Letter: Generosity made for memorable event

To the community,

Barton Home Heath & Hospice would like to thank Inn by the Lake, especially Dan Garrison and Rich Bodine, for providing their meeting space for the Light Up a Life ceremony.

Without your kindness, this event would not have been possible.

Also, thank you to everyone in the community that attended and braved the elements for our first outdoor ceremony to take a moment to remember those we have lost.

May the season bring you comfort, joy and peace!

Rebecca Phillipsen, Barton Home Health & Hospice

Ski report: Storm conditions causing closures

The storm has arrived. The wind is affecting upper lift operations, causing lift and resort closures. Kirkwood is closed for the day. Call ahead. Here is the Dec. 22 ski report. – Curtis Fong

2 women in artist Kinkade's life settle estate dispute

By Julia Prodis Sulek, San Jose Mercury News

Anyone expecting a dramatic courtroom showdown between Thomas Kinkade's estranged wife and his live-in girlfriend over the late artist's multimillion dollar Monte Sereno estate will be sorely disappointed.

After months of name-calling and finger-pointing, lawyers for Nanette Kinkade and Amy Pinto announced Wednesday they have reached a secret settlement. And despite Pinto's vow months ago to clear her name and explain how she was no gold-digger but rather Kinkade's soul mate, she has accepted a deal in return for her silence.

Lawyers would make no comment about the details of the settlement or the legitimacy of two tantalizing, barely legible handwritten wills that Pinto claimed Kinkade wrote to her, leaving her $10 million and the keys to his hillside mansion.

Instead, they issued this brief yet strangely sentimental statement:

"Putting Mr. Kinkade's message of love, spirituality, and optimism at the forefront, the parties are pleased that they have honored Mr. Kinkade by resolving their differences amicably."

So who gets the 7,000 square-foot house on Ridgecrest Avenue, the studio next door, his warehouse of paintings, copies of which are said to hang in one of every 20 American homes?

Nobody is saying. How much the estate is worth also hasn't been made public but adding millions of dollars in value are the licensing of his bucolic images on coffee cups and calendars, china plates and tote bags, many of which will surely be

wrapped under Christmas trees next week.

It wasn't clear Wednesday whether Pinto, 48, was still living in the house she had shared with Kinkade, 54. After the artist's April 6 death of a lethal mix of alcohol and Valium, Pinto refused to leave the house. Estate lawyers posted a security guard within the gates of the estate to make sure Pinto didn't steal anything. In a recent court hearing, she had agreed to pay $11,000 a month to continue living there, without the intrusive security guard.

But that was before the case was settled.

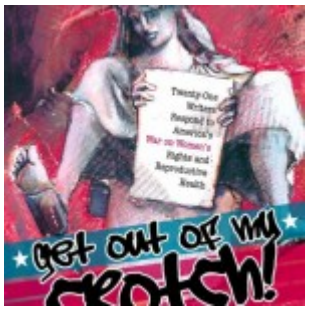
Kinkade's reputation as the "Painter of Light," with his popular images of candlelit country cottages and Christian symbolism, cratered in the aftermath of his death, both by the revelations that he was a regular fixture at local bars and that his marriage of 28 years had recently imploded.

Kinkade's brother, Patrick, had told the *Mercury News* that mean-spirited criticism of Kinkade's work and his estrangement from his wife and four daughters had taken its toll on the artist and factored into his alcoholism.

The story became more tawdry when Pinto, who began dating Kinkade six months after his separation, produced the two handwritten wills that were dated several months before Kinkade's death. Stating that Kinkade was "of sound mind and body," the wills left Pinto his house and $10 million to establish a museum of his works in the studio next door. Pinto's lawyers interpreted those notes to mean they also included some $66 million worth of Kinkade's paintings to put on display.

Lawyers for the Kinkade estate had said the squiggly notes “speak for themselves” and were confident they would be thrown out of court. But Pinto’s lawyers were equally convinced of their credibility, saying Kinkade’s alcoholism had left him with a shaky hand, but the letters reflected his true desires.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Twenty-one writers respond to America’s war on women’s rights and reproductive health in “Get Out of My Crotch” – which will be released Jan. 22 on the 40th anniversary of Roe v. Wade. Order a copy online.

• Tahoe Regional Planning Agency will be closed Dec. 24-Jan. 1.

• The San Francisco Giants World Series trophy is not coming to Lake Tahoe like it did after the 2010 championship. The route is online.

• New American Mortgage and Chase International South Tahoe made holiday donations to Tahoe Youth & Family Services, Live Violence Free and El Dorado County South Lake Tahoe library’s Giving Tree for Court Appointed Special Advocates.

• *Lake Tahoe News* is closing in on 1,000 likes on its Facebook page. If you are the 1,000th, LTN will send you a T-shirt.

TRPA adds publisher to list of job duties with launch of paper

Tahoe Regional Planning Agency along with federal, state and local partners have launched an environmental newspaper entitled Tahoe In Depth, with the inaugural issue being mailed this week to every property owner in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

This free publication is designed to keep Lake Tahoe homeowners, residents and visitors abreast of the variety of activities taking place to protect and restore the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Funding and contributing partners include the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Nevada Division of State Lands and TRPA. Agencies contributing content to the publication include U.S. EPA, Bureau of Reclamation, Tahoe Resource Conservation District, Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board, California Tahoe Conservancy and UC Cooperative Extension.

Free copies are available at Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority and Explore Tahoe in South Lake Tahoe, Tahoe City PUD and Tahoe City Visitors Information Center in Tahoe City, Tahoe Environmental Research Center and Incline Village/Crystal Bay Visitors Bureau in Incline Village. A PDF of the publication may be downloaded.

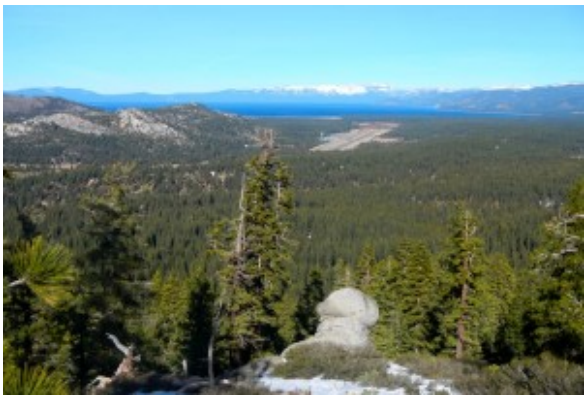
Cowboy Rock – small in size, big in views

By Kathryn Reed

MEYERS – While it probably would have been hard to get lost, it was nice to have a guide get us beyond the various off-shoot trails and direct us how best to make a loop through the woods so we'd find our vehicle before dark.

That's the thing about locals – they know where unmarked trails go.

Entering the forest off Pinewood Drive we pass a gate and walk up a short ways on asphalt. A South Tahoe Public Utility District water tank is on the right. From there, the trail is all dirt – well, except for the pockets of snow.



Lake Tahoe's signature blue shines from a hilltop in Meyers. Photos/Kathryn Reed

We make this excursion on the second Sunday of December when there is more dirt than snow on the trail. The same conditions would not exist today. If someone else had been out there

first I might go on snowshoes, but there were no blue markers on trees to help guide the way in snow.

Kim leaves work for a spell to show us one of her favorite places to take her dogs out for a romp. For her, it's a short walk from her house in Meyers. We had to drive *all the way* from South Lake Tahoe. It was well worth it.

It's one of those treks that isn't super long, but has incredible views.

Cowboy Rock is the end point – but we stop just shy of there. My stamina was lacking after coming off a nasty cold and the air temperature was less than pleasant when our bodies stopped moving.

While Mount Tallac is stunning from any angle, seeing the Angora burn area below it is still heart wrenching 5½ years later. This spot is where some in the neighborhood watched the fire rage that June day in 2007. Today, the scar on the land is a reminder of what happens when campfires – illegal or not – are not fully extinguished.

Despite this reminder of one of Tahoe's tragic events, beauty is everywhere. Sugar pines are interspersed with other conifers.

No longer is the forest as dense as it was earlier in the summer. U.S. Forest Service crews have been out thinning this area. Future burn piles dot the landscape at the start of the trail.

Various routes abound. It's easy to hook up with Mr. Toad's or go over to Oneidas from here.

We turn around after a quick break on top of some granite boulders. There we have views of Lake Tahoe Airport with Lake Tahoe in the background.

Sue and I count this as a teaser excursion, as we look forward

to discovering more about this network of trails after the snow melts.

——-

Getting there:



To the left is a map of where Pinewood Drive is in Meyers. For the most part, just go straight up, veering a bit to the right to get to where the excellent views are and then to the top of Cowboy Rock.

ngg_shortcode_0_placeholder (Click on photos to enlarge.)

Letter: Massacres – life imitating art

To the community,

Newton grade school gunfire. A score of children murdered with weapons legal.

Some say life imitates art.

If that’s so, if movies and TV violence are a model that art and weapons legal and weapons illegal flood streets and home, who can stop copycat murder and massacre?

Not cops, not God.

Bill Crawford, South Lake Tahoe

Nevada lawmakers vote to stop posting public salaries online

By Hannah Dreier, AP

LAS VEGAS — Critics in Nevada are calling new regulations that excuse cities and counties from posting public salaries online a strike against transparency.

A legislative commission Thursday passed regulations allowing cities and counties to post only aggregate salary expenditures on their websites. Previously, they had been required to post individual salaries.

Nevada Press Association Executive Director Barry Smith says the move could open the door to fraud and abuse. He notes that local governments spend most of their taxpayer dollars on payroll.

The new regulations implement a 2011 law ending a requirement that local governments posting quarterly financial statements in the newspaper.

State Sen. David Parks of Las Vegas said cities and counties should not post employee salaries because it is an invasion of privacy.

Traffic collision kills 1 person on Mt. Rose Highway

One person died and two others were hospitalized after their vehicles collided on slick Mount Rose Highway on Friday afternoon.

The name of the deceased woman has not been released pending notification of family.



One person died in a two-car collision Dec. 21 on Mount Rose Highway. Photo/Provided

According to the Nevada Highway Patrol, the preliminary investigation indicates a white Chevy Suburban was traveling west on the two-lane highway when the female driver apparently lost traction. Snow was falling and blowing at the time of the crash. Her vehicle traveled into the opposing lane as it was rotating in a clockwise direction and was struck by a Dodge Ram 2500 pickup pulling a two-axle trailer. The front of the Dodge struck the left side of the Chevy SUV.

The driver of the SUV died.

Two occupants in the Dodge received minor injuries, but were taken by ambulance to Renown Medical Center in Reno.

The accident forced the closure of the highway for almost an

hour before troopers were able to open one lane to alternate traffic in each direction around the scene.

The accident occurred about 1:50pm east of Joy Lake Road.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Fun Trip set for grades K-8

Kid’s Club is having a Fun Trip on Jan. 3 for grades K-8 at the South Lake Tahoe Rec Center.

Activities include: Tahoe Tot Spot, bowling, swimming and more. Cost is $25.

Preregistration is necessary – (530) 542.6056.