, but whole-grain bread is real sustenance, and I wanted good ones in my repertory. So over the past few years, I’ve challenged myself to make 100 percent whole-grain bread, and to make it delicious.

There are three reasons that my whole-grain breads have become better: the food processor, the overnight rise and the sourdough starter. And they all involve abandoning kneading. Kneading dough by hand for 20 minutes — as was the practice when I first started baking — was never actually necessary (few home bakers knew that), but a requirement of a particular kind of bread made in a relatively hurried fashion using a relatively large amount of domesticated (that is, store-bought) yeast.

That hurried method was, as far as I can tell, perfected (I say this in the sense that it truly cannot get any better) by Charles Van Over in his book, “The Best Bread Ever,” published in 1997 and set to be revised as an ebook this fall. Van Over makes the best home baguettes of anyone I’ve ever met. In any case, both the “not-quite-whole-grain bread” and whole-wheat focaccia recipes are adaptations (by me, not Van Over) of his technique. The key “ingredient” in Van Over’s method, aside from his precision, is the food processor, which “kneads” the dough in 45 seconds, developing gluten in much the same way an overnight rise does.

The overnight rise is at the heart of my second revelation, a result of my well-known (to bread bakers, anyway) encounter with Jim Lahey of Sullivan Street Bakery in SoHo. Lahey slowed the process down, reducing the yeast and combining a slow rise and an oven-within-an-oven baking method described in his book, “My Bread” (written with Rick Flaste, a former *Times* editor). This method essentially replaces kneading with time and takes at least 12 hours. (For further discussion, consult “No-Knead Bread,” which ran in the *Times* in November 2006, along with the hundreds of blog posts, comments and wonderful, thoughtful variations it spurred.)

Finally, I came to the realization that great 100 percent whole-grain bread can be made only with sourdough (it’s about the difference between how whole grains respond to store-bought yeast and how they respond to acid, or a combination of acid and wild yeast), and I discovered that via a combination of driving other people crazy with questions and a recipe from “The Scandinavian Cookbook,” by my friend Trine Hahnemann. When I visited Hahnemann just over a year ago, I requested a lesson in Danish rye and got one. That plus her recipe has propelled me at least halfway up the mountain.

The recipe here is, again, an adaptation, though it’s close to her original. The sourdough method, which I have found to be the most reliable way to produce a starter, is from “Bread Alone,” by Daniel Leader and Judith Blahnik, a fine bread-baking book that gets a bit technical for me. (If you find my route overly simplistic, buy “Bread Alone.”) Sourdough rye requires time: a few days to make the starter, and 12 hours or so every time you want to make bread. But kneading? No.

For those who like a dense, chewy, flavorful loaf, Hahnemann’s rye is the find of a lifetime. You can make it lighter in texture and color by using a touch of white flour in place of whole wheat, though to me that defeats the purpose. You can make it darker in color — gorgeously so — by adding roasted malt powder. Seeds — fennel, caraway, anise — add flavor. If it’s too chewy for you, use flour in place of cracked rye. Finally – and this may be hard to believe – it’s best when wrapped in plastic and cured for a day before eating.

The other two breads here are based on Van Over’s technique, and the not-quite whole grain includes a fair approximation of his original recipe. If ever there was a reason for you to splurge on a kitchen scale, this is it: there is real precision here, and if you follow the instructions to the gram, you will produce very good bread.

So why don’t all baguettes incorporate the complexity of whole grains? The problem is that there is a limit to how much whole grain you can add to a bread and still make a light loaf with a crisp, shattering crust and an interior that pulls pleasantly. Whole grain has benefits and charms of its own, but it does not respond to yeast the way white flour does. Adding something like 10 percent of whole wheat or rye or barley flour to a white dough gives you something like what the French call pain complet, but it’s not complet at all; it’s just white bread with a little whole wheat in it, like the stuff they sell in stores. Adding 20 or 30 percent gives you a distinctive loaf that has the benefits of both, and it has become my standard. Adding 50 percent or more pretty much robs you of the reasons you started with white flour in the first place. If that’s what you want, make sourdough, or cheat.

The last recipe here, the whole-grain focaccia, is the cheat. I won’t apologize for it – I make it often – but it’s not in the same league as these others. By upping the amount of yeast, using the food processor and incorporating relatively large amounts of fat (in the form of olive oil), you can make a 100 percent whole-wheat focaccia (other shapes, including baguettes, will also work, but I like it best as a puffy flatbread) in a minimum of time. Really, the best treatment for whole grain is sourdough. But if you’re in a hurry, greatness takes second place.

What happens to your virtual things when you die?

By Katy Steinmetz, Time

Consumers are spending an unprecedented amount buying things they will never actually touch. Shoppers shelled out an estimated $4.5 billion last year for e-books and billions more for music, movies and other stuff that exists only on a computer or in the cloud. The benefits of this digital shift are enormous, but so are the unanswered questions. Among the biggest: As more of the things you buy, make and cherish cease to be tangible, what happens to them all when you die?

It's a problem lawmakers are just beginning to deal with—and one that grows in urgency as we move more and more of our lives into the digital realm. There's money at stake: a dedicated iTunes user could easily amass a collection worth $5,000. But there are sentimental concerns too. By one estimate, nearly 600,000 U.S. Facebook users died last year, yet the rules governing what happens to all their photos, notes, messages, videos and other digital memories are muddled.

In legal parlance, our e-things are called digital assets. Problems arise when beliefs about what we or our survivors should be able to do with digital assets conflict with terms of service agreements, those novella-length contracts everyone approves and no one reads. Providers like Yahoo and Amazon often state that accounts are nontransferable or that what you "buy" is not technically sold to you, just licensed for your personal use.

Legislators are trying to bring some clarity to the high-tech confusion. Five states have laws intended to give executors easier access to certain digital assets, and lawmakers are crafting similar bills around the country. Companies like Facebook, wary of violating users' privacy even after they're gone, have resisted calls to release content. In Massachusetts, Google lobbied against a digital-assets bill. The matter may have to be settled in court. "The first big case on this issue will be a very interesting one," says attorney Katie Zulkoski, who worked on a digital-assets bill in Nebraska. "It's really unclear, and someone will test it."

In the meantime, the prospect of leaving your virtual goods to the grandkids remains a tricky proposition. "We won't ever own digital assets in the way we own tangible ones," says Rutgers law professor Greg Lastowka. User, beware.

Ski report: Snow on its way

Expect the clouds to open up with snow this afternoon.

Here is the Feb. 7 ski report.

— Curtis Fong

Nutrition, exercise focus of talk

How often do you stop and reflect about your eating regimes? Do they foster your athletic goals? Are you ready to mix up your routine in activity and nutrition?

Registered dietitian Jill Whisler and exercise physiologist Wendy Buchanan will talk about the top 10 nutrition and exercise tips for peak performance and health.

The two are from the Tahoe Center for Health and Sports Performance.

The talk is March 5 at Tahoe Center for Environmental Sciences, 291 Country Club Drive, Incline Village.

The no-host bar opens at 5:30pm, with the presentation at 6pm. Cost is $5.

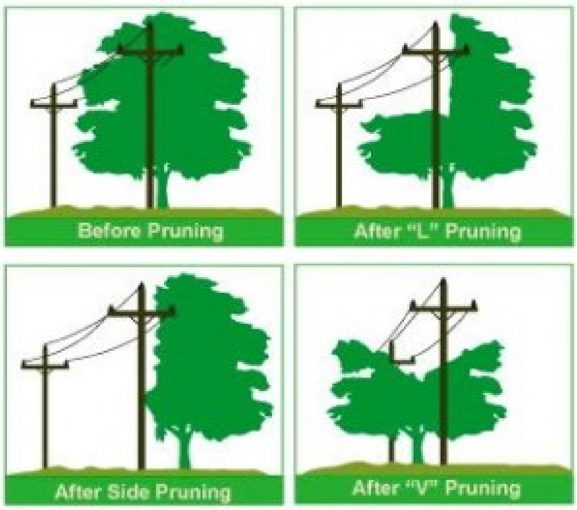
Childhood scare with power line in Tahoe leaves scars, changes electric company's policy

By Kathryn Reed

South Shore children had to die and become severely burned before the utility company would take responsibility for cutting back trees near power lines.

It was on Sept. 29, 1969, when 9-year-old Dan Cook was climbing trees with his 7-year-old sister near their Echo View Estates home that he nearly died after becoming entangled in the electrical wires.

“We sued Sierra (Pacific) Power. If you see trees trimmed by power people, that is why,” his mother, Bea Cook said. The Cooks were one of three families to sue the electric company.



The power company is responsible for tree trimming.

In less than a decade in that era, five children were singed to varying degrees by power lines. Two died and three lived.

Dan had grabbed onto a 14,000-volt power line. It was the main source of power coming through the area near Sawmill Road. Kids would play in the sand pits in the area – with climbing trees one of the main activities.

“A neighbor boy came up and said Dan’s leg was smoking and he was hanging 30 feet in air,” Cook recalled.

This is Burn Awareness Week and Shriners Hospitals for Children is putting on a yearlong education campaign.

It wasn't until 1997 that the Shriners burn center in Sacramento opened.

Dan Cook spent almost two months at Barton Memorial Hospital. He had two surgeries before being released in time for Thanksgiving in 1969. From his right hand that had touched the wire, the burn crossed his body, leaving third-degree burns on his upper left side that went down to his ankle.

His mom has wonderful things to say about Barton. (Bea and Bruce Cook still live here, while Dan, his wife, and their children are in Florida.)

But about a year after the incident three more surgeries were required. This time at St. Mary's Hospital in Reno.

At age 12, it was recommended Dan go to the burn center in Texas because what was being done regionally was not working. At that time Shriners had facilities in Galveston and Boston.

"For us, Shriners is just incredible in what they do, have done and continue to do," Cook said.

Shriners paid for mother and son to travel to Texas, put her up in a hotel for a month and performed six surgeries on the boy. Shriners provides care for children up to age 18. The treatment is free.

On the bottom floor of the Texas facility they were raising pigs for

Not much has changed since the 1960s because Barton sends patients with severe burns to the nearest designated burn center, according to doctor Warren Withers. Patients can also be flown directly to a burn facility from the scene if first responders deem that appropriate.

The most common burns Barton sees are usually due to cooking or fireplace accidents. In 2012, Barton's emergency room saw 59 burn patients:

- **53 were treated and released; 12 were children** the grafting material. It was a 30-bed facility, with Dan on the reconstructive side.

• 3 were admitted to Barton
• 3 were transferred to a designated burn center.

Dan Cook when he got out of Barton Hospital. Photo/Provided

Using Jobst bandages for burns was new at the time. But they were too rough for Dan, so once he got home his legs were wrapped with Ace bandages to keep pressure on the skin grafts. He was also having to wear shorts to school, which some of the kids didn’t think was right. Apparently his little sister set them straight.

On the back of his left knee the doctors put in grow darts with the thinking Dan would not need more surgeries – that the grafts would grow as he did.

“He is 6-4 now and has never had another surgery because of those grow darts,” Cook told *Lake Tahoe News*.


Dan Cook

When the Coast Guard saw his scars they said there would be no admittance without a doctor’s clearance. Shriners obliged and the young man became a Coastie for four years.

“When I see a Shriner, I give them hug,” Cook said, knowing they made sure his son was able to live a normal life.

Musical chairs on Fallen Leaf Lake board

Fallen Leaf Lake will not have an election next month because El Dorado County Board of Supervisors filled two positions via appointment.

Larry Calof and Steve Malley were the only two to apply for the vacancies on the board. The county had the option to make the appointments or go through with an election. This expedited matters and saved the district money.


It’s not just the water that is turbulent at Fallen Leaf Lake. Photo/LTN file

But now there is another opening.

The Fallen Leaf Lake Community Services District board was supposed to meet Jan. 26, but board member Wanda Kownacki resigned via email the day before. She has not returned a call from *Lake Tahoe News*.

Her departure left only Tom Bacchetti and Stephanie Neidig on the board at the time, so the meeting could not be conducted. Calof and Malley were appointed Jan. 29.

A special board meeting has been called for March 9. At that time it is hoped people will have applied for Kownacki’s seat and the four board members can make an appointment.

An item from the January agenda moved to March’s docket centers on the possibility of forming a citizens’ advisory committee regarding the ongoing issue of who has the right to vote at Fallen Leaf Lake.

— Lake Tahoe News staff report

Editorial: CalFire burns trust with taxpayers

Publisher's note: ***This editorial is from the Feb. 4, 2013, Sacramento Bee.***

A second state department is caught hiding money. Once again, there will be an audit, a legislative hearing and no doubt a "full" investigation.

While full details are emerging, CalFire concealed $3.66 million that should have gone into the general fund.

Its arrogance underscores the larger issue: The money doesn't belong to some bureaucrat with a badge. It belongs to the people.

In a budget that exceeds $130 billion, $3.6 million might be considered dust. Dust or not, the money didn't belong to CalFire bureaucrats – as they knew, according to internal documents. The money should have been deposited in the general fund, for the benefit of the entire state.

Starting in 2005, CalFire collected the $3.6 million in settlements of lawsuits against property owners who had liability from fires, as was first reported by the *Wall Street Journal* and *Los Angeles Times*. Attorneys defending Sierra Pacific Industries discovered the cache of money while fighting a suit in which the state seeks to recover costs of quelling the Moonlight Fire.

Rather than depositing the money into the general fund as required by law, CalFire used it to buy goodies including digital cameras, GPS equipment and metal detectors, and pay, as the *Bee's* Kevin Yamamura reported, $33,000 for a conference at a Pismo Beach resort.

The California District Attorneys Association, which should have known better, agreed in 2005 to manage the money, in exchange for payments which totaled more than $370,000 over the seven-plus years.

CalFire officials knew months and maybe years ago that what they were doing was wrong, as drafts of early audits showed. They passed up several chances to come clean and hand the money over to the Department of Finance.

Instead, CalFire officials clammed up as Department of Finance auditors scoured departments looking for hidden funds last year, in the wake of revelations that the state Department of Parks and Recreation squirreled away more than $20 million.

CalFire remained mute as the California attorney general investigated, lightly as it happens, the parks department.

Finally, the District Attorneys Association, whose past leaders showed questionable judgment by entering into the agreement with CalFire, severed the arrangement in December after its current leadership learned about it.

CalFire clearly should have come forward at that point.

The California Department of Finance has commenced an audit. Auditing is an essential part of budgeting. But so is trust. The Department of Finance relies on the honesty of the myriad of state departments to provide truthful and complete information. In this instance, CalFire, a department that is responsible for protecting people and property, stumbled badly, and in the process sacrificed trust.

Growth in pharmacy, retail spark CVS earnings

By Tess Stynes, Wall Street Journal

CVS Caremark Corp.'s fourth-quarter earnings rose 2.6 percent as the company reported revenue growth in its pharmacy-services and retail drugstore operations.

For the year, the company raised its forecast for per-share adjusted earnings from continuing operations by 2 cents and now expects $3.86 to $4.

CVS's retail pharmacy business gained customers last year in the wake of a contract dispute between rival Walgreen Co.'s and pharmacy-benefits manager Express Scripts Holding Co. that has since been resolved.

A wave of major generic drugs introductions is having a mixed effect on the industry. Though the copycat drugs carry higher margins than branded products, they command lower prices, hurting sales revenue.

CVS Caremark reported a profit of $1.13 billion, or 90 cents a share, up from $1.1 billion, or 81 cents a share, a year earlier. Excluding debt-extinguishment losses, acquisition-related charges and other items, adjusted earnings from continuing operations were $1.14. Revenue increased 11 percent to $31.39 billion.

Analysts polled by Thomson Reuters most recently projected earnings of $1.10 on revenue of $31.13 billion.

Revenue in the larger pharmacy-services business climbed 17 percent to $18.6 billion, reflecting new client starts, higher prices and growth of its Medicare Part D program. Pharmacy network claims processed rose 6.5 percent.

On the retail side, revenue increased 5.1 percent to $16.3 billion. Same-store sales were up 4 percent from a year earlier, as pharmacy same-store sales also improved by 4 percent. Same-store sales in the front end of the store grew 3.9 percent.