History: Simple flumes play big role in Tahoe timber

Publisher's note: ***This is reprinted with permission from the September-October 1989 Lake Tahoe Historical Society newsletter.***

Picture two long slabs of thick heavy wood placed at right angles to each other, braced by trestle legs so that they form a constant and connected downhill trough. It does not sound like much but it was an invention that was vital to the lumber business in the Tahoe basin from 1867 to 1900. The steep slopes, the lack of roadways and the fact that most of the lumber was headed for Virginia City and the Comstock Lode, made this simple device an important link in the transportation chain.

The V-flume was invented by a man named J.W. Haines in 1867. It was so simple to build and operate that it was two years before Haines sought to patent it. It was too late for him to make a profit from it however, for it was in widespread use by then and he lost his patent suit. By 1873, the Carson & Tahoe Lumber & Fluming Co. had a twelve mile long flume above Glenbrook and in 1876, Flood & Fair opened a fifteen mile flume east from Mount Rose to Carson City where its logs met at the Virginia & Truckee Railroad headed for Virginia City. By then, there were dozens of other V-Flumes operating in the mountains around the lake.

When a tree was cut, logs were taken to the head of the flume and placed in the trough. There had to be a constant flow of water at least one inch deep, or the boards had to be greased, to ease movement of the logs. Men stationed along the way with long poles kept logs form snagging or catching on anything.

Gravity did the rest. At the end of the trip, logs hit the lake with a resounding crack and an impressive splash of water. There they would be chained together, towed to Glenbrook, hauled up the eastern summit and placed in another flume which took them to the train yard in Carson City.

There are still pieces of aging, cracking wood lying in the basin that were once used in V-Flumes. When lumbering stopped at the turn of the century this once-vital device was left rotting and abandoned but not quite forgotten This simple, elegant mechanical device illustrates the ingenuity and creative skill of the 19th century Americans.

Residents protest South Lake Tahoe police

Corrupt law enforcement in South Lake Tahoe?

That’s what some people believe. And they took to the streets Monday to make their feelings known.

Ty Robben organized the Jan. 28 demonstration along Al Tahoe Boulevard. Robben’s issues started last fall when bounty hunters busted down his door. He’s been waiting for the South Lake Tahoe cops to finish the report. He even went to the City Council meeting last week to plead the electeds to intervene to speed up the process.

Within a week the report was done and passed on to the District Attorney’s Office.

But Robben said he is having a hard time getting a copy of the report.



One of the signs at the Jan. 28 protest in South Lake Tahoe. Photo/Provided

"I think this is the moment for Police Chief [Brian] Uhler to shine or sink. I think Chief Uhler seems like a nice fella based on my experience and I hope he's legit. Perhaps some of the people below him are the problem," Robben told *Lake Tahoe News*. "The PD does good things too and I would prefer to not be their critic or on their bad side."

At the protest on Monday people were sharing stories of their run-ins with local law enforcement. Drivers honked their horns in support.

When an unmarked police vehicle went by and suddenly turned on its lights for no apparent reason one protester wondered out loud if that was to try to intimidate those who had gathered peacefully.

"I do think that the totality of my situation and others warrants some kind of future discussions. Most people are very, very intimidated to speak up or stand up for their rights because of retaliation by police, the DA or the courts. I have been retaliated against, but protesting is one thing I

can do and I have certain control over that right. For some of us, that might be the only justice we ever get," Robben said.

Robben hopes future protests are not necessary – but he said there would be more if he believes there is a need to raise awareness about what law enforcement is or is not doing.

The planning of the protest unintentionally coincided within less than a week of Officer Johnny Poland being arrested on five federal charges dealing with witness and evidence tampering. Robben was planning the protest before Poland's arrest.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Lawmaker wants plastic bags banned throughout California

By Megan Hansen, Marin Independent Journal

Assemblyman Marc Levine, in his first piece of legislation, is calling for banning plastic grocery bags throughout California, starting in 2015.

Levine, D-San Rafael, introduced Assembly Bill 158 this month, reviving a similar bill that got stuck in a Senate committee last year after it faced criticism from plastic bag manufacturers and grocers.

"A similar bill was held up in the Senate, but that's not a reason to advance good public policy," Levine said. "This is about advancing good environmental policy and best business practices."

Levine said plastic bags have a drastic impact on the environment, killing hundreds of thousands of marine fish and mammals each year. He said banning them could reduce beach debris by about 10 percent.

Under the bill, grocery stores with more than $2 million in annual sales or retailers with more than 10,000-square-feet of floor space would have to stop offering plastic bags.

These stores would be required to provide free recycled paper bags for their customers through July 30, 2016. After that, Levine said stores could charge a fee for recycled paper bags.

As part of the bill, stores would also be required to sell reusable grocery bags.

It’s no surprise Levine is advancing the legislation, coming from a county where a plastic bag ban has been in place in unincorporated areas since Jan. 1, 2012. Under Marin County’s ban, grocers can charge at least 5 cents for a recycled paper bag.

In addition, Fairfax has banned plastic bags since its residents in 2008 approved the idea with 79 percent majority vote.

Levine said he’s ready to take on critics and fight for the environment.

Levine said the plastic bag ban won’t apply to small bags in the produce area used for fruits and vegetables.

AB158 is being coauthored by Assemblyman Wesley Chesbro, D-Arcata, Tom Ammiano, D-San Francisco, and Bonnie Lowenthal, D-Long Beach. Levine said other legislators have also expressed interest in supporting the bill.

State legislation to ban plastic bags has been debated for several years. In 2010, a bill backed by both grocers and Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger didn’t make it out of the state

Legislature due to heavy opposition from the plastics industry.

Last May, Hawaii made headlines when it became the first state to ban plastic bags. San Francisco was the first city in the nation to ban them in 2007.

The last attempt to impose a statewide ban was put forth by termed-out Assemblywoman Julia Brownley, D-Santa Monica, in 2011. Her bill reached the Senate Appropriations Committee after a committee staff analysis indicated the ban would cost $200,000 to implement.

Levine said there are multiple cities and counties throughout the state enacting plastic bag bans, each with different rules and regulations. An uniformed state law would streamline plastic bag reduction efforts.

“We’re trying to make it easier for people, because those laws would apply the same way,” Levine said.

Levine said he’s ready to take on critics and fight for the environment.

“If oil and plastic companies want to put up a fight, we’re on the right side of the argument,” Levine said.

South Shore knitters, crocheters to meet

The next monthly gathering of knitters and crocheters is Feb. 2 from 1-3pm.

Crafters of all ages and experience are welcome.

Meet at the the South Lake Tahoe Branch Library, 1000 Rufus Allen Blvd.

For more information, call (530) 573.3185.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Trent Renner, Kevin VanKirk and Joe Forehand recently joined the South Lake Tahoe Fire Department.

• Would you like to show your support for your local library? Why not join the Friends of the Library? Stop by their monthly Feb. 20 at 1pm, 1000 Rufus Allen Blvd., South Lake Tahoe.

• Caltrans has upgraded its website to give motorists access to planned lane closures on highways statewide. Real-time statewide route information is accessible online.

• A memorial service for longtime South Lake Tahoe resident Bert Lucido will be Feb. 2 at 1pm at St. Theresa Catholic Church.

• What happened to the millions of dollars that was spent in the Al Tahoe region of South Lake Tahoe? Here is info from the Tahoe Pipe Club:

http://youtu.be/fAPQbtzO1qE

Lego event at South Tahoe library

Design, build, invent with Legos at the South Lake Tahoe library.

The whole family is welcome Feb. 23 at 10am.

Lego creations will be displayed in the library until the next month’s Block Party.

The library is at 1000 Rufus Allen Blvd., South Lake Tahoe.

For more information, call (530) 573.3185.

Placer County has money for projects that reduce emissions

Placer County Air Pollution Control District is seeking applications for the 2013 Clean Air Grant Program. The goal of the program is to incentivize emission reducing projects in Placer County not otherwise required by law.

The open application period closes at 5pm Feb. 28. Applications are available online.

The district has approximately $950,000 available for eligible projects.

Eligible projects will be evaluated on a cost-effective basis, with respect to the reduction of nitrogen oxide (NOx) and diesel particulate matter (DPM) emissions (not green house gas emissions). All projects selected for funding must operate at least 75 percent of their time within Placer County and be completed within two years or less of grant approval.

For more info, call Heather Kuklo at (530) 745.2339.

Poland out on bail; more charges possible

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe police Officer Johnny Poland is out of jail on a $100,000 bond. He is scheduled to be in court on Feb. 14 to face five federal charges related to witness and evidence tampering.

Poland was arrested Jan. 23 and was released from the Sacramento County Jail the following day.



Johnny Poland

Although the complaint written by local FBI Agent Chris Campion details more than one incident of Poland having sex with minors, no statutory rape charges were filed against him.

When asked why there were no federal charges involving sex with students, FBI spokeswoman Gina Swankie told *Lake Tahoe News*, "The individuals in the complaint were not high school students during the time of the FBI investigation."

Poland was the school resource officer at South Tahoe High School.

"Information in the complaint relates that the girls were victimized in 2003 and 2006 – while conducting an internal investigation, at the time, they denied sexual activities," Police Chief Brian Uhler told *Lake Tahoe News*. "Later, during the joint FBI and SLTPD investigation – within the time restrictions of the appropriate statute of limitations – they disclosed the illegal conduct that could lead to the state charges. … the DA is considering these additional charges."

The alleged crimes occurred when he was on and off duty.

Here is a copy of the Poland complaint.

Japan's school lunch menu: A healthy meal, made from scratch

By Chico Harlan, Washington Post

TOKYO – In Japan, school lunch means a regular meal, not one that harms your health. The food is grown locally and almost

never frozen. There’s no mystery in front of the meat. From time to time, parents even call up with an unusual question: Can they get the recipes?

“Parents hear their kids talking about what they had for lunch,” said Tatsuji Shino, the principal at Umejima Elementary School in Tokyo, “and kids ask them to re-create the meals at home.”

Japan takes seriously both its food and its health and, as a result, its school lunches are a point of national pride — not a source of dismay. As other countries, including the United States, struggle to design school meals that are healthy, tasty and affordable, Japan has all but solved the puzzle, using a system that officials here describe as utterly common sense.

In the United States, where obesity rates have tripled over the past three decades, new legislation championed by Michelle Obama has pushed schools to debut menus with controversial calorie restrictions. But even the healthiest choices are generally provided by large agri-food companies, cooked off site, frozen and then reheated, and forced to compete in cafeterias with all things fried, salty and sweet.

Schools in Japan, by contrast, give children the sort of food they’d get at home, not at a stadium. The meals are often made from scratch. They’re balanced but hearty, heavy on rice and vegetables, fish and soups. The meals haven’t changed much in four decades.

Mealtime is a scene of communal duty: In both elementary and middle schools, students don white coats and caps and serve their classmates. Children eat in their classrooms. They get identical meals, and if they leave food untouched, they are out of luck: Their schools have no vending machines. Barring dietary restrictions, children in most districts can’t bring food to school, either, until they reach high school.

Japan’s system has an envious payoff — its kids are relatively healthy. According to government data, Japan’s child obesity rate, always among the world’s lowest, has declined for each of the past six years, a period during which the country has expanded its dietary education program.

Japan does struggle with childhood and adolescent eating disorders, and government data show a rise in the number of extremely skinny children. But there is virtually no malnutrition resulting from poverty. Japan’s children will live on average to 83, longer than those in any other country, according to the World Health Organization.

When it comes to food, Japan has some deeply ingrained advantages. Children are taught to eat what they are served, meaning they are prone to accept, rather than revolt against, the food on their plates. But Japan also invests heavily in cultivating this mind-set. Most schools employ nutritionists who, among other tasks, work with children who are picky or unhealthy eaters.

Though Japan’s central government sets basic nutritional guidelines, regulation is surprisingly minimal. Not every meal has to meet precise caloric guidelines. At many schools, a nutritionist draws up the recipes — no bureaucratic interference. Central government officials say they have ultimate authority to step in if schools are serving unhealthy food, but they can’t think of any examples where that actually happened.

Funding for lunches is handled locally, too: Municipalities pay for labor costs, but parents — billed monthly — pay for the ingredients, about $3 per meal, with reduced and free options for poorer families.

Notable is what’s lacking: You don’t see low-fat options. You don’t see dessert, other than fruit and yogurt. You occasionally see fried food, but in stark moderation. On a

recent day at Umejima, kids were served the Japanese version of fried chicken, known as karaage. Each child was allowed one nugget.

Officials at Adachi Ward, in northern Tokyo, say they run a "fairly standard" school lunch program in the ward's 71 elementary schools and 37 middle schools. And because this is food-obsessed Japan, those standard meals are restaurant-worthy; in fact, the ward publishes a full-color cookbook based on its best school meals.

District officials allow themselves to brag for just one reason, their success in cutting food waste to 5 percent. This follows the "Oishii Kyushoku," or "Delicious School Lunch," program they created five years ago to get kids more interested in what they were eating.

At Umejima, one of Adachi Ward's schools, the hallway walls look like the pages of Bon Appetit magazine. Hand drawings of healthy lunches dreamed up by students hang near the principal's office. There are charts of beans and spices. Then there's the real food, which is chopped, diced and simmered every morning, beginning at 8a,, by a staff of 12. Shortly after noon, they'll have meals for 760 students.

"Everything is cooked on site," school nutritionist Kimii Fujii said. "We even make our own broth."

Fujii has an expansive job – part educator, part chef and the point person for parent questions. Because of concerns about food contamination in the wake of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster, Fujii gives a daily account on the school Web site of where the lunch ingredients are coming from: the sardines from Hyogo, the carrots from Chiba, the bean sprouts from Tochigi.

She writes the recipes, changing them to reflect seasonal ingredients, and she's realized, over the years, that kids will eat almost anything if you serve it to them right.

They'll eat hijiki, an earthy black seaweed, if you mix it with rice. They'll eat small whole fish, heads and all, if they are lightly fried. Tofu is an easier bet, but just to be sure, it sometimes comes with minced pork.

Fujii doesn't teach a class, but three or four times a year, classrooms come visit her for lunch – meaning they eat in the cafeteria, rather than their classrooms. This field trip comes with a small price: After the kids have served themselves the food, but before they can eat, they get a five-minute lecture about the items on their plates.

Lunchtime, on this particular day, begins with a call from the teacher.

"People in charge, please come up."

Six third-graders put on their white sanitary smocks and caps and take their positions behind serving trays. One child eyes the thick reservoir of Sichuan tofu and wiggles his right arm, as if to warm up his ladling hand. A teacher shows the girl serving rice how much to give each of her classmates – between 160 and 180 grams.

"Is this OK?" the girl asks as the first student comes by.

When everybody sits back down, the lecture begins.

"Today's meal is made up of various ingredients, but to fill you up, you have to eat everything fully," Fujii told the class of third-graders. "If you finish this whole lunch, it means you are taking in 21 ingredients."

One child interrupted.

"You have to eat a balanced meal."

"That's right," Fujii said. "You can get full without vegetables, but we still need them. Why do we need them? Because they have Vitamin C, which makes you stronger."

Japanese food, contrary to the common perception, isn't automatically healthy; it includes crispy chicken, rich bowls of salty ramen with pork belly and battered and deep-fried tempura. But, like most cuisines, it can be healthy.

Japan began emphasizing healthy food for its students in the aftermath of World War II, when the government prioritized education and health as a way to catch up to the modernized West. For a decade after the war, school lunch food was still coming from international donations. Many older Japanese remember postwar school meals of powdered skim milk, bread and daikon radish. But by the 1970s, the school meal came to look much like the modern-day standard. These days, ethnic food (such as Korean or Italian) is mixed in once or twice per week.

Japanese government officials say no other country has copied Japan's system of made-from-scratch meals eaten in classrooms, or even tried to.

"What is most difficult for me to explain is why we can do this and other countries cannot," said Masahiro Oji, a government director of school health education.

Oji mentioned that last year he attended an Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation workshop in Moscow on school lunch programs. Japan sent members of its education ministry, Oji said. Most other nations sent members from their agriculture or farm ministries.

"Japan's standpoint is that school lunches are a part of education," Oji said, "not a break from it."

Yuki Oda contributed to this report.

Ski report: Wear good goggles



Partly to mostly cloudy, and expect light snow and variable surface conditions.

Here is the Jan. 28 ski report.

— *Curtis Fong*