Letter: Community made for successful Festival of Trees and Lights

To the community,

Thank you to the many businesses and individuals who make the Lake Tahoe Festival of Trees and Lights possible. Your donations of time and monetary support have made this event the regional kick-off to the holiday season.

We want to especially acknowledge Bill Horning, Dreu Murin, Kenny Curtzwiler and K&K Services, Nancy Harrison, Ann Jones, Angela Moore, the entire steering committee who starts planning in February of each year, the volunteers who staff the event, the designers who create their masterpieces, the entertainers who keep us wanting more, the Barton employees who create mini trees and wreathes to decorate our walls, and the retailers and sponsors without whom we would not be here.

And of course a special thank you to you, our community because of all of you – we are making a difference.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Kindle Craig, executive director Barton Foundation

Citizen heroism in Truckee crash recognized by CHP

By Barbara Barte Osborn, Sacramento Bee

Bill Nern and Bill Bartlett are two regular guys who were honored Wednesday for their extraordinary actions.

Calling Nern and Bartlett's rushing to the aid of the two drivers involved in a fiery Jan. 9 collision in the Truckee area "selfless, courageous and heroic," California Highway Patrol Capt. Timothy Malone presented the two men with framed award plaques from the CHP commissioner.

"I only did what I would hope anyone would do," Nern said.

"I'm honored to get it," Bartlett said, "but you just react and do it."

A third rescuer, Sam Keiper, 55, a visitor from Waterford, couldn't attend the awards ceremony and will be honored in late January, Malone said.

"It's very rare the commissioner does this. It's the highest honor he presents to a citizen – the Commissioner's Resolution for Bravery and Heroism," said CHP Officer Pete Mann.

"If an officer had done this, he'd likely get the Medal of Valor – that's our highest honor," Mann said.

Nern, 46, a tugboat captain, had just returned to his home near Truckee from work in the Bay Area and was out in his yard near Cabin Creek and Highway 89 when he heard the crash about 7pm.

"It was almost in front of my yard," he said.

Bartlett, 51, a Truckee resident, was driving home from his

job as a hardware store manager in Tahoe City. His was the only other vehicle on the road at the time and he pulled over immediately.

A pickup driven by a Las Vegas man living in the area for the winter had crossed a solid double line and struck a van head-on, causing the vehicles to become stuck together and the van to burst into flames.

CHP Officer Rich Morin arrived at the scene just as the burning van, driven by Jill Patrick, a longtime area day-care owner, exploded.

“The fire completely destroyed the van,” Bartlett said.

But in the brief moments before that happened, Bartlett and another man had pulled Patrick from the van and gotten her to the side of the road, then rescued her dog.

Paramedics tried to save Patrick, who had received massive injuries, as they rushed her to Tahoe Forest Hospital in Truckee. From there, she was transferred to Renown Medical Center in Reno, where she died two days later.

“Her dog also died later,” Bartlett said.

Nern and another rescuer had attached a chain to the truck, which was stuck to the van, and pulled it away before it, too, could catch fire.

Seeing that the van’s driver had been removed, Nern, who is trained as a first medical responder, rushed to the pickup driver’s side.

“He had to be extricated and was at first out cold, then came to,” said Nern, who stayed by his side and kept him talking to prevent him from going into shock until firefighters and paramedics arrived.

Patrick’s death is the primary reason the awards ceremony was

clouded for the two citizen heroes.

“None of us really like to remember that day,” Bartlett said. “I feel horrible the lady didn’t make it. And the other driver has to live with it.

“I have to drive by that spot every day,” he added.

The pickup driver was taken by Care Flight to a Reno hospital and later sent a thank-you note to Nern for pulling the two vehicles apart before his could catch fire.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Wendy David will serve as president of Lake Tahoe Unified School District’s board for another year. Barbara Bannar is the clerk of the board for the next year.

• South Lake Tahoe branch library (1000 Rufus Allen Blvd.) is having a family game event from Jan. 4 from 2-4pm. Just show up.

• Royal Gorge opens Dec. 15.

• Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival will be putting on “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” in summer 2013.

• Trivia: One in five people in the United States drinks water that started in a National Forest.

South Shore loop road down to 6 alternatives

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – While a decision has yet to be made as to whether a loop road beyond what exists today in the Stateline area should or will ever be built, the choices are being narrowed.

At a Dec. 13 meeting at Harveys there were six choices presented. This is down from the 16 that were talked about at the last two meetings. While people had the chance to write down their thoughts, no longer were they offered the chance to draw their own version.

Deanna Shoopman with Caltrans told *Lake Tahoe News* it is not unheard of in California to take a city street and make it a state highway and for the state highway to become a city street.



People study the various loop road alternatives on Dec. 13 at Harveys. Photo/LTN

That is essentially what proponents of the project want to do. While not everyone is convinced rerouting Highway 50 behind two or four of the casinos is necessary, the bigger arguments are about where the rerouting would start on the west side and whether it should be a half loop or full loop.

“Safety to the traveling public is our No. 1 priority,” Shoopman said.

For now, this is a Tahoe Transportation District project. Shoopman said her agency would formally weigh in on the project when the environmental documents come out.

Eric Guevin, fire marshal with Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District, was perusing the maps Thursday afternoon, too. Traffic flow is what his department is concerned about.

“Intersections that are offset have more problems. There are visual barriers,” Guevin told *Lake Tahoe News*. “Squared intersections tend to be safer.”

Mike McKeen, who owns property in South Lake Tahoe that could be impacted depending on the route, believed the presentation was a charade, a propaganda campaign.

He took issue with the poster board that said 92 percent of the people favor moving forward, while 8 percent want the status quo.

Carl Hasty, TTD executive director, admitted those numbers were derived from the 118 people who attended the last two loop road meetings and that some of the same people attended both meetings and therefore were counted more than once.

What also isn’t in that number are the people who would vote to do nothing if their particular alternative is not selected.

Hasty said when his board next hears about the loop road, which could be March, that the history of the project will be told. This includes the various alternatives, not just what

staff believes are the most popular.

It will be up to the TTD board to select which alternatives would be studied in the environmental analysis.

In the meantime, the economic analysis is ongoing. That, too, will be part of the environmental study.

TTD reps are also going business-to-business to talk to owners about their opinions.

Anderson nails slopestyle run to win Dew Tour in Breckenridge

By USSA

BRECKENRIDGE, Colo. – Jamie Anderson of South Lake Tahoe started her season with an impressive run that featured some of the most versatile riding snowboarding fans have seen, winning the women's Dew Tour slopestyle finals in Breckenridge on Friday.

Nailing her final run with spins in all four directions and a massive 540 on the final jump that she floated to the bottom, Anderson scored a remarkable score of 96 out of a possible 100. It was an improvement over Anderson's finish at last season's Breckenridge Dew Tour where she came in fifth.

Next up for Anderson is the Sprint U.S. Grand Prix and FIS World Cup at Copper Mountain Jan. 9-13.

Canada’s Spencer O’Brien placed second with Enni Rukajarvi from Finland taking third.

“I don’t even have words! I really lifted my last jump and I knew that I needed my frontside 7 in my run, but I was having a hard time with it during training.” Anderson said. “I knew it was important to spin four ways and I am so thankful to be here. This is such a nice personal redemeption for me and this is what I wanted to do. The course was really fun too.”

Bowman takes second in halfpipe on Dew Tour

By USSA

BRECKENRIDGE, Colo. -– Brita Sigourney’s (Carmel) amplitude and technical tricks won the judges over at women’s halfpipe finals at the Dew Tour on Friday.

Teammate Maddie Bowman (South Lake Tahoe) whose run featured left and right 900s with strong grabs, landed her in second.

“I really want to do well at this event to start my season off right. It was great to be able to try my new 900 and nail it,” Bowman said.

It was Sigourney’s first competition back after she suffered a knee injury in late February.

Canada’s Rosalind Groenewoud or “Roz G” took third.

Men’s halfpipe finals saw David Wise (Reno) to fifth with Canada’s Justin Dorey taking the win.

Tahoe-Truckee firefighters rewarded for efforts in Colorado

Three engine strike teams from the Eldorado/Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, Plumas and Tahoe national forests were recognized by the regional forester as Honor Award recipients for their response to the Waldo Canyon Fire near Colorado Springs, Colo.

Strike Teams 4601C, 3660C and 4660C arrived at the Waldo Canyon Fire on June 26. Driven by winds up to 65 mph and burning through historically parched fuels, the fire raged into the Mountain Shadows community, spotting extensively and displaying extreme fire behavior creating very challenging conditions. The strike teams, each composed of five engine crews, worked through the night to protect lives and property.

“Comments from Incident Management Team members who were directing the suppression efforts, local agency personnel, and Colorado Springs residents consistently praised the outstanding efforts of the engine strike teams. They emphasized that the strike teams were responsible for saving many homes on the night of June 26 and 27 with their decisive and aggressive actions and that their efforts directly contributed to the 80 percent survival rate of residences

impacted by the fire," Tahoe Forest Supervisor Tom Quinn, who was working on the fire as agency administrator, said in a press release. "I am very proud of these men and woman and their effectiveness in fighting this fire which eventually burned over 18,200 acres and has been described as one of the most destructive fires in Colorado State history."

The strike teams were also specifically recognized for their efforts by the president when he toured the Waldo Canyon Fire on June 29.

TNF Strike Team participants:

Strike Team Leader: Robert Hilfer

Engine 333 – White Cloud Station east of Nevada City: Andy Achter, Lee Helgeson, Bill Bakker, Dana Salisbury, Dustin Friedman.

Engine 31 – Camptonville: James Prince, Matt Mullins, Daniel Sadlo, Christopher Buckbee, Danny Rasmussen.

Engine 42 –Foresthill: Mike Durocher, Eric Husmann, Tyler Bosworth, Daniel Manry, David Foster.

Engine 71 – Truckee: Jesse Green, Ryan Herrera, Wade Boan, Bryce Dana Boyer, Sabrina Retterer.

Engine 73 – Truckee: Matt Bradford, Adam Smith, Richard Herrera III, Gregory Lowdermilk, Jens Schneyder.

NHP beefs up enforcement to catch drunken drivers

In an effort to identify impaired drivers who may get behind the wheel after consuming too much alcohol, additional Nevada Highway Patrol troopers, as well as a multi-agency DUI checkpoint, are being scheduled this month.

With a federally funded Joining Forces grant secured by the Nevada Office of Traffic Safety, NHP will schedule and staff additional troopers to patrol Northern Nevada highways on the weekends of Dec. 15 and Dec. 22.

Letter: Connecticut tragedy a reminder about safety in Tahoe schools

To the community,

An unspeakable tragedy occurred at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn., when a gunman opened fire Friday, killing 20 students and eight adults. This horrific act has left us numb and deeply saddened at the loss of these innocent people with so much of their future ahead of them.

When tragedy strikes, the results are traumatic, both for those directly affected and for the community of people who

know them or identify with them. But when something like this happens at a school, to very young children, it hits closer to home and we may feel helpless.

At noon today, Superintendent Jim Tarwater ordered all Lake Tahoe Unified schools on Yellow Alert. Schools were requested to secure all perimeter entrances and monitor school grounds as a precautionary measure against the possibility of a copycat act in our area.

Staff members were asked to be extra vigilant. Administrators and security personnel increased surveillance at schools and continued to be on heightened alert and high visibility until after the dismissal of school today.

Flags at all schools were ordered to half staff in honor of the victims.

Teachers were not directed to discuss this tragedy with the children; parents can decide how best to approach their child with this news.

Although we cannot control the fact that a tragedy has taken place, adults can do a great deal to help children regain their emotional safety.

This website contains useful advice for parents in dealing with tragic events.

As part of normal operations of the school district, all campuses have comprehensive, up-to-date safety plans in place to address a variety of emergency conditions. The plans are reinforced through drills with students and at regular meetings with our employees.

I’d like to take this opportunity to remind you of a few tips to ensure your child’s safety:

· Update your child’s emergency card information throughout the school year. Contact your school if there are any changes.

· Sign-in and sign-out of the front office. Knowing who is on our campuses is for your safety as well as the children.

· Wear a “Visitor’s” badge throughout your stay.

· If you are on campus and you see someone who is not wearing any kind of identification, please approach them and inquire who they are.

How will you know what’s going on during an emergency at LTUSD schools?

· Wait for a Connect-Ed call to your home or cell phone. Whatever you list on the emergency card goes into our system – Aeries.

· Wait for an email from the superintendent.

· Listen to local radio and local television stations.

· Use your computer to go to websites that post “current news” such as *Lake Tahoe News, Tahoe Tribune*, or KCRA.

· Turn on the television for news breaking events on national television.

· Subscribe to email alerts from newspapers and TV stations in our area.

Please follow these Dos and Don’ts

DO

· Keep your child’s emergency card information updated. It’s how the Connect-Ed call out system can stay accurate.

· Be familiar with the emergency procedures at your child’s school.

· Follow all instructions by school staff and agencies during an event. The safety of all is at stake.

DON’T

· Go to the school site. Your child is being kept safe and you coming may tie up needed space on the roads.

· Contact your child by cell phone. You could be tying up the needed cell phone lines available to emergency personnel and school staff.

In any emergency situation, specific response strategies depend on the nature and scope of the incident and prevailing conditions. In most incidents, public safety and emergency management personnel play a critical role in identifying the specific nature, cause, and extent of the emergency, as well as providing guidance to administrators on the response steps that must be carried out.

Your children are surrounded daily by professionals who have dedicated their lives to helping their students; in the event of an emergency, you can count on these caring individuals to keep your children secure. All employees in the LTUSD continue to work to make all our schools safe and secure environments.

If you have questions about your child’s safety and school support responses, please contact your principal. If your child is experiencing any anxiety about this tragedy over the weekend, please contact your principal who will contact one of our school psychologists to talk to your child.

Your understanding, support, and cooperation are vital as we take these precautionary actions on behalf of our students.

And finally, although I don’t even need to say this, hug your children a little closer tonight. Our hearts and prayers go out to those whose loved ones were taken away from them all too suddenly today. May they rest in peace.

Take care,

Angie Keil, LTUSD

Ganong top U.S. finisher in super G

By USSA

VAL GARDENA, Italy– Travis Ganong of Squaw Valley led a back of the pack charge by the U.S. Ski Team in the Val Gardena super G, starting 58th and finishing 24th to lead five U.S. Ski Team athletes into the points.

Ted Ligety was 25th to retain second in the Audi FIS Alpine World Cup overall standings behind race winner Aksel Lund Svindal of Norway.

Ganong was followed in 59th start by Steven Nyman (Sundance, Utah), who finished 29th. Tommy Biesemeyer (Keene, N.Y.) was 27th and Andrew Weibrecht (Lake Placid, N.Y.) 30th.

“I’ve had really great speed in training. Today I was just approaching it like another training day. I was just trying to go for it as hard as I can and then react to any mistakes,” Ganong said.