Opinion: Live Violence Free welcomes ED, moving forward

To the community,

Live Violence Free would like to formally welcome our Executive Director Frank Blakeney to our team and to this community. On Sept. 20, we offered an open house and meet-and-greet to the community so everyone would have the chance to come and personally welcome Frank to town. We had a great showing of South Lake Tahoe Community members who came to chat with Frank and staff about our continued mission for a violence free community.

Frank comes to Live Violence Free from Anchorage, bringing with him 10 years of experience in nonprofits. In his previous position, Frank served as state Director of Program Services for the Alaska Chapter of the March of Dimes. Frank lived in Alaska for 12 years where he also taught and earned his masters' of education in Guidance and Counseling. He moved to Alaska after his marriage to an "Alaska" girl, and there he and his wife Vickie welcomed four children.

Frank is excited to be in his new position with the challenges and opportunities it affords him. Frank stated, "My challenge is to make a very good agency even better."

With Frank officially welcomed, Live Violence Free is looking ahead to October, as it is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. To start off the awareness month, we are having a Candlelight Vigil in honor of the victims in our community who have lost their lives to domestic violence. We invite the community to come walk with us from our office at 2941 Lake Tahoe Blvd. up the highway to the Lakeview Commons beach area in observance of DVAM. We will be meeting at Live Violence Free at 7pm Oct. 1 to assemble and light our candles.

For more information on the Candlelight Vigil and the other DVAM activities we have coming up, contact me at scaldwell@liveviolencefree.org.

Scarlet Caldwell, Live Violence Free

Sand Harbor bus shuttle will return for second summer

By AP

INCLINE VILLAGE – The new shuttle bus system at Lake Tahoe's Sand Harbor State Park has been declared a success and is coming back again next summer, albeit with a possible tweak or two to better target peak demand.

Ridership totaled 12,155 on the East Shore Express during 81 days of operation between the park and nearby Incline Village, the Tahoe Transportation District said.

Daily ridership averaged 150 for the season, from June 15 through Labor Day weekend. June was the slowest, with big spikes later for weekends and holidays – the biggest on July 3 with 1,430 riders.

Running daily in 20-minute intervals from 9am to 6pm, the shuttle is part of an effort to help slow erosion around the lake, ease congestion and improve safety along Highway 28.

The roundtrip tickets including park entry fee cost $3 for

adults, $1.50 for children.

Jay Howard, park supervisor of Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park, which includes Sand Harbor, said the shuttle has “vastly” improved safety on the highway, especially for bicyclists and pedestrians.

Along with the new shuttle service came a prohibition on summer walk-up visitors, a move designed to keep pedestrian flow off the roadway hugging the lake’s shore.

Lake Tahoe motorcyclist dies near Northstar

By Barbara Barte Osborn, Sacramento Bee

TRUCKEE – A 56-year-old Lake Tahoe man died Saturday after his motorcycle struck a pickup driven by a Citrus Heights man on Highway 267.

Mark C. Steffy of Crystal Bay died from injuries sustained when he was ejected from his motorcycle, according to the California Highway Patrol report. He was pronounced dead at the scene of the accident by Northstar fire personnel.

The accident occurred at 8:41am Sept. 22 south of Mt. Watson Road on Highway 267, the road between Kings Beach and Truckee.

According to the report, Steffy was traveling northbound behind a pickup driven by Brian M. Brodsky, 30, of Citrus Heights, when they encountered slow-moving traffic.

As Steffy began to pass over solid double yellow lines, traveling northbound in the southbound lanes, Brodsky began to turn left into the Tahoe Rim Trail parking area, the report said.

The motorcycle collided with the pickup’s driver-side door, causing Steffy to be ejected.

Brodsky received minor injuries, “cuts and scratches,” the report said.

The Highway Patrol is investigating the accident.

Girls basketball leagues forming at Kahle

Douglas County Parks & Recreation Department is taking signups for the upcoming Girl’s Basketball League at Kahle Community Center.

Registration runs until the league is full.

Divisions:

3-5 grade – Tuesday nights, season is November-February.

6-8 grade – Wednesday nights, some Mondays possible, season is December-March.

Cost: $85.

All games will be at Kahle Community Center in Stateline. Teams usually have one practice and one game per week.

For more information, call (775) 586.7271.

Horses provide children opportunity to build confidence, life skills

By Cindy Cowen

What we so often hear about in our daily lives centers around negative happenings in our community: abuse, drug related crimes, students failing in our education system. We hear about children in trouble and the lack of resources to help.

One program that is tending to the emotional, social and personal needs of our youth in the Lake Tahoe, Carson Valley and neighboring communities is Between Horses and Humans, a small nonprofit that pairs able bodied children with equine partners to develop leadership and communication skills. Through leadership group classes or private classes, children learn the value of dedicated perseverance, clear communication, and generosity of heart. Working with horses enhances the children’s ability to understand how to approach new situations with confidence, handle miscommunications without frustration or anger, and respect others.



Horses help youngsters develop more the equestrian skills. Photo/Provided

Directed by Barbara Slade, a talented horsewoman and teacher, Between Horses and Humans operates mainly out of Skyhawk Ranch in Gardnerville. Slade explains that the highly sensitive horses, through their actions and responses, mirror back to the children the state of their emotions. The children learn how to modify their behavior and responses in order to successfully work with the horses, who give them unconditional love and acceptance.

With kindness, firmness and intuitive coaching from Barbara, children learn techniques and leadership skills with horses that, beyond the joyful mastery it gives them, teaches them how to deal with their life challenges in new, positive and life affirming ways.

Parents and children are thrilled by the changes in character that the horses inspire. A young mother, whose husband had died, struggled with her child’s debilitating grief over her father’s death. Between Horses and Humans classes have changed the child’s life.

One child, in the throes of family and self-esteem issues, has attended private classes for several months. She uses her equine partner as a personal motivator when difficult situations come up in her life. She said horses have taught her about inner-strength, patience and trust.

Teachers report that students in the leadership classes made marked improvement in behavior and social interactions, and show greater focus and determination in academics.

Between Horses and Humans targets able-bodied children and young adults from age 8 and up. Children are referred to the program by a variety of sources such as social agencies, educators, therapists, counselors and private individuals.

On Oct. 20, Between Horses and Humans is hosting a fundraiser at Skyhawk Ranch. Students will demonstrate their new leadership skills with their equine teachers. Following the demonstration, there will be a luncheon and silent auction.

If you are interested in learning more about the program or the fundraiser, call Barbara Slade at (775) 265.0901 or go online.

NV Energy offering cash for old refrigerators

NV Energy has money for people who recycle their old refrigerator.

Older refrigerator can use up to four times the electricity of a new one. It’s possible to save up to $140 a year on utility bills by getting a new fridge, NV says. The utility company will haul away the old appliance and send people $50.

To participate, refrigerators or freezers must be in working condition and be at least 10 cubic feet in size (no dorm-sized ones). There’s a two-unit per address limit.

For more information or to schedule a pick up, call 877.289.8260.

California retiree fund investing in China real estate

By Kenneth Rapoza, Forbes

How awful is China real estate? Apparently not bad enough. CalPERS, the pension fund for California state employees, pledged to invest around $530 million in two new China real estate funds.

The funds are run by ARA Asset Management, an Asian firm that specializes in management of publicly traded real estate investment trusts as well as private real estate funds. “We believe foreign investment in the Chinese real estate market will continue to grow over time, notwithstanding near-term challenges and some price volatility along the way,” Moses Song, CEO of ARA’s principal investments division, told *China Daily* last week.

The California Public Employees’ Retirement System, or CalPERS, has high performance standards for its managers, so ARA is “certainly expected to deliver results”, he said.

China’s National Bureau of Statistics said that of the 5.08 trillion yuan ($800 billion) invested in Chinese real estate between January and July, only 22.8 billion yuan came from foreign investment funds, down 54.3 percent from the same period in 2011 as foreigners shun the China real estate

bubble.

The monthly average of foreign-fund investment in Chinese real estate through this year’s first seven months was 3.26 billion yuan compared to 6.78 billion yuan from Jan 1 to July 31, 2011, and 6.63 billion yuan during the same period of 2010.

Crew creating Tahoe holiday tradition sworn to secrecy

By Kathryn Reed

Orders are already being placed – even from doctors who know this is not health food. It’s quite the opposite.

But there seems to be something therapeutic about this once-a-year specialty item. While they can’t actually be bought until November, a gang of aficionados gathered on a September Sunday morning in a back corner of Barton Memorial Hospital to start the process.



Bob Harms is at the walnut station during the September assembly of cheeseballs. Photos/Kathryn Reed

It was like it was their religion – the reverence with which they spoke of these cheeseballs, the dedication they have year in and year out to assemble them.

Lake Tahoe News was not allowed in until the secret ingredient was well out of sight.

“The secret ingredient comes in bulk. We can get it in smaller amounts, but it’s cost prohibitive,” Pearl Parks explains.

All of this secrecy and early assembly is for the more than 1,000 cheeseballs the Barton Auxiliary sells each year. And each year they sell out.

Parks rallies the troops to make sure the cheeseballs are ready for the masses to buy at the holiday fair on Nov. 4 from 9am-3pm at St. Theresa’s. It all started in June with the ribbon being cut, bags bought and tags set to go.

When the fundraiser first started in 1988 all the mixing was done by hand. At that time the cheeseballs were not a big seller.

But through the years it has become a tradition. Some people place their order a year in advance. It’s not uncommon for people to order a dozen.

Parks is pretty sure these cheeseballs have shown up as hors d’oeuvres at the same party.

The base is cream cheese and butter. Then there is a secret ingredient. Parks says people have guessed it. A tiny taste on

a cracker was not enough for this reporter to figure it out. (Time to make a cheeseball order.)

Big mixers in the kitchen at Barton churn for 3½ hours. Half were made this particular day, the other half will be made on a Sunday in October.

Each ball is measured before the nuts are put on. Each is 10 ounces.

Then the balls are rolled in walnuts. There was a time when the walnuts were cracked and hulled – not anymore. But they are chopped up fine before the ball is rolled in them. Other nuts have been used, but it got to be too expensive.

Another station is responsible for putting them in the bags. All are tied with a gold ribbon and have a little tag with a blurb about the cheeseballs.

All are frozen – in a locked freezer. And they aren't at the hospital.

Parks said people have found the balls in their freezer years later and they still taste good. They can be refrozen. Some people have melted them over fettuccine or turned them into a dip.

For the first time in 12 years the price is going up – to $8. This is an increase of 50 cents. To place an order, call (530) 573.1416 or (530) 577.0328. Besides the holiday fair, cheeseballs will also be available at Barton Hospital on Nov. 7 from 10am-1pm, Carson Valley Medical Center on Nov. 15 from 10am-2pm, and during the Festival of Trees and Lights at MontBleu Nov. 30-Dec. 2. The money raised goes to the Barton Auxiliary, which in turn uses the money on various Barton Health projects.

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Wildlife officials order 4 mountain lions killed in El Dorado County

By David Bienick, KCRA-TV

RESCUE – Wildlife advocates said Monday that state officials should have considered alternatives after learning they ordered a mother mountain lion and her three offspring to be shot and killed in El Dorado County.

The killings happened last month in the community of Rescue, which is about three miles north of Shingle Springs.

The California Department of Fish and Game said it had received several complaints about the mountain lions and confirmed that at least one domestic goat had been killed by a mountain lion.

Jason Holley, a supervising wildlife biologist for the department, told KCRA 3 it was not clear if all four mountain lions had participated in the kill.

“That may or may not be true, about all four animals killing the animal that was confirmed dead. But what is very likely is that they all fed off of it, and they were all of huntable age, and they could all be killing animals in the area,” Holley said.

Holley said the young mountain lions were about 18 months old – an age at which he said they often leave the protection of

their mother.

“Some of these cubs, or sub-adults, looked like they were 60 pounds,” Holley said.

Holley said the department had received a complaint from the owner of a goat herd in the area. He declined to identify the owner.

Holley said the state contacted an agent for the United States Department of Agriculture who confirmed that one of the owner’s goats had been killed by the mountain lions.

Holley said in such cases, state law requires that a permit to kill the animals be issued.

However, the Mountain Lion Foundation, a nonprofit organization based in Sacramento, questioned the decision.

Executive Director Tim Dunbar said the goat owner should have done more to protect his herd.

Dunbar said even if the mother mountain lion had to be killed, the others could have been sent to zoos or wildlife preserves.

“Just off the top of my head, I would say there are 20 or so that are on a waiting list now, that would want to have a cub,” Dunbar said.

He also said in such cases, California should attempt to relocate young mountain lions to other parts of the state.

He said the state of Washington has been successfully doing so for the past two years.

Holley said California officials will attempt to place cubs younger than 4 months.

Care Flight offering paid flights as a way to fund new equipment

By Adam Rasmussen, KTVN-TV

Care Flight plays a vital role in Northern Nevada, able to transport patients in critical condition to health care centers in just minutes.

Saturday, it hosted its inaugural Flight For a Good Cause fundraising event, giving people a unique opportunity to fly inside one of its medical helicopters.

For $75, each person was given a 15 minute helicopter ride from the Truckee Airport. All the proceeds go directly to Care Flight.

“The reception from the public has been absolutely amazing,” says Kurt Althof with Care Flight. “We sold out in record time.”

Dozens of people signed up, and the rides continued all afternoon. Care Flight expects to raise about $12,000 to purchase some new medical equipment.

“We’re looking at what’s called an video laryngoscope,” says Althof. “It’s to open up and secure an airway for those patients that need assistance breathing.”

A necessity for Care Flight, which receives an average of three emergency calls per day.

“That’s up to 90 to 160 calls every month,” says Althof. “So,

these are folks that really need emergency air medical transport.”

Every bit of money helps, especially considering how expensive operation costs are.

“Completely configured for medical transport, it’s between $4 million and $4.5 million per aircraft,” says Althof. “We have four of these.”

There wasn’t enough room on the helicopter, so our camera wouldn’t fit. But we did follow along with some folks preparing for their first ride.

That included Lester Reynolds and his 4-year-old son Kaleb.

“Oh, he was so excited,” says Reynolds. “He’s been excited for like three weeks.”

After a 10-minute orientation, everyone is buckled into place. Once in the air, they fly over Squaw Valley and North Lake Tahoe.

A great experience for a father and son, who say it was definitely money well spent.

“My first time and it was awesome,” says Reynolds. “You’re going 120 mph, and it was great.”

Care Flight will offer rides again next Saturday in Gardnerville and again in Reno the week after. It’s completely sold-out, but there is a waiting list just in case someone cancels.