Sodas disappear from schools, but sugary drinks remain

By Melissa Healy, Los Angeles Times

The high school or middle school student who can grab a sugar-sweetened soft drink on school grounds during class hours is becoming a rarity, a new study finds. But lots of kids still can buy high-sugar beverages in schools: Fruit juices and sports drinks that are designed for serious athletes engaged in vigorous physical activity remain widely sold in U.S. middle and high schools.

In 2010-11, 25 percent of high school students had access to sugary sodas during school – either at cafeteria concessions or from vending machines. That was down from 54 percent of high school students in 2006-07. Middle school students' access to sweetened soft drinks also dropped: in 2006-07, 27 percent had access to sodas and sugary soft drinks; by 2010-11, just 13 percent did.

The study was published Monday in the Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine, and was funded by Bridging the Gap, a research program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Read the whole story

Fish and Game commissioner may be removed from post

By Paul Rogers, San Jose Mercury News

Six months after one of California's top wildlife officials faced a fury after shooting a mountain lion in Idaho, fellow commissioners are expected Wednesday to remove Dan Richards as president of the state Fish and Game Commission.

But the unabashed hunting enthusiast isn't going down without a fight.

"This originates from the enviro-terrorists being threatened by me," Richards said in one of his first interviews since his mountain lion hunt enraged environmentalists.

"They see a guy who is paying attention to the issues, and who calls them out on the crap they throw out. Their involvement is important but by and large it's a farce, and I'm not afraid to call it that."

The state Fish and Game Commission will vote on "election of new officers" at its meeting in Ventura, a vote that is expected to dethrone Richards, a San Bernardino County real estate developer and big-game hunter, but leave him as a member of the commission.

"The president of the commission should be someone who has the confidence of a majority of his peers," said Mike Sutton, vice president of the commission, and executive director of Audubon California.

Richards said he plans to attend the meeting. If he is replaced as president – a role that allows him to set the agenda, speak for the commission and run its meetings – he said he will remain on the commission until his term expires in January.

The powerful five-member commission sets rules for fishing, hunting and endangered species in California.

Read the whole story

LTUSD, South Tahoe talking about future of ball fields

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe and Lake Tahoe Unified School District officials are meeting this morning to figure out how the ball fields in the community will be managed.

The district owns most of them and the city maintains most of them. In the past the Community Athletic Coordinating Council has collected the fees. That practice has ended.

City Manager Nancy Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News* that not all of the money for field use was collected this year and that staff is tracking down those dollars. She does not believe any illegal or unethical activity occurred, but that it was bad management.

She believes it should be the city or school district collecting the money.



South Tahoe High's softball field's expense keeps rising. Photo/LTN file

Another item to be discussed today is scheduling. In the past the city had done this.

Kerry said the former head of recreation had spoken with the superintendent of the district about LTUSD taking over scheduling and that both sides had agreed to that.

“Part of the meeting is to clarify roles,” LTUSD CFO Deb Yates told her board.

Superintendent Jim Tarwater said CACC would be taking on an advisory role.

Kerry said an issue is that “most of the members of CACC have their own special reason to be in the group.”

Chuck Leonard, who is chair of the CACC, also is chair of the Measure R ball fields committee.

Measure R dollars were part of the school board’s discussion on Aug. 7. The district is going to ask for $59,800 from Measure R funds for South Tahoe High School’s softball field. At the meting they agreed to take another $44,5000 out of special reserves for that field, too. This is in addition to the $160,557 the board approved June 12.

The Office of Civil Rights still needs to give its blessing of the proposed improvements in relation to how they comply with equality issues. Americans with Disabilities Act, Title IX and state law have all played a role in this much-maligned field that has come under scrutiny from a variety of entities.

Tahoe book a finalist for national award

Tahoe Writers Works literary publication “EDGE, Volume 5” was recently recognized as a finalist in the 2012-13 Next Generation Indie Book Awards in the best anthology category.

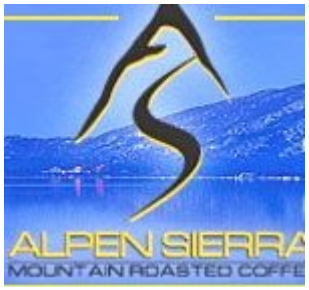
The Next Generation Indie Book Awards is the largest not-for-profit book awards program for indie authors and independent publishers. In its fifth year of operation, the Next Generation Indie Book Awards was established to recognize and honor the most exceptional independently published books in 60 different categories, for the year, and is presented by Independent Book Publishing Professionals Group in cooperation with Marilyn Allen of Allen O’Shea Literary Agency.



Tahoe Writers Works is a group of writers, poets and other individuals who are interested in the art of writing. In addition to monthly meetings and writing workshops, TWW writes and direct numerous theater performances including the “Murder Mystery Radio Theatre” and hosts “A Celebration of Writers Around the Lake”. TWW has published its literary publication, EDGE, for the past five years, and this is the second national award that it has won.

For more information, call (530) 577. 2005 or go online.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Kirkwood Mountain Resort, aka Vail Resorts, has switched from locally brewed Alpen Sierra coffee to Starbucks.

• Did you know if you click on any ad on *Lake Tahoe News*, it takes you to that businesses' website or to a PDF with more info? That's why advertising online allows your business to say even more than any print ad can. Email info@LakeTahoeNews.net with "Want to Advertise" in the subject line to find out more about advertising with *LTN*.

• In an interview with Capital Public Radio, Maureen McCarthy of the Tahoe Science Consortium, says the odds of the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act being reauthorized anytime soon are slim.

• The bike committee of the South Lake Tahoe Recreation Facilities Joint Powers Authority is meeting Aug. 10 at 9am in the downstairs conference room at Lake Tahoe Airport.

• What are you doing for your pooch Aug. 26? This is National Dog Day after all.

Opinion: Fire fee is an illegal tax on Californians

By Ted Gaines

Despite my efforts to stop it by referendum and legislation, the illegal fire tax is being assessed on more than 825,000 people starting this month.

This so-called fee was passed in 2011 to extract up to $150 per habitable structure from rural property owners. The tax will not provide any more fire protection and will actually make it harder for local fire agencies to raise the money they need to keep people safe. It’s a lose-lose proposition for the people in my district and for anyone concerned with public safety and the rule of law.



State Sen. Ted Gaines in the Angora burn area in June. Photo/LTN

This tax should have been subject to a two-thirds vote in the Legislature just like every other tax, but the Democrats called it a fee to get around that requirement. The Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association will file a lawsuit disputing the fee’s legality and I hope it gets overturned ASAP.

Until that happens, though, the state Board of Equalization

(BOE) plans to begin mailing the first bills for the new fire tax this month and hopes to have all bills sent by December. The BOE also plans to mail an advance notice to the affected property owners to warn them that the bills are coming, and to provide them with a brochure explaining the “fee.”

No matter how many mailers or explanations or warnings any agency sends out, it doesn’t make this tax any more right or more legal. It was, is and always will be a shakedown of rural property owners that takes their money every single year but gives them zero in the way of additional fire safety.

The answer to fire protection in California is not bogus taxes, but budgets that invest in core government services that protect every citizen in the state – rural, urban or suburban. My office will be watching this issue closely and will keep you updated on any new developments.

Visit www.calfirefee.com to see if you live in a “State Responsibility Area” and will be paying this tax. For questions regarding your bill, contact the BOE at 888.310.6447. For more information regarding the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association litigation, contact (916) 444.9950.

State Sen. Ted Gaines, R-Rocklin, represents Lake Tahoe.

What would you think of the Tahoe area hosting the Summer Olympics?

South Lake Tahoe trying to solve problems created by Lakeview Commons' success

By Kathryn Reed

While Thursday night concerts have been a success at Lakeview Commons based on attendance, the complaints about it being something less than a family event dominated a portion of the afternoon session of Tuesday's South Lake Tahoe City Council meeting.

Mayor Claire Fortier said the number and types of calls she has received has her constituents saying families don't want to go back to the concerts.

Her colleague said it's not quite that bad based on his experience of being at all but one show.



Rob Giustina of OnCourse Events

talks about all the trash people leave in the neighborhoods by Lakeview Commons. Photo/Kathryn Reed

“I’m concerned it could go that way real easy if we don’t take proactive action now,” Councilman Tom Davis said in terms of the free event turning away families.

Police Chief Brian Uhler responded by saying, “We will have a heavy presence at Lakeview.”

He said people smoking marijuana would be cited and that officers also have the authority to cite anyone who throws a cigarette butt on the ground.

Pot and tobacco smoke are the predominant complaints, along with the literally thousands of cigarette butts that are picked up each week by volunteers. (Having a card for medicinal marijuana will not stop cops from telling someone to take it elsewhere.)

The council at its Aug. 21 meeting is expected to entertain an ordinance that would ban smoking of all kinds at city parks – which would include Lakeview Commons.

“There shouldn’t be any smoking at all, whether it’s cigarettes or marijuana. We need an ordinance to cover that,” Davis said.

The other thing the city needs to do is bring its special use permit and park rules into compliance. Permits can be granted for alcohol, but park rules say no alcohol ever.

Right now OnCourse Events, the promoter of Live at Lakeview, has a beer garden. (Wednesday paddleboard does as well, as do the Derby Dames at Bijou Community Park. Even the city has operated a beer booth at Bijou Bash.)

In September, the council will also be looking at refining what it wants from concessionaires in the future, what is allowed and not allowed. The businesses operating at Lakeview Commons and Regan Beach are only there for this season.

Standup Paddle, which operates the boathouse at Lakeview, is being taken to court by Beachcomber Lake Tahoe, a private resort on Lakeview Avenue. The dispute is over the paddleboard's tent on El Dorado Beach blocking the view of Beachcomber guests.

City Manager Nancy Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News* the city is not named in the complaint and that staff is trying to facilitate a resolution. If that doesn't happen, Beachcomber could be asking a judge on Friday to tell Standup Paddle to move its tent.

When the city first awarded the contract to the South Tahoe company to operate the boathouse it was not envisioned the beach would become an extension of the building for doing business. But there is nothing in Standup Paddle's contract preventing it from using all of El Dorado Beach.

And not part of OnCourse's contract is cleanup. Still, owners Rob and CarolAnne Giustina along with an employee and any volunteers who show up each Monday between 8-10am fill multiple large trash bags. (Meet at the fire pit to help each Monday.)

"We do the beach, but the heavy focus is the neighborhood," Leslie Schultz with OnCourse told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Crews go down about three blocks on Lakeview Avenue and to Tallac Avenue along Harrison Avenue.

The reason to do this on Monday instead of Friday is so anything left from the weekend gets picked up, too.

The city takes care of the cleanup in the street level area of

Lakeview Commons.

Rob Giustina's thinking is the neighborhood is already impacted by the music; it shouldn't be troubled by the litter left behind.

But what shocked the Giustinas and Schultz as they picked up trash this week was the abundance of cigarette butts and people leaving empty bottles on the side of the road. They also can't believe people are bringing their dogs to such a crowded event – and to a location that doesn't allow canines.

Giustina said they put up 12 signs saying no alcohol, no smoking, no dogs. The response by many was – no compliance. Plus, multiple announcements are made about the smoking – whether it's tobacco or weed – that it impacts the enjoyment of others.

Giustina is a firm believer this is "everybody's park" and wants to make sure everybody is comfortable coming to his free Thursday concerts that will go on through Sept. 6 from 4-8:30pm.

Former member appointed to LTUSD board of education

By Kathryn Reed

Barbara Bannar is returning to the Lake Tahoe Unified School District board of education.

She was selected Tuesday by the board to fill the seat that

was abruptly vacated by Judy Cefalu on June 26.

Five people vied for the position that expires in December 2013.



Barbara Bannar is returning to the LTUSD board staring Aug. 21. Photo/Kathryn Reed

The sitting board members praised Bannar and Kathy Haven the most for their knowledge of the district and involvement with education. But they also said it was refreshing to have such a qualified field of candidates. The other candidates were Mark Bissonnette, Cathy Giardina and Heather Clelan.

While the deliberations were in public, the voting was by secret ballot. There were three votes for Bannar and one for Haven. When it came time to vote on Bannar joining the board it was unanimous.

Each of the candidates was asked the same 10 questions and then was able to make a comment at the end.

It was pointed out how current board members Sue Novasel and Larry Green tried to be appointed as provisional board members and failed; but won when they ran for election. This was said to those who didn’t get appointed so they might be encouraged to run in the future.

Bannar was on the board from 2004-08. She ran for re-election in 2008 and lost by three votes to Larry Green. Now she will be a colleague of his.

During her 20-minute interview before the board Bannar said she would want to run for a full term in November 2013.

“I really am thrilled to be back on the board and be working with everyone at the school district,” Bannar told *Lake Tahoe News* after the vote.

Bannar will be sworn in at the Aug. 21 meeting. She already has one meeting under her belt because she stayed for the Aug. 7 meeting.

Wine event benefits League to Save Lake Tahoe

Join the Cork & More in South Lake Tahoe for a special wine tasting event on Aug. 16 at 7pm to benefit the League to Save Lake Tahoe.

Participants will be able to experience a collection of wines from the Northern Italy areas of Trentino to Alto Adige.

Tickets are $15 per person. Advanced purchase is highly recommended as tickets are limited. To purchase tickets visit

the Cork & More at 1032 Al Tahoe Blvd. or call (530) 544.5253.