Meyers community to talk recreation, transportation

There is a meeting Nov. 7 to discuss the Meyers Community Plan update.

The 5:30-8:30pm meeting is at Lake Valley Fire District, 2211 Keetak St., in the modular at the rear of the property.

The work group sessions and times are:

5:30-7pm: Recreation (including Tahoe Paradise Improvement District- Lake Barron) and conservation

7-8:30pm: Land use and transportation.

No contingency plan in place if disaster strikes on Election Day

By Alan Greenblatt, NPR

Suppose Sandy had struck a week later. With power out across multiple states, how would people be able to vote on Election Day?

“If this were happening next week, we have no provisions for dealing with this in law,” says Thad Hall, a political scientist at the University of Utah.

Many states have contingency plans for conducting elections in the wake of a natural disaster or terrorist attack. But they tend to focus on strictly local effects – moving polling places over to a neighboring precinct, for example.

There's no controlling authority when it comes to rescheduling presidential voting when roads are blocked and power is down in several states at once, according to the Congressional Research Service.

When terrorists struck Manhattan on Sept. 11, 2001, New York City suspended its mayoral primary, which was to be that day, delaying the vote until that November.

But postponing the vote in a single city or state – or across multiple states – would skew the result of a national election, says Curtis Gans, director of the Center for the Study of the American Electorate at American University.

"We don't have a contingency for major disasters on Election Day," he says. "If [Sandy] occurred next Monday and Tuesday, there'd be an enormous number of people who couldn't vote."

Local officials frequently call on courts to allow a little more time for voting when there are blizzards or power outages within a contained area. On Colorado's primary election day in June, wildfires were raging across 12 counties, but vote counting continued.

"The people in Colorado Springs were counting even with masks on, and there were embers and everything," says Donetta Davidson, executive director of the Colorado County Clerks Association. "They didn't leave until they were told to get out."

Colorado's primary, though, was conducted mostly by mail. Getting voters and poll workers to voting stations could be difficult after a disaster.

And, while counties have gotten better about having backup batteries and generators in place to power voting machines, making sure schools, churches and other voting centers remain open in an emergency might be tricky.

“We’ll ignore it until it happens, and when it happens, we’ll figure it out,” says Doug Lewis, executive director of the National Association of Election Officials. “It’s not the best way to go about doing something like this.”

It might be smarter to have plans in place ahead of time. Overburdened state and local officials understandably have other priorities while coping with a crisis.

“I don’t give a damn about Election Day,” New Jersey GOP Gov. Chris Christie told reporters Tuesday, during a briefing about Sandy. “It doesn’t matter a lick to me at the moment. I’ve got bigger fish to fry.”

But Lewis says election officials have typically been shouted down the moment they bring the subject up for discussion. No politician, it seems, wants to be accused of plotting to manipulate an election by changing its possible time frame.

“Elected officials are reluctant to take on the task of canceling the election and being accused of doing that for partisan purposes,” says Ray Holmberg, a Republican state senator in North Dakota.

Early voting might ease some of the strain of a storm-struck Election Day, Davidson suggests. States along Sandy’s path, such as Pennsylvania, Connecticut and Massachusetts, allow very little by way of early voting, which would leave them with a much more difficult task if voting were disrupted.

But early voting has become a partisan issue, with Republicans in states such as Ohio and Florida seeking to curb the practice this year.

In terms of tinkering with the final election date, Congress clearly has that power. The current system, in which the presidential election is on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November, was set by statute. But despite prodding from some academics, Congress hasn't taken up the question of contingency planning if disaster were to strike.

That means, should the time ever come when a storm the size of Sandy occurs on or just before Election Day, officials in the affected areas would be left scrambling at the worst possible time.

"Whether it's man-made or natural," says Lewis, the association director, "we're eventually going to get hit by something on Election Day."

Tips for those living with restless leg syndrome

By Mandy Kendall

There is a very prevalent condition that affects an estimated 10 percent of the population and, for a change, its name actually describes what it does. Restless leg syndrome is a condition with an unknown cause and currently is without a known cure.

Symptoms reported by sufferers are generally very similar; an irresistible urge to move the legs, mainly when sitting or lying, usually improving with movement or walking and getting worse in the evening or at bedtime. There is often also an aching sensation to the legs, or even a creepy-crawly sensation experienced when sitting for prolonged periods of

time – a miserable situation to be in.



Mandy
Kendall

As for what causes RLS, there doesn't appear to be any definitive documented causes, but there are many theories put forward by health professionals.

There are theories that the central nervous system plays a part in RLS, especially the dopamine neurotransmitter system. RLS symptoms have been shown to respond well to medications that improve dopamine neurotransmission within the central nervous system. However, there are also medications that have been linked with causing RLS, including antidepressants, so professional advice should be sought before considering taking medication for the relief of RLS.

Studies have shown that iron deficiency can also be a major contributor to RLS and treating sufferers with supplemental iron has been shown to be an effective method of improving symptoms. There is some literature to suggest that being deficient in some of the B vitamins and magnesium might trigger limb movements, so exploring these questions with your doctor and taking the appropriate supplements might be helpful.

All of the symptoms associated with RLS will often disturb sleep, making RLS one of the most health disruptive of the non life-threatening conditions. RLS is also often reported more frequently by those suffering with kidney disease and diabetes, and they often report that symptoms increase during times of stress.

While there is no known cure for RLS some lifestyle changes have been shown to reduce symptoms for some sufferers.

So what can you do about RLS? Here are some *Qwik-e tips* that may help minimize the effects and symptoms.

Sleep tactics – Avoid chronic sleep deprivation by trying to maximize total sleep time.

Exercise – Avoid exercising too close to bedtime, but try having a regular exercise program to keep circulation at optimal levels.

Caffeine/alcohol – Avoid caffeine (which can sometimes trigger symptoms late in the day), and alcohol near bedtime.

Blood tests – Have iron and vitamin levels checked with a blood test and take advice from a professional on possible supplementation requirements.

Stress – Use breathing or relaxation techniques to help reduce the physical side effects of stress on the body.

As always, the *Health Connective Qwik-e* articles are for information only and are not meant to serve as any form of diagnosis or treatment plan. Any readers of *Health Connective* articles should contact their healthcare provider for further information and treatment.

Mandy Kendall operates Health Connective in South Lake Tahoe, which aligns wellness seekers with their ideal wellness provider. If you have questions, would like some advice, or would like to request some Qwik-e tips on any health and well-being topic, drop her an email at connect@healthconnective.com or keep an eye out on Lake Tahoe News for regular Qwik-e tips on how to make healthy changes one Quick and Easy step at a time.

Letter: S. Lake Tahoe has enough on its plate

To the community,

If Mayor Claire Fortier is serious about the city honoring Marjorie Springmeyer and her Johnson brothers, then the city should build a city hall to honor them because years ago they gave 6 acres to the city for a hall that never was built.

At a council meeting the police chief reported that the school district has a problem with unexcused absences. Apparently there's a deal between the district and city for cops to be truant officers. It's ill advised because the city needs to focus on city affairs. The district should employ a truant officer. The city has enough on its plate.



Bill Crawford

Also, at the council meeting there was talk about recreation. The city and El Dorado County are talking about, if possible, blending city and county programs. A city committee has been created. Again, it's ill advised because the city should focus on city problems, not distractions.

Also, the city is straining for the city recreation program to contribute to the city's bottom line. Public recreation

programs were never intended to be for profit. And where is the financial report on the private management of the ice rink?

There has been a blunder in the leasing of the city building across the street from the rec center. The city attorney was in the dark about the deal. It should be a given that all contracts should be sent to the city attorney before any contact is signed.

The city hasn’t an assistant city manger. So when the city manager isn’t available to manage, who will be in charge? There should be a city line and staff chart that shows the order of command.

Bill Crawford, South Lake Tahoe

PS: John Steinbeck wrote that a cynic is one who sees things as they are, not as they ought to be. I agree.

3-day Valhalla Holiday Faire on South Shore

Valhalla’s annual Holiday Faire is Nov. 16-18.

There will be 24 local vendors featuring handcrafted items, along with musical presentations from local children’s choirs, Santa’s Village, and concessions serving hot food and beverages.

The hours are Nov. 16 from 5:30-8:30pm, Nov. 17 from 10am-5pm and Nov. 18 from 10am-4pm.

Valhalla is off Highway 89 on the South Shore in between Camp Richardson and Fallen Leaf Lake.

S. Tahoe man gives up plane in deal to have drug charges dropped

By Jonathan Edwards, Lincoln Journal Star

Carrying 175 pounds of marijuana, Justin Woodcock landed his single-engine plane March 9 at the Alliance Municipal Airport in Nebraska.

Alliance police Detective Dusty Bryner was waiting, armed with a tip and a police dog specially trained to find drugs.

Bryner found the pot and arrested the South Lake Tahoe man. Prosecutors charged him with felony possession with intent to distribute marijuana.

His lawyer, San Francisco-based Zenia Gilg, said she's seen clients convicted in similar cases land 2- to 2 1/2-year prison sentences.

Six months later, the charges against Woodcock have vanished and the videographer is back home in South Lake Tahoe, free man.

"It's definitely changed my life," said Woodcock, who said he learned a valuable lesson.

His life didn't change as much as it could have.

Chief U.S. District Judge Laurie Camp tossed out the case earlier this month, with the blessing of federal prosecutor Nancy Svoboda.

Svoboda said settlements happen “all the time for a plethora of reasons,” but declined to comment further on the case.

Two weeks before the case was dismissed, Gilg said key facts in Bryner’s search warrant were wrong and pushed Camp to void it.

In the application for the warrant, Bryner said Special Agent Gil Johnson from Immigration and Customs Enforcement told him Woodcock was headed his way, and he might be carrying drugs.

In his report, Johnson said he was tipped off by a Reno airport employee who suspected Woodcock was a drug mule, according to Gilg’s motion.

But an independent investigator hired by Woodcock learned that federal investigators reached out to the airport employee, not the other way around. Once contacted, the employee said he saw that the plane was full of luggage, but did not say he thought Woodcock was a drug mule, according to Gilg’s motion.

Bryner did not return phone calls from the *Journal Star*.

Gilg also urged Camp to suppress the marijuana itself as evidence because of problems with the drug dog.

The dog, Capone, didn’t have enough hours of training, and the training he did have was crammed into too few days, according to an expert hired by the defense. Without proper training, the dog’s signal that drugs were aboard the plane was meaningless.

“What stood out to us was the complete lack of training the dog,” Gilg said.

Ultimately, prosecutors agreed to drop the case before Camp

ruled.

Gilg complimented Svoboda for agreeing to dismiss the case. Most prosecutors would have pushed on, hoping to score a sympathetic judge, she said, but Svoboda relayed information from the Alliance Police Department that bolstered Woodcock's case, even though she didn't have to.

"I'd say the U.S. Attorney's Office evaluated the search and agreed there were some problems with the Fourth Amendment violations," Gilg said.

"I can't say enough nice things about the prosecutor. She had a lot of integrity. She made sure things we're done right."

Woodcock, 29, agreed to forfeit his plane as part of an agreement to dismiss the case, Gilg said.

"My client is a really nice kid," she said, adding that the charge was his first offense. "He's certainly learned a valuable lesson."

Said Woodcock: "I'm just glad it's over and done with. I'm just so thankful."

Lake Tahoe area ski resorts count down to opening day

http://youtu.be/19mhiCx4bPM

By Kathryn Reed

While this will be the first full season Kirkwood Mountain

Resort has operated under the Vail Resorts flagship, it has been a mainstay in the Tahoe area for 40 years. Also celebrating its 40th year is the second newest Vail acquisition – Northstar.

But it's Squaw Valley, Alpine Meadows and Sugar Bowl that are investing the most amount of money in infrastructure for the 2012-13 ski season.



Ski resort operators are doing snow dances in hopes no one comes to the slopes this year with open-toed footwear. Photo/LTN file

And that season has already begun. Squaw was open for a day in October as a fundraiser, while Boreal remains open on weekends.

Snowmaking guns at Northstar and Heavenly Mountain Resort were fired up in October.

All resorts are hoping that for this season the manmade stuff sets a base and gets the season going; unlike last year when snowmaking helped save the season. But even an epic, record snowfall winter like 2010-11 is not all that welcome because it makes getting to the resorts difficult and digging out challenging.

While forecasters look west, analyze computer models and study historical data to predict what the weather will be like this winter for the greater Lake Tahoe area, only time will reveal what this winter will be like. But if one is to look at local lore, most years when significant snowfall has dropped on Heavenly (like last month), that winter is above average when it comes to white stuff. Again, time will tell.

Here are few highlights at some Tahoe area resorts for this season:

Squaw

Big Blue Express, a high-speed six-pack chairlift, replaces High Camp chairlift. It starts where the base of the High Camp lift was, but goes farther – to the top of the ridge so it will be easier to access Shirley Lake, Solitude and Granite Chief chairlifts.

The Links double chairlift is out and in its place is Mountain Meadow, a triple chair.

The Park Pulley telecord, touted as a modern day tow lift, is designed to provide easy access to the Belmont terrain park and to eliminate traversing across the mountaintop meadow.

The resort is trying to catch up with others when it comes to snowmaking capabilities by putting in $3 million worth of upgrades. Some of that cash was also spent on groomers.

A Burton Learn to Ride program will be initiated.

Olympic Plaza Bar has been completely remodeled to the tune of $300,000.

Opening dates *:

- **Boreal** – Open Fri-Sat-Sun
- **Mammoth** – Nov. 8
- **Heavenly** – Nov. 16
- **Northstar** – Nov. 16
- **Squaw Valley** – Nov. 21
- **Kirkwood** – Nov. 21
- **Sugar Bowl** – Nov. 22
- **Homewood** – Thanksgiving-ish
- **Tahoe Donner** – Thanksgiving-ish
- **Sierra-at-Tahoe** – November-December

New shops are also expected to open in the village.

While Squaw and Alpine have one owner as of fall 2011, the bulk of the money is being spent at the 1960 Winter Olympics venue. Combined, about $24 million in capital improvements have been made for this season at the two areas. This year's investment follows the $15 million in base area and on-mountain improvements from last winter.

Called the Renaissance, the plan is to invest $70 million at Squaw and Alpine by winter 2015-16.

Alpine Meadows – Dec. 7
Diamond Peak – Early December
Mount Rose – Early December
Bear Valley – Early December
** All are subject to change.*

Alpine

With a vast improvement to snowmaking efficiency at Alpine, a mile-long terrain park will be built. Snow Park Technologies will be tasked with building Tahoe's longest park.

Alpine will also operate a Burton Learn to Ride center.

The ticket office has been reconfigured with seven windows, including one to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Northstar

Additional glading was completed in the Promised Land ski pod over the summer.

Lack of snow last year prevented the launch of snowcat and backcountry tours on Sawtooth Ridge, so that is back on the agenda this season.

A Burton Riglet Park that introduces snowboarding to ages 3-6, like what Sierra-at-Tahoe started last season, will open at Northstar.

Sean White continues to call Northstar his training grounds. He will help design a 22-foot superpipe.

Tavern 6330’ opens in the Village at Northstar.

Dec. 22 is when the resort will celebrate its 40th birthday. White is expected to be on hand for the party.

Sugar Bowl

Sugar Bowl will be operating the country’s largest cross country ski area – Royal Gorge. The resorts are already linked by an “interconnect” trail that allows skiers to ski between the two. Plans are in the works to improve that route. Sugar Bowl also has plans to invest $500,000 in Royal Gorge this season.

The resort is partnering with Sierra Nevada Dog Drivers to return a sled dog race to the region after a 17-year hiatus. The Jack London Commemorative Sierra Sled Dog Derby will be at Royal Gorge on March 2-3.

In 2013, an academy that will train young skiers and snowboarders for high-level competition will be complete. This is part of the $50 million in improvements the resort has made in the last few years.

Rental gear is free for people participating in group lessons with a daily lift ticket.

Returning is the Rahlves Banzai Tour finale on March 16-17.

Kirkwood

Major capital improvements aren’t coming this season. Vail officials have not released a game plan or time line for upgrading their newest resort.

The Swatch Freeride World Tour makes its only U.S. stop at Kirkwood Feb. 27-March 3.

New this season is a four-day backcountry camp offered through Expedition: Kirkwood on Feb. 15-18.

Heavenly

Heavenly increased its snowmaking capabilities this summer with 10 energy-efficient Viking V2 snow guns on lower Stagecoach.

Unbuckle at Tamarack, the après ski party, is being touted as better than before. The Gunbarrel Grill is being called an "on-mountain man cave".

The resort will host the U.S. Freestyle Championships on March 29-31.

Instructors in Heavenly's Peak Performance Academy will work with skiers and snowboarders in an all-mountain clinic that will feature video analysis, high-end riding and off-piste tactics, while addressing personal goals. The two three-day clinics are Jan. 25-27 and Feb. 8-10 and one five-day clinic is March 4-8.

Sierra

Sierra-at-Tahoe this season will offer snowcat tours that will take skilled skiers and riders to the top of Huckleberry Canyon to access backcountry terrain. The Sierra Snowcat is also available for private tours by groups of five or more.

Sierra-at-Tahoe season passholders have the added benefit of skiing or riding for free at multiple mountains around the country. Unlimited season passes include 10 days at both Mountain High in Southern California and Stevens Pass Mountain Resort near Seattle. All Sierra season passholders can ski or ride Monarch Mountain in south-central Colorado for three days.

Belgium spending the month of November celebrating fries

By Paul Ames, GlobalPost

BRUSSELS, Belgium — Fries may be devoured around the world, but only Belgians elevate the golden fingers of deep fried potato to the status of national treasure.

“It’s part of our history, our gastronomy, our culture in the widest sense of the word,” says Hugues Henry, a leading expert on the topic, at the launch of a monthlong celebration of the humble fry.

The author of a lavishly illustrated book about Belgian fry culture, Henry is director of a Brussels fries museum. “It’s about much more than just eating,” he explains. “Fries are

deeply rooted in the Belgian mentality. Everybody grew up with a fries-stand on the corner of the street or in the town square."

The Belgian capital is honoring its traditional fritkots — street stands whose paper cones of hot fries topped with mayo are to Brussels what pizzas are to Naples — at the climax of a yearlong gastronomic festival named Brusselicious.

Tourists arriving at Brussels airport and the city's international rail terminal throughout November will be handed a pink cardboard cone they'll be able to fill with fries at 17 fritkots around the capital for just $1.30.

For hearty appetites, the tourist board has laid out a walking tour linking a dozen of the best-known fritkots across the city.

There will be a vote for the best fries — the winning fritkot gets a sculpture of a giant cone of fries — and on Dec. 13 a night of debates on the history of frites.

The events have a clear message for Americans who, as any Belgian will tell you, have been misled about the origin of the fry.

"The French are still trying to claim the French fry is theirs," Martha Meeze of the Brussels tourist office complains. "We have proof that's not the case."

The debate goes back a long way. Some claim American Doughboys who were served fries in World War I by French-speaking Belgians came home calling them French fries. Others believe Thomas Jefferson brought the recipe home after his stint as ambassador in Paris.

According to the Belgians, there is documentary evidence that fries were given to the world in the 1680s by fishermen along the Meuse River near the city of Namur. They began

supplementing their meager catch of bite-sized fried fish during hard winters by adding sticks of potato to bubbling oil.

Belgians find the term “French fries” doubly irksome because the French have long poked fun at their northern neighbors’ love of frites. “Why does Saudi Arabia have oil and Belgium fries?” goes one typical joke. “Because when the world was created, the Belgians got to choose first.”

Although Brussels frikots are increasingly viewed as part of Belgian heritage, however, the often ramshackle street stands weren’t always treated so warmly by city officials who saw them as eyesores or health risks.

“They were just slaughtered in the 1980s,” Henry says. “There were 10,000 fritkots across Belgium at the end of the 1970s, and now only around 1,600.”

Among those that survived and thrived is the Maison Antoine, which has been frying since 1948 and was once described by the *New York Times* as serving the “best French fries [sic] in the world.”

Located a short walk from the European Union’s headquarters, Antoine has provided fries to Belgium’s royal family. Its late-night opening hours have also made it a post-show favorite with visiting musicians including the Rolling Stones and French rock idol Johnny Hallyday.

Fortunately, you don’t need to be a rock star to eat there: Tough economic times are encouraging the fritkot revival.

“With this crisis, there are plenty of people who can’t afford to go to a restaurant,” says Antoine’s fryer-in-chief Thierry Willaert. “For $5.80, you can have a cone of fries with sauce and a fricadelle [deep fried sausage], a chicken wing or a little skewer of meat. That’s a filling dinner people can still afford.”

Belgians argue about the ideal kind of potato to fry, whether vegetable oil or the traditional beef fat produces the tastiest frites and what's the best complement for your snack – mayo, ketchup or one of the myriad sauces available at any self-respecting fritkot. One matter on which they all agree, however, is that cooking them twice is essential for giving Belgian fries their crispy-on-the-outside-soft-in-the-middle trademark.

Henry's book "Carrement Frites" ("Squarely Fries", as yet unavailable in English), is packed with frite facts such as the frying world record, which is held by Chris Verschuren of Kastel, near Brussels. He produced 1,500 kilos of fries in a not-stop sizzle that lasted 83 hours.

There are also sections on the fry in art, music, cinema and fashion – Brussels fashion house Piece of Chic has a fries-inspired collection called Magik Fritkot.

Fries have a political function, too, as a rare symbol of unity among Belgium's squabbling French and Dutch speakers. A youth movement that sprang up in 2011 against linguistic divisions that have paralyzed government was called the "Revolution des Frites."

At the launch of the fries festival last week, a scantily clad girl group called Frituur performed an eclectic set in styles ranging from gospel to gangsta rap, the lyrics extolling the delights of fries and a variety of sexual practices.

"We all love fries," explains a band member who goes by the name of Sista Fricadelle. "They give pleasure and they don't take themselves too seriously and that's what we're all about."

Barton awards $24,000 in health grants

Barton Health’s Community Advisory Committee along with the Barton Foundation gave $24,000 in health grants to nine organizations at the foundation’s annual Philanthropy Day Lunch last week.

The CAC is comprised of individuals who represent different entities in the South Lake Tahoe area. They identify and advise the Barton board of directors regarding the unmet health needs of our community and serve as a catalyst for relationship building and partnering with organizations, businesses and individuals.

The recipients of this year’s grants include:

South Lake Tahoe Police Activities League (PAL), Six-week athletic programs and sports sponsorships: $2,000

The Drug Store Project, Drug Store Project for all sixth-graders in the Douglas and Lake Tahoe Unified school districts: $3,000

N.A.M.I., Funding for emergency medications and temporary housing for mentally-ill patients: $3,000

Boys and Girls Club, Bike Safety for Youth Program: $1,500

Live Violence Free, Child counseling services: $5,000

A.Y.S.O., Soccer Scholarship Fund: $1,500

O.P.E.N., Transportation for medical treatments: $3,000

South Tahoe Library, summer reading program: “Reading Is So Delicious:” $2,000

Tahoe Youth & Family Services: “Tahoe Collaborative Mentoring

Project:” $3,000.

Famous Tahoe cheeseballs are ready for consumption

It’s cheeseball time in South Lake Tahoe.

Orders are being taken at the gift shop at Barton Memorial Hospital, with pick up the next day.

Bring $8 in the form of cash or check. The money goes to the Barton Auxiliary.

For more info, call (530) 543.5927 or (530) 573.1416.