Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• South Lake Tahoe's interactive snow removal route map is online.

• Have you ever wondered what a League to Save Lake Tahoe tax return looks like or what former Executive Director Rochelle Nason was paid or what her severance package was? If yes, then click on tax return to see the League's 2011 document.

• Impersonator McAvoy Layne will perform Mark Twain's "Secrets to Longevity" on Nov. 30, 6-8:30pm, at the Incline Village Recreation Center. A wine and cheese party will follow. Tickets are $25.

• The Experimental Aircraft Association Chapter House at the Truckee Airport will be offering free aviation-related movies Dec. 7 at 6:15pm.

• Tahoe Regional Young Professionals will roast s'mores and sample fondue, soups and hearty treats at Basecamp Hotel's recently opened bar in South Lake Tahoe on Dec. 12 from 7-10. Admission is free for TRYP members and $5 for non-members. For more info, email TahoeTRYP@gmail.com.

What tips do you have for keeping off extra pounds during the holidays?

S. Lake Tahoe to begin searching for city attorney

By Kathryn Reed

On a morning that started out with Mayor Claire Fortier giving the State of the City address – looking back and forward – the big news of the day didn't come until staff comments.

South Lake Tahoe will have a new city attorney by summer, if not sooner.

Patrick Enright during his comments at Tuesday's City Council meeting said he would not ask his bosses to renew his contract that expires May 31. He had presented them with a letter regarding his intentions prior to his public announcement.

The council in October had a closed session item on the agenda to give Enright a performance review. That never came about. But the council also did not offer him a contract extension.



Patrick Enright

“It had to be up to Patrick what he wanted to do. He made the decision not to get his contract renewed,” Fortier told *Lake Tahoe News* after the Nov. 20 meeting. “I think Patrick had a lot of huge issues to face as city attorney. What a grueling job.”

Enright was not available for comment after the meeting.

He was hired in 2009 to be the city attorney who would focus on redevelopment, while Jacqueline Mittelstadt was hired to do much of everything else. Mittelstadt resigned in March 2010 after a contentious few months.

The idea when they were hired was that they would provide a one-two punch. That never materialized.

Enright, while never accused of wrongdoing per se, has made some questionable legal decisions that have hurt the city financially or given it a bit of a black eye.

There was the first contract with Lakeview Commons that ended up in a lawsuit and the project needing to be rebid; questions about privatizing the ice rink and how the bonds worked; a dust-up over the concessionaire agreements at city beaches; questionable advice given regarding the ongoing South Tahoe Area Transit Authority lawsuit; and ongoing issues with the successor agency involved with dissolving redevelopment.

It’s expected the council will decide soon whether it wants to hire an outside firm to recruit the future city attorney of

South Lake Tahoe or if staff will do it.

“I’ll figure out the costs and make some recommendations. We are capable of conducting a recruitment,” City Manager Nancy Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The letter Enright gave the council says he could leave sooner than May 31; it will depend on where he goes next.

Fortier in her address to a packed room let it be known she would like to see some changes to the council. She wants electeds to be paid a livable wage so it would provide for a more diverse council.

In other action:

• On a 3-2 vote, with Councilmen Tom Davis and Bruce Grego in the minority, the parking permit idea for certain areas was scrapped, but meters will go up in select areas of town.

• Community Services Officer Bob Albertazzi, who has overseen the parking program, is retiring at the end of the month.

• Per a unanimous vote, the council has decided not to change the fire department’s structure. That means beyond the fire marshal services and longstanding mutual aid response agreements, Lake Valley and city fire departments will remain separate.

DiMatteo remains behind bars;

DA won’t answer questions

By Kathryn Reed

Gino DiMatteo will be spending Thanksgiving in jail.

The South Lake Tahoe resident accused of federal drug violations had a hearing Nov. 19 in Sacramento and is scheduled to be back in court on Nov. 26 to discuss whether he will be granted bail.



Gino DiMatteo

Lake Tahoe News requested an accounting of hours and money spent on the DiMatteo case by the El Dorado County District Attorney’s Office and El Dorado County Sheriff’s Department. The leaders of those two departments, Vern Pierson and John D’Agostini, respectively, never got back to *LTN*.

Personnel in the county’s Chief Administrators Office and Auditors Office said they are not privy to those numbers.

Pierson via press release, because that’s the only way he communicates, says there is still an investigation into possible wrongdoing by South Lake Tahoe officials. He refused to elaborate.

Because Pierson’s position is elected, the Board of Supervisors has no control over him. He is supposed to be accountable to the people. All the board can do is approve that office’s budget.

2 men caught with bleeding deer in vehicle

Two men were arrested this week after numerous 911 calls about blood coming out of a vehicle led officers to the suspects.

Not knowing exactly what they were dealing with, El Dorado County sheriff's deputies and California Highway Patrol officers conducted a felony stop on the SUV and detained the two occupants Nov. 18 at about 2:20pm.

Multiple law enforcement officers converged on the area and the Toyota was spotted by an El Dorado County K9 unit traveling west on Highway 50 nearing the Sacramento County line at a high rate of speed.

Officers said the the two subjects illegally shot the spike male deer with a shotgun off Ponderosa Road, and after the deer collapsed, threw it in the back of the Toyota. Shortly thereafter, while driving away, the deer regained consciousness and began struggling. One or both of the subjects used an edged weapon to stab the deer until it finally died, leaving the car and it's occupants splattered in blood, and blood dripping heavily out the back of the car, deputies said.

Scott Lee, 46, of Sacramento, and 32 year old Nai Saechao, 32, of Sacramento were arrested by Fish and Game officers on charges of violating multiple laws related to hunting, including poaching, as well as felony animal cruelty. Both have posted bail.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Bijou students need votes to win books, materials

The fifth-grade two-way immersion class at Bijou Community School has entered a contest to win Spanish books and materials. The class made a video entirely on its without any adult help.

The school with the most votes wins.

The top prize is $5,000 worth of materials. Follow this link and click on “vote now” to help Bijou win.

Voting goes through Dec. 2. It’s possible to vote once a day.

Online hotel reviews may not reflect the whole truth

By Hugo Martín, Los Angeles Times

If you choose a hotel based on glowing online comments – “OMG, I love this place!” – you may be relying on bogus or insufficient information.

That assessment came from Market Metrix, a San Francisco Bay Area hotel market research company, in a study that found as much as 40 percent of reviews could be made up or even paid

for by the hotels.

And even if those online comments are genuine, the study said the reviews could be skewed because hotel guests with bad experiences are three times more likely to write a review than those who had a good or neutral experience.

The study also argued that young people are overrepresented in online reviews. Only 20 percent of adults older than 50 submit such reviews, according to a survey by the Pew Research Center.

“There is a big segment that doesn’t play in that area,” said Jonathan Barsky, co-founder and chief research officer for Market Metrix.

But Market Metrix may be biased on the subject. The company is in the business of offering hotels what it says is a better way to gauge guest sentiments: guest surveys.

Last week TripAdvisor, one of the world’s largest travel websites, defended the value of online reviews with a survey that found 98 percent of those questioned said TripAdvisor hotel reviews accurately reflected their experience. The study was conducted by PhoCusWright.

The survey of 2,739 visitors to the website also found that 74 percent said they write reviews, not to critique, but to share good experiences with other travelers.

Endurance athletes using caffeine to keep them going

By Murray Carpenter, NPR

The Ironman World Championship in Kona, Hawaii, is an extreme event – a 2.4-mile swim, followed by a 112-mile bike ride, topped off by a marathon.

Throughout the event, racers drink plenty of fluids and eat energy bars or gels. Most also take a performance-enhancing substance that is legal and effective – caffeine.

“While I’m racing, caffeine is actually a pretty important part of my day, particularly in the Ironman, where it’s such a long race,” says Sarah Piampiano, a professional triathlete.

She integrates calories and caffeine into her race-day diet using energy gels. Each contains 50 milligrams of caffeine, which Piampiano calls a “shot.”

“Before the race, I typically take one gel that has one shot of caffeine in it, and then when I get onto the bike, each hour I take one shot of caffeine,” explains Piampiano. In the last half of the marathon, she ups her dose to two shots every 20 minutes.

“Caffeine has been well-known to be a beneficial drug to use during sport. It’s been studied for many years over a variety of different types of sports; it will improve your performance,” says Matthew Ganio, director of the University of Arkansas Human Performance Laboratory.

But, he says, it is important to take the right dose.

“The general consensus is 3 to 6 milligrams per kilogram of body mass, and it can be quite a bit. The example being, an 80-kilo individual needing 6 milligrams per kilogram body mass

– that’s four strong cups of coffee,” says Ganio.

But instead of guzzling coffee, many athletes rely on products, such as energy gels, that allow them to better quantify their caffeine. Brian Vaughan is CEO of GU Energy Labs, which makes gels that blend carbohydrates, amino acids, electrolytes and caffeine.

“The top-end athletes, the pros, want to be able to meter out caffeine during the course of an endurance event. It’s always nice to have that second wind, late in the race, where you can energize the mind, stimulate the mind, with the central nervous system response of caffeine,” says Vaughan.

Some researchers urge restraint. University of Connecticut doctoral candidate Evan Johnson says caffeine works best when used judiciously.

“You find a lot of people who constantly ingest caffeine throughout the day and therefore need alcohol or some sort of sleep aid to get to bed, and then in the morning are so groggy they need caffeine again,” Johnson says. He calls it a “vicious cycle of supplementation.”

That’s what happened to players on England’s soccer team. They took caffeine pills to amp up for a recent World Cup qualifying game and then needed sleeping pills to wind down.

Some athletes say they avoid caffeine because it makes them jittery, or it bothers their stomachs. Others, like triathlete Sam Gyde of Belgium, take a less systematic approach.

“I have a very busy life and a very busy work, and I train a lot, so I just drink lots of coffee so I am naturally very caffeinated. During training and racing, I use gels, which contain caffeine, and it’s not with any purpose, but I’m more or less like a heavy caffeine user,” says Gyde.

It seems to work for Gyde; he has won his age group twice at

Kona. And you may not have to be an Ironman to benefit. A recent Australian study showed that caffeine enabled sedentary men to work out more vigorously.

The side effects of ingesting so much caffeine are still being elucidated, however. The Food and Drug Administration announced last week that the agency is investigating several deaths that could be linked to energy drinks.

Truckee man recovering from gunshot wound by officer

A 27-year-old Truckee resident who was shot Nov. 10 by a Washoe County sheriff's deputy has improved to stable condition, authorities said Monday.

Michael Nelson Heil remained hospitalized Tuesday in Reno.

Reno police said Heil was shot in Verdi by a sheriff's deputy who made contact with Heil during a routine patrol. The deputies name is not being released.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Esther Evans – 1921-2012

Esther Bernice Hughes was born in Pomfret, Conn., on Dec. 28, 1921. She came to California as a tot with her parents and they settled into Long Beach where her siblings, Roland and

Mildred, were born.

Esther grew up with music in the house, cats in the yard and playmates on every corner. After high school, she entered UCLA to pursue a degree in music and education. Following graduation she applied and was accepted into the Julliard School of Music in New York, where she specialized in piano and voice.

Returning to California, she was contacted by a friend and schoolmate, Thelma Bernhardt, who tempted her with a job in Lake Tahoe teaching music and English at a new high school. In 1950, Esther packed up her belongings and moved to Bijou (South Lake Tahoe was not yet incorporated), where she was hired to begin her career at South Tahoe High School.

At that time, the school was housed in what is now the American Legion Hall on Highway 50. She rented a small duplex from Thelma, who often sent her handsome brother to perform maintenance during the winter months. The brother, Owen Evans, ended up proposing to Esther and they were married on April 12, 1952.



Owen and Esther Evans

They had also survived the infamous “Winter of 1951-52” when storms closed roads for weeks at a time and Tahoe residents relied on one another for food, firewood, and medical needs.

In pursuit of an education, Owen applied to Cal Berkeley and

was accepted. Esther followed suit, and they spent several years living in Richmond while attending the college. With diplomas in hand, they returned to their beloved Tahoe where Owen was employed by the U.S. Forest Service (the Eldorado National Forest at that time) and Esther continued her teaching career.

In 1960, they adopted Leona and Esther decided to be a stay-at-home mom. Now that the family was slightly larger, Owen began the task of building a home for them on Tamarack Avenue. He convinced the Forest Service to allow him to dismantle one of the Baldwin family guest cottages on Fallen Leaf Lake, and log by log, drove them in his 1947 Studebaker pickup to the property on Tamarack. He reassembled the structure, adding insulation and a front porch, and it became their home. The cabin still remains.

Not one to remain inactive, however, Esther began teaching piano and voice in her home while participating in many social and service organizations on the South Shore. She was instrumental in getting the first chapter of the American Association of University Women started, as well as the Toastmasters Club. She was a leading member of the local Christian Women's Club and brought the Community Concert series to Tahoe. She was also involved in the Tahoe Arts Project, and served as a soprano in the Tahoe Choir. Her rendition of Gilbert and Sullivan's "They Call Me Buttercup" was priceless.

Esther served as a local television talk show host that focused on arts and culture in the area. The show was broadcast from the basement of what is now the county building on Highway 50 and Takela. She was also a soprano in the Lake Tahoe Community Presbyterian Church's choir for many years, after which she took on the role of organist/pianist.

Years later she was hired by Hope Lutheran Church to fill the same position and came to enjoy her new Christian family.

Most amazing about her social skills, however, was Esther's ability to make a 742-square-foot log cabin seem like a mansion when she entertained.



Esther Hughes, circa 1940

When Leona was old enough, Esther returned to teaching as a substitute in the intermediate and high schools. Admittedly, her biggest challenge as a teacher was having her own daughter in the classroom.

Esther also got her real estate license and began selling homes. She fell in love with the first house she was asked to sell, which was on Mount Olympia Circle. They bought the house and expanded into almost 4,000 square feet.

In 1993, Esther was diagnosed with Alzheimer's. Although typically a disease that causes unpredictable and even violent behavior, Esther remained her sweet, compassionate self. Once when the family was shopping and ran into an old friend, Esther exclaimed, "I have Alzheimer's, but don't worry. It's not contagious."

The family continued to care for her until she became a resident of Barton Hospital's Skilled Nursing Facility in

February 2006. In the hands of their loving, generous and caring staff, Esther thrived. The staff became family and the facility became home. Although Esther lost her Mount Olympia home to the Angora Fire, her spirit lives on in the form of a community garden.

Esther passed peacefully with Leona and her Skilled Nursing family by her side on Nov. 15, 2012. She goes to join her adoring “OE” as well as her siblings.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that you perform a random act of kindness and help someone or a critter in need. The family will be hosting a remembrance day on Dec. 2 from 2 to 5pm at their home – 1897 Toppewetah St. in Meyers. Everyone is welcome. A celebratory service will also be at the Skilled Nursing Facility on Dec. 4 at 2pm (2170 South Ave., South Lake Tahoe).