Should men be allowed to vote on women’s issues?

3-day SnowGlobe music fest returning to S. Lake Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

Turning the stage 180 degrees so the sound reverberates away from homes, ending the concerts at 10pm the first two days and at 12:30 New Year’s morning, designating smoking areas, keeping the decibel level below 95, paying a $50,000 deposit and involving local businesses in the three-day event. Those are the criteria SnowGlobe promoters agreed to in order to bring the controversial music festival back to South Lake Tahoe.

While the South Lake Tahoe City Council on Aug. 21 agreed to have the techno bass-driven music event return Dec. 29-31, the final contract still needs to be drawn up.

With the council also on Tuesday passing an emergency no-smoking ordinance on city owned or operated property, the promoter would need to get a waiver to allow smoking even in a designated area.



SnowGlobe will be returning Dec. 29-31 to South Lake Tahoe. Photo/LTN file

The $50,000 deposit the city will collect is designed to pay for any overtime staff – especially police – that may occur, as well as cleanup costs.

The 2011 event cost the city almost $20,000. Police officer overtime was $11,000, $5,000 went to cleaning the artificial turf field, and the remainder mostly went to unexpected overtime for parks and recreation staff.

Lake Tahoe Community College's board at last week's retreat discussed the prospect of the event returning. A vote is expected to be taken at the Aug. 28 meeting.

While the field where the event takes place is owned by the city, it is a joint use facility with the college. The college facilities are integral to pulling it off. Buses brought concertgoers to and from the college, and the gym was used as a green room of sorts.

LTCC President Kindred Murillo spoke at Tuesday's meeting, saying she supports the event. She practically lived at the college those three days so she knows intimately what went on, what worked and what didn't.

"This was a pretty well-behaved group of people," Murillo said.

What she told *Lake Tahoe News* is the board needs to decide if it will rent the facilities like it did last year or become a true partner. This could include being part of the marketing, having more of a say of what goes on and making money in a different way. LTCC's contract with promoter Chad Donnelly would be separate from the city's.

There is a SnowGlobe logistics team comprised of city, college, lodging, and tourism personnel. Dory Smith, a vocal opponent to the festival in the past, will join that committee.

He spoke at the council meeting as a resident who spent three days last December dealing with sound checks and then the concerts. It was the never-ending bass that permeated his walls and affected him physically. And he's a musician, so he knows a few things about decibel levels, bass and subwoofers.

Smith and his wife, Diana Hamilton, were not the only residents affected by the noise. That whole neighborhood seemed to flood the city (staff, police, council) with complaints. People in Tahoe Keys heard the concerts, as did Echo View Estates.

While no one at the council meeting promised residents and guests would be 100 percent satisfied when SnowGlobe bands – many of which are more like disc jockeys making unique sounds – take to the stages, the goal is to significantly decrease the problems that occurred last year.

The boom, boom of the base, as Councilman Tom Davis called it, is what needs to go away. While that won't happen entirely because of who the acts will be, altering the stage, sticking to the time and having the lineup not include the heaviest bass acts at the end should cut down on the invasion of noise into people's homes.

City Manager Nancy Kerry said the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency had complained about SnowGlobe, but the bi-state

regulatory agency is now silent.

“They have not let us know what the specific problems were,” Kerry said.

Donnelly would like to eventually secure a multiyear contract for SnowGlobe in South Lake Tahoe. He has told city officials he is open to changing the date after this year, but needs to first establish South Lake Tahoe as SnowGlobe’s home. That is why he is so committed to making sure the event works for all involved.

Tourism officials, while acknowledging some businesses benefited from SnowGlobe at a time when no snow blanketed the South Shore, believe having the event another time would be more beneficial in a normal snow year because New Year’s Eve is traditionally a busy time for the area.

But it was also acknowledged that having a place for people to go, especially Dec. 31, took some of the pressure off Stateline.

Police Chief Brian Uhler said he would like to see SnowGlobe become the destination for visitors and Stateline become a non-issue. As it is now, young people (those in their 20s and some not of drinking age) mill about the casino corridor — many in a stupor. There is no ball, no music, nothing.

Last year each night of SnowGlobe attracted about 10,000 people. Donnelly wants to increase that by 20 percent. He works with AEG — a world-renowned company that puts on festivals like Coachella and the New Orleans Jazz Festival.

Accident ends with 1 arrest, 1 person in hospital

One person is in custody and another was fighting for his life Tuesday night at Renown Medical Center.

South Lake Tahoe police refused to respond to multiple inquiries from *Lake Tahoe News* about the Aug. 21 incident on Highway 89.

Reports are that it started as a hit and run accident of a pedestrian vs. cyclist. However, details have not been provided, which includes names and home towns of the two involved.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

LTUSD, South Tahoe solidifying how to manage ball fields

By Kathryn Reed

Lake Tahoe Unified School District officials missed a critical meeting Monday as the fields committee of the recreation joint powers authority centered its discussion on making an area at the old Al Tahoe Elementary School a multiuse field. This would require taking out some of the blacktop and the school

board saying OK.

Steve Morales, facilities manager for LTUSD, is a non-voting member of the board. He was not at the Aug. 20 fields committee meeting. But he was at the school board meeting the following night.

At Tuesday's meeting he advocated for CACC (Community Athletic Coordinating Council) to continue to be a player in the whole process. He is the district's rep on the CACC board, too.

What was revealed Aug. 21 to the surprise of the school board is the district and CACC have been charging the same people to play on the fields owned by the district. In essence, they were double charged.

LTUSD board member Sue Novasel said that even though in the past her husband was involved with CACC, she is unable able to get any financial statements from this nonprofit. Neither could *Lake Tahoe News* for its November 2011 story on CACC.

As CFO Deb Yates put it, CACC can charge a membership fee, but won't be charging to use the field.

Morales was a cheerleader for CACC, saying how much they do and that the city and district won't be able to handle the fields without CACC's input.

Superintendent Jim Tarwater, Yates and the board didn't sound like they agreed with his assessment.

"The city will have to deal with CACC," Tarwater said.

The school board agreed to spend ($19,800 from special reserves) to pay for scheduling software. LTUSD, in an agreement with South Lake Tahoe, is taking over all scheduling responsibilities for the fields.

Still to be negotiated is the fee structure. The city charges one price and the district another. What the board said,

though no vote was taken, is they want CACC out of the business of charging people to use they field.

A formal agreement between the district and city could be on the Sept. 11 LTUSD agenda.

The fields committee at its Sept. 17, 4pm meeting at Lake Tahoe Airport is expected to finalize its priorities. In the meantime, the list of 13 possible places to spend the $500,000 it has in the kitty is being scrutinized to find out actual costs.

South Lake Tahoe, according to Councilwoman Angela Swanson who spoke at the school meeting, is working with El Dorado County on a detailed analysis of field needs in the basin. This will complement what the county has done on the West Slope. However, that analysis is not expected to be done until 2014.

Mother Goose is on the loose at S. Tahoe library

Mother Goose on the Loose is a lap sit storytime for ages newborn to 2.

“Mother Goose on the Loose” is an award winning program that combines music, movement, visual literacy and language development to help children get ready to read.

The dates are Sept. 13, Sept. 20 and Sept. 27 at 11am at the South Lake Tahoe library – 1000 Rufus Allen Blvd.

Grant helps Tahoe students prepare for college

Services aimed at getting students ready for college are available for up to 500 students at South Tahoe Middle and High schools through a Lake Tahoe Community College federally funded grant program.

The Department of Education grant consists of $230,000 a year for five years to provide services to 500 low-income, first generation college-bound students at the middle and high schools.

The types of services offered through the TRiO Educational “Talent Search” include academic, career, and financial aid counseling, tutoring, assistance in preparing for college entrance exams and completing college admissions applications, and exposure to postsecondary campuses, cultural events, and other academic programs.

Services include: tutoring, academic, financial, and career guidance, workshops to develop skills for success, trips to four-year schools and cultural events, and workshops for parents in English and Spanish to provide information and support.

Each of these services is designed to prepare and motivate students to complete middle school and high school and go on to college. All of the program services are free to qualified students. Applications are available online.

For more information, call Erika Franco at STHS Career Center (530) 541.4111, ext. 400 or email franco@ltcc.edu, or Lisa Utzig Schafer at STMS, (530) 541.6404, ext. 243 or utzigschafer@ltcc.edu.

4-day seminar for new, existing South Shore businesses

A four-day business improvement series is being provided in partnership by the South Lake Tahoe and Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce. The program is designed to provide strategies for new and established businesses.

Topics include: mapping revenue and profit projections, insight in potential markets, finance, messaging, customer experiences and more.

The cost is $300 and is free to qualified individuals.

The program is being offered Sept. 12, Sept. 19, Sept. 26, and Oct. 3 from 9am-4pm.

To enroll, contact Emily Abernathy at (775) 588.1728, ext. 303.

Kerry officially becomes South Lake Tahoe's city manager

By Kathryn Reed

Nancy Kerry has lost part of her title with the city of South Lake Tahoe. That would be "interim".

The City Council in closed session on Tuesday agreed unanimously that Kerry should be the city's city manager.

When Kerry was appointed interim city manager in June this was to last until the fall. At that time the council was to decide if a full search should take place or if Kerry would be given the job.



Nancy Kerry

In the nearly two months since she has had the interim role, Kerry has demonstrated her ability to her five bosses in a manner that does not require them to see any more or talk to anyone else.

Mayor Claire Fortier told *Lake Tahoe News*, "The council has been very, very impressed with Nancy's capacity to deal with people and take on this city at a tough time.

"It is really gratifying to promote within someone so capable and so considerate and forward thinking."

Another consideration for making the decision now instead of in October is so during the budget process and election cycle the city manager position did not become a political issue.

Fortier with Councilwoman Angela Swanson will be working out the details of the contract. The contract is expected to be discussed in closed session Sept. 4, with it likely presented to the public Sept. 18.

Fortier would not speculate on what Kerry's salary or other benefits would be.

However, it is likely the contract will be for 30 months so this moves it out of the election cycle. Most city managers have been given a three-year contract, with annual renewals.

The 52-year-old Kerry is South Lake Tahoe's first female city manager. She started working for the city in 2008 in the now defunct Redevelopment and Housing Department. She became second in charge under former City Manager Tony O'Rourke about one year ago.

In her short time as interim city manager, Kerry has cleaned house a bit by letting go of Community Development Director Stan Sherer, reducing the number of medical marijuana collectives from three to one, and has begun an earnest effort to do things and stop talking about doing them.

Listening to community members and caring, even when disagreeing, is how Kerry approaches her job.

"My style is very participatory. I like to involve employees in decision-making," Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Kerry added that she is touched and humbled by the opportunity to be South Lake Tahoe's city manager.

California looking at how best to grade schools

By Jim Sanders, Sacramento Bee

California schools spend all year grading student performance, but lawmakers are turning the tables with an issue that strikes at the heart of education: How should a school be graded?

Parents have a right to know if their child's campus is passing or failing; the current yardstick is based entirely on standardized test scores, sparking a Capitol push for change.

Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg says the system provides incentive to "teach to the test" and shortchanges students by not properly gauging their readiness for college or career.

Bubble-test questions are important, but so are critical thinking, complex problem-solving and effective communication skills, and school evaluation should reflect that, Steinberg contends.

"What counts, matters," the Sacramento Democrat said. "And what matters, counts."

Steinberg is pushing Senate Bill 1458 to de-emphasize standardized tests in evaluating schools, giving them 40 percent or less of the weight, for example, in judging a high

school’s performance.

Changing how schools are graded could alter decisions they make, affecting how courses are taught, what topics are stressed and the number of vocational classes offered, Steinberg said.

“How do we engage young people in a more effective way?” he said.

Steinberg said schools need more innovation, more combining of academic skills with career-oriented instruction – a University of California institute, for example, has designed a high school course in which students use mathematics to design a house that can be heated and cooled by sunlight.

“We’ve got to get away from this notion that one size fits all,” said Assemblywoman Julia Brownley, D-Santa Monica.

Others caution that misguided change could make matters worse. Consensus has not been reached on what multiple measurements should be used in judging schools or how much weight to give them.

De-emphasizing test scores could backfire by pulling the spotlight away from the building blocks of childhood education: basic reading, writing and arithmetic, critics say.

Margaret Fortune, a charter school operator and former education adviser to Republican Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, said she is not familiar with details of SB 1458 but that multiple measurements could “water down” school evaluation.

“Any attempt to mask, whether deliberate or unintentional, what is going on in schools around the education of students of color, and students living in poverty, ought to be a direction we turn away from,” Fortune said.

Republicans opposed the bill when it passed the Senate, saying that it would de-emphasize testing too much. Regardless of

whether students are preparing for college or career, they need the core academic skills measured by standardized tests, a GOP analysis said.

California currently produces an annual Academic Performance Index score that is used to rank each campus, by decile, against every other school statewide and against those with similar socioeconomic characteristics.

The score is determined entirely by results of standardized tests, though when the accountability system was created 13 years ago, rankings were designed to consider other indicators as well, including attendance and high school graduation rates.

Steinberg's measure calls for standardized test results to make up at least 40 percent of an elementary or middle school's score but no more than 40 percent of a high school's score.

The bill does not specify other elements for the performance index, besides test scores and graduation rates. But it encourages measurements of student readiness for college or career, and it authorizes use of the rate at which pupils successfully promote from one grade to the next in middle and high school.

Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson, with approval from the state Board of Education, would design a final plan.

Steinberg said possibilities for measuring college and career readiness include rates that a high school's students require college remedial courses or rates at which they are admitted to a university, apprenticeship or professional licensing program.

SB 1458 would drop the wholesale API ranking of schools by decile, but it would retain the similar schools comparison. It

calls for a separate system of local review, if money becomes available, in which panels of evaluators would observe teachers, interview students and examine student work.

The California Teachers Association has taken no position.

Read the whole story

Lobbyist who facilitated Apple's deal in Reno has state contract

By David McGrath Schwartz, Las Vegas Sun

When Apple needed help negotiating the tax breaks it sought as a condition to build a $1 billion data center in Northern Nevada, the company turned to Greg Ferraro, a veteran Carson City lobbyist and top adviser to Gov. Brian Sandoval.

But Ferraro not only has a close relationship with the governor. He also has a $200-an-hour public relations contract with the Governor's Office of Economic Development, the agency with which Apple company officials would be negotiating.

In yet another example of the insular world of Nevada politics, Ferraro's company was, in essence, collecting paychecks from negotiators sitting on opposite sides of the table.

Although the client roster for Ferraro's company includes the state and Apple, he said he personally represented only Apple in the dealings that netted the company $89 million in tax breaks.

“There’s no way I saw, or was worried about, a conflict in that intersection,” he said.

Ferraro played a key role in the Apple deal, putting together meetings between company representatives and state and local officials. He sat in on some of the meetings, some of which were held in his Reno office.

Steve Hill, director of the Governor’s Office of Economic Development, said Ferraro represented only Apple, not the state, in the deal that lured the iconic technology company to Nevada.

A state board approved a $200-an-hour contract with the Ferraro Group for public relations and communications in 2009, before Sandoval was elected governor. The contract was extended in 2011 for another two years. The almost four-year contract, in total, is capped at $180,000.

The Ferraro Group contract with the state calls for it to help the state develop its message for the public. The group has sent out press releases. Monthly invoices were not immediately available.

Read the whole story