Bands ready to entertain at Live at Lakeview

Live at Lakeview kicks off the summer June 26 with Lake Tahoe’s Peter Joseph Burtt and the Kingtide.

This is the third summer for the Thursday night free concerts at Lakeview Commons in South Lake Tahoe.

Besides the music, there are food vendors, local

artists, a beer and wine garden, and a free bike valet every.

The last concert is Aug. 28. Concerts are from 4:30-8:30pm. The headliners usually start at 6:30pm.

The musicians are:

June 26 Peter Joseph Burtt and the Kingtide

July 3 Lavish Green

July 10 Tracorum Rock

July 17 Randy McAllister

July 24 Paa Kow’s By All Means Band

July 31 Sister Sparrow & The Dirty Birds

Aug. 7 40 Watt Hype

Aug. 14 Mojo Green

Aug. 21 Scott Pemberton Trio

Aug. 28 Rocker T.

Undeclared voters on the rise in California

By Patrick McGreevy, Los Angeles Times

California's chief elections officer reported Friday that the percentage of voters registered with no party preference has increased while the percentages for registered Republicans and Democrats declined.

Compared with four years ago, the number of registered voters has increased by about 1 percent, to 73.3 percent of the number of people eligible to register, according to the report by Secretary of State Debra Bowen.

The percentage of voters who registered with no party preference has gone from 20.17 percent four years ago to 21.16 percent today, an increase of about 325,000 voters, the report said.

Read the whole story

Monthly doubles mixers at Zephyr Cove courts

Zephyr Cove Tennis Club is hosting tennis mixers on the first Wednesday of each month.

The dates are June 4, July 2, Aug. 6 and Sept. 3. Play starts

at 5:30pm. The doubles mixer is for adult players of all abilities.

The Hump Day Mixers are $10 for club members, $15 for non-members, and $5 for spectators (meal only). It includes a barbecue, raffle prizes, and lots of tennis. Memberships will be sold at the event.

Participants are encouraged to bring a side dish or dessert, as well as beverage of choice that does not come in a glass container. No advance sign-up is required.

For more information about Zephyr Cove Tennis Club, go online.

The courts are on Warrior Way off Highway 50 in Zephyr Cove.

Rat poison maker to stop selling formula that harms kids, pets

By Martha Groves, Los Angeles Times

After years of challenges to federal environmental officials, the maker of d-Con rat traps has agreed to discontinue a consumer line of poison-laced baits that have accidentally harmed children, wildlife and pets.

The rodent-control products will be replaced next year with a new line of baits that the federal Environmental Protection Agency has approved for use in every state.

California earlier this year banned the sale of such products

to consumers after July 1. Reckitt Benckiser, the maker of d-Con, sued the state to halt the ban.

Read the whole story

Meyers residents win jewelry making award



The winning piece is called Ariel's Grotto.
It is made of a blue calcedony drusy, fluorite, Swarovski crystals and artisan wire. Photo/Provided

The Meyers mother-daughter team of Patricia Summers and Kelly Schweim took first place for their jewelry design in the

California State Fair.

While the fair is not until this summer, the competition is in the spring.

The division they won is Jewelry and Bead Art. It includes stringing, micro macramé, and other wearable art techniques.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

• South Lake Tahoe Library is hosting “Mad Science: What do we know about H2O?” on June 20 at 2pm. This program is a high-energy, interactive show that highlights water. This children’s even is free. For more info, email maria.delallo@edcgov.us.

• Tom Davis (not the councilman) has been hired as director of medical imaging for Barton Health.

• Zephyr Cove Tennis Club is having a doubles mixer June 4 at 5:30pm. Cost is $10 for members, $15 for others. It includes hamburgers and hot dogs. Bring side dish or dessert to share.

• First-time novelist Ann Gelder will read from her book “Bigfoot and the Baby”, answer audience questions and sign copies of her book on June 13 at 7pm at Lake Tahoe Community College’s library. Bona Fide Books in Meyers is the publisher.

• At the Smiling Tree Symposium workshop people will be taught about native and locally adapted trees, and planting considerations by incorporating microclimates, defensible space, tree care and pests, and forest health and diversity. Free classes are from 5:30-6:30pm July 14 at Lake Tahoe

Community College Demonstration Garden in South Lake Tahoe, July 15 at TERC Tahoe City Field Station in Tahoe City, and July 16 at North Lake Tahoe Demonstration Garden, Sierra Nevada College, Incline Village.

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Maddox

Maddox is a handsome orange striped fellow with soft long hair. He is playful and friendly.

Maddox was brought into the shelter after a divorce. He’s still a bit unsure why he’s not sitting in someone’s lap being petted, or watching birds through a window. Maddox has been at the shelter for about four weeks. He will appreciate a loving home with lots of attention and playtime.

Maddox has been neutered, microchipped, and vaccinated. He is available at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many other dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes.

Go online or the Tahoe animal shelter's Facebook page to see photos and descriptions of all pets at the shelter.

Call 530.573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet.

For spay-neuter assistance for South Tahoe residents, go online.

– Dale Payne

Website provides detailed SLT budget data

By Kathryn Reed

Accountability and transparency are buzzwords in government circles.

South Lake Tahoe wants to take ownership of them by allowing the public to delve into the city's multi-million dollar budget in ways it has never been able to until now.

In May the city unveiled its partnership with Open Gov, a firm that puts a government's budget online in a way that allows users to drill down into expenses and revenues. Colorful charts pop up, with just the numbers below.

Data goes back to the 2008-09 budget year.



South Lake Tahoe City Manager Nancy Kerry demonstrates how Open Gov works. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Budgets by nature are cumbersome. There are restricted and unrestricted funds. This simply means some dollars have strings attached, others don't. Part has to do with where the money comes from, and part has to do with what it is being spent on.

Things people might not ordinarily think about can be found – like how much money has been spent to pay on-call employees to remove snow on city streets. In 2009-10, it was a whopping $76,633. It plunged to $16,199 in 2012-13. While $25,000 was budgeted this year, the final numbers aren't in.

Accounts are updated quarterly. The finance staff sends them to Open Gov to upload. The city then does a check to make sure it was done correctly.

But like anything, the data is only as good as what is provided. And in an era of extreme public distrust of nearly all political entities, how is the public to know what is being presented is really the truth? Just look at the city of Bell or California State Parks – distrust still lingers.

"Bell had an auditing firm without access to the budget. Our auditor gets the budget," South Lake Tahoe City Manager Nancy Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News*.

It’s an independent auditor who is reviewing the city’s budget. That is the public’s assurance that the numbers the city provides are factual – that there are no hidden accounts, that the income stated is true and what it’s spent on is factual.

What Open Gov does is allow people to more easily find the numbers. The actual budget document is so thick and convoluted that a few years ago *Lake Tahoe News* paid a financial expert to help sift through it in an attempt to bring understanding to it. Even then it was near impossible to grasp everything.

While Open Gov is a step in the right direction, it is still a bit clunky. So far there is no search button. The company is working on one, but has no time line for when it will be live.

Like most websites, there are multiple ways to get to what a person is looking for. The “reset” button at the top left is likely to be used a lot as people search for things.

In 2010, with the city changing how it categorized items, it makes the system seem a bit less fluid. After all, how many people know that in 2010-11 the vacation rental program enforcement became the job of the police department?

Open Gov cost the city $7,000 in start up expenses and will be a $4,000 line item each year for the company to upload and maintain the data.

This data, as well as the more than 40 other cities on Open Gov, is available to anyone. Kerry foresees this potentially being good for investors doing research on South Lake Tahoe to see how solvent the city is.

But her main goal with Open Gov is to get more engagement from locals in the budget process – for them to see where money is coming from and where it is going.

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Notes:

• Here is a link to South Lake Tahoe's Open Gov site.

• For help with Open Gov, call Debbie or Olga in the finance department at 530.542.6000.

Opinion: Time to revisit outdated Master Plan for Higher Education

By Dan Walters, Sacramento Bee

As California's population surged from migration and a postwar baby boom in the 1950s, education and political leaders wrote a Master Plan for Higher Education that envisioned a seamless array of low-cost, high-quality coursework.



Dan Walters

Community colleges would offer two-year degree programs, technical training and lower-division classes for students planning to transfer to four-year schools.

The state college – later university – system would train the teachers, engineers and other professionals that a growing

state would need in great abundance.

The University of California would be the state's engine of research, offer a greater array of baccalaureate fields to top-tier high school graduates, train physicians and lawyers, and provide postgraduate studies up to the doctorate level.

Read the whole story

IRS bars employers from dumping workers into health exchanges

By Robert Pearmay, New York Times

WASHINGTON – Many employers had thought they could shift health costs to the government by sending their employees to a health insurance exchange with a tax-free contribution of cash to help pay premiums, but the Obama administration has squelched the idea in a new ruling. Such arrangements do not satisfy the health care law, the administration said, and employers may be subject to a tax penalty of $100 a day – or $36,500 a year – for each employee who goes into the individual marketplace.

The ruling this month, by the Internal Revenue Service, blocks any wholesale move by employers to dump employees into the exchanges.

Under a central provision of the health care law, larger employers are required to offer health coverage to full-time workers, or else the employers may be subject to penalties.

Many employers – some that now offer coverage and some that do not – had concluded that it would be cheaper to provide each employee with a lump sum of money to buy insurance on an exchange, instead of providing coverage directly.

Read the whole story