Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe

The shelter in Meyers is full of kittens – black, white, gray, orange, and nearly all possible combinations. This is the perfect time to adopt a kitten or two, or consider one of the beautiful adult cats who are waiting patiently for a new home.



All kittens, as well as all of the other cats and dogs at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, are neutered, microchipped, and vaccinated.

Go online to see photos and description 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.

– Karen Kuentz

Opinion: U.S. Senate lacks

giants of yesteryear

Dana Milbank, Washington Post

Four years ago this week, Ted Kennedy changed history with the sheer force of his will.

Senate Democrats, battling with the Bush administration, were one vote short of the total they needed to maintain a key provision of Medicare. Harry Reid, the Democratic leader, then used a lifeline: He called Kennedy, who was in Boston receiving chemotherapy for brain cancer, and pleaded for the liberal giant to return to Washington to provide the clinching vote. When Kennedy walked onto the floor on July 9, 2008, senators on both sides erupted in cheers, and some wept. The Medicare bill passed – with nine Republican senators switching their previous votes to be on Kennedy's side.

Among those cheering the loudest that day was Utah Republican Orrin Hatch, Kennedy's longtime legislative partner, who wrote a song for Kennedy upon learning of his friend's illness and eulogized him at his memorial a year later.

I was reminded of this moment when talking in recent days with senators and veteran Capitol Hill correspondents about what has gone wrong in the Senate. A leading theory: There are no giants in the chamber today, no figure with the stature of a Kennedy who could carry 10 votes with his mere presence. There is no longer a revered figure – a Byrd, a Dole, a Moynihan, a Chafee, a Nunn, a John Warner – whose authority could transcend party and the usual arithmetic of vote counting. Some have died. Some have retired. Others, such as Hatch and John McCain, have been lost to the exigencies of survival in a hyperpartisan political system.

Read the whole story

A cowboy cookout at 10,000 feet

By Eugenia Bone, Food & Wine

When I told my mother I was going on a long horseback ride and I was nervous, not having ridden since horses were a substitute for boys in my affections, she said, “Well, you need to look each hoss in the face and ask, ‘Do you want to carry me?’”

At the time, that seemed like good advice. A communion of some sort would definitely be to my advantage. But instead, the cowboys at Edwards, Colorado’s Bearcat Stables picked out my horse for the four-day, 55-mile trek from Vail to Aspen, through the magnificent White River National Forest and Holy Cross Wilderness Area. I was assigned a gentle gelding named Socks. Nonetheless, I pocketed an apple at breakfast, figuring that what I couldn’t achieve by horse-whispering, I could achieve with food.

Food was definitely going to be a part of this riding experience, and not just for the horses. Bearcat partner Leeds Butcher, a sommelier, collaborated with his friend Kelly Liken, of Restaurant Kelly Liken in Vail, to prepare wonderful, rustic dinners for us on the trail. Liken—one of the best chefs in the Southwest, a Top Chef finalist and a contestant on “Iron Chef America” — seemed in her element, happily cooking at fire pits in the waning light.

Gavin Selway, a weathered fellow in aging chaps and the other half of Bearcat, led our ride; a hired hand, Todd Brown, followed with a packhorse laden with cowboy necessities (saws, first-aid supplies, bug spray). There were 12 of us, including

the cowboys, plus the packhorse: “Twenty-five heartbeats on the trail,” said Todd. When I first saw my fellow riders, young men and women attired in gorgeous western gear, I figured they were real cowboys and cowgirls… until I heard their English accents and found out they were swigging amaretto from their flasks. (They were, it turns out, freshly minted British MDs.)

We traveled in a line, changing places periodically to separate quarreling horses. “It’s like managing a bunch of third-graders,” sighed Selway. We rode through grass pastures knee-high with purple columbines, pink primroses and bluebells; we scared up deer that bounded away on legs like springs. Selway pointed out medicinal plants cowboys use to treat sore muscles and scrapes, and if you were in the back of the line, you heard Brown’s litany of naughty cowboyisms (apparently a “cowboy hand warmer” is a horse turd).

The first day was an eight-hour ride, and by the end I felt sore and tired, but also exhilarated to have accomplished the journey. (Subsequent days were less arduous.) When we entered the Peter Estin Hut, named for a famous skier, and pulled off our boots, I couldn’t get enough of the simple pleasure of wiggling my toes.

The huts—we stayed at two—lay between 9,700 and 11,700 feet above sea level and are part of a series of beautifully maintained backcountry log cabins in the Colorado Rockies known as the 10th Mountain Division Huts (the 10th Mountain Division of the U.S. Army trained in the Rockies during World War II). Our huts had comfortable beds, pegs on the wall for our hats, open kitchens with wood-burning stoves and views of the endless craggy peaks of the Williams Range, the Maroon Bells and the Elks.

On our first night, we were greeted with the profoundly satisfying scent of warm bread. Liken, a brown-eyed 35-year-old with quick, confident hands, was cooking flatbread over a

campfire’s embers until the crust was as spotted as a leopard; she then spread it with ricotta and sautéed wild mushrooms. “Pizza,” she told us, smiling, “is inherently shareable food.” Her friend Kevin Furtado, the winemaker at California’s now-shuttered K. Furtado Wines, was there to pour his 2009 rosé of Syrah, as dainty and floral as the jars of wildflowers on the porch tables.

Liken is one of a dozen or so chefs defining Colorado cuisine today. I’ve been to her elegant Vail restaurant, where she prepares unfussy, scrupulously sourced New American dishes, like potato-crusted trout fillets with haricots verts. She cooks outdoors in the same spirit. Indeed, the essential Kelly Liken seems most evident under the big Colorado sky.

Read the whole story

TRPA changing approach regarding individual BMPs

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – A communal approach to BMPs may save individual property owners money and angst, while also keeping more sediment from reaching Lake Tahoe.

While the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency is not doing away with best management practices, it is headed toward being less focused on what individuals (those 43,000 parcels) are doing and more focused on communitywide efforts.

Through the total maximum daily load protocols mandated by the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board on the

California side of the lake and Nevada Department of Environmental Protection in the Silver State, TRPA in part will be using the data they collect to help measure the volume of sediment reaching the lake.



Drip lines will still be required, but the emphasis by TRPA on individual BMPs is likely to decrease. Photo/LTN

John Hester, who is overseeing the Regional Plan update for TRPA, said staff is proposing being less focused on monitoring individual projects and instead looking at larger areas, including subwatersheds. He said the idea is to get away from a one-size fits all approach.

During a multi-hour presentation to the TRPA Governing Board last week, reps from both states and the TRPA outlined how using the total maximum daily load will be incorporated into the Regional Plan update. That update is expected to be voted on in December.

But it was stressed that the TMDL is not the sole mechanism for achieving lake clarity.

“There is some sense that TMDL is all there is,” Joanne Marchetta, TRPA executive director, said. She said that’s not accurate. “The whole system is much larger than that.”

She said the TMDL is one component of the stormwater management system, which in itself is just part of the bigger picture. After all, particles floating in the air also contribute to water quality issues.

“Fifteen percent of fine sediment is from atmospheric deposition,” Bob Larson with Lahontan told the TRPA board. “But we don’t know exactly where it is from.”

He said it is most likely dust from paved and unpaved roads. While past theories put the blame on the Sacramento Valley and Gobi Desert for polluting Lake Tahoe, Larson said that is not the case.

Road improvements – including better street sweepers, along with improved public transportation are ways the road dust could be decreased.

Marchetta went through the evolution of water quality programs in the basin starting in the 1970s.

She admitted the introduction of parcel-by-parcel best management practices “was not driven by science. It was driven by policy.”

The theory was every drop of water needed to stay on the property it landed on.

BMPs have cost homeowners and businesses a tremendous amount of money in the last couple decades with no measurement as to whether they did any good. It meant redoing driveways, putting in drip lines so the runoff from roofs didn’t cause erosion, and covering bare soil.

“Simple erosion control practices will continue to be required around roof drip lines and to stabilize bare soil, but area-wide solutions are being recommended to help property owners with things like their driveways,” Kristi Boosman, spokeswoman for TRPA, told *Lake Tahoe News* after the meeting. “The draft Regional Plan proposes to coordinate TRPA’s BMP implementation efforts with local jurisdictions so that limited resources are focused in the areas that achieve the greatest pollutant load reduction. These areas would be determined by load reduction plans and Lake Clarity Crediting Program load reduction strategies local jurisdictions have to prepare as part of the TMDL.”

Besides stormwater concerns, water quality is impacted by watershed management, invasive species, how threatened-endangered-sensitive species are handled, and whether it was a dry or wet winter.

Through the TMDL program, the five counties, one city, U.S. Forest Service, and two state transportation departments collectively are tasked with reducing fine sediment particles reaching the lake by 10 percent in the next five years and by 33 percent in 15 years.

Larson said if a switch were flipped today that stopped the sediment from reaching Lake Tahoe, it is estimated it would take five years for the lake to respond – to be at the desired clarity level of water officials.

Derby Dames lose double-header; eager for August tournament

The Tahoe Derby Dames lost a double-header at home.

The two July 21 bouts at Bijou Community Park featured different squads.

The first bout featured Tahoe's Green Team up against the North Bay Bruisers from Sonoma County. Although the Tahoe Green Team battled through the Bruisers' great defensive plays and scoring jammers, it wasn't enough as the Bruisers won 213-79.

The main event featured The Tahoe Derby Dames Black Team against the Sacred City Disciples from Sacramento. A tightly contested bout to the end, the visiting team won 118-100.

GiGi Allen, captain for the Dames, in a press release said, "The Black team played well together. There were a lot of good things happening. In the end we did not emerge triumphant, but it was a close one the whole time, and we have a great foundation set for future success."

The inaugural Tahoe Roller Derby Tournament billed as Deep Blue Derby is Aug. 18 at Bijou Community Park. For more information, click on the flyer.

Kings Beach to host Lake Tahoe Flow Arts Festival

The Lake Tahoe Flow Arts Festival, sponsored by the North Lake Tahoe Chamber/CVB/Resort Association, is Sept. 4-6.

The event, a potpourri of creative expression, activities and workshops, is a gathering geared for hooping, juggling and aerial silks enthusiasts, as well as poi performers, stand up paddleboarders, dance and yoga practitioners. Last year, more than 15 countries were represented at the event.

The Lake Tahoe Flow Arts Festival is at various locations in Kings Beach.

A full-event adult pass is $77 and daily passes $45 if purchased by Sept. 2.

To purchase tickets and for a full schedule of events and times, go online.

Ideas for creating a fire-resistant garden

By Sunset

A lush, vibrant landsape is every gardeners aim. But what if you live in the middle of wildfire country?

Great news: Your gardening goals don’t have to change in high-risk fire areas, just the means by which you plan to reach them.

Before this landscape was reimagined, a thick blanket of worn-out junipers covered the slopes; their resinous foliage is potentially dangerous in a firestorm.

Read the whole story

Camp Tadaka headed to Reno for a ball game

Camp Tadaka is having a Fun Trip on July 31 for first- through 10th-graders.

The group is going to the Reno Aces baseball game. Cost is $25.

Preregistration is necessary – (530) 542.6056.

Bring lunch, sunscreen, hat, glove, and a water bottle. Camp will provide peanuts, popcorn, and water.

LA teachers to be judged partially on student achievement

By Teresa Watanabe, Los Angeles Times

In a potentially groundbreaking decision, Los Angeles teachers and administrators agreed with the school district for the

first time to use student test scores as part of performance reviews beginning this school year.

But an attorney for United Teachers Los Angeles later said the commitment he made during a court hearing Tuesday was contingent on whether the union and L.A. Unified School District could successfully negotiate an agreement on exactly how such scores would be used in the teacher evaluations.

That drew criticism from an attorney who sought the pledge in a case he brought on behalf of Los Angeles parents, who successfully sued the district for violating a 41-year-old state law that requires evaluations to include measures of student achievement, such as test scores.

“This is exactly what we were concerned about – that [UTLA] would say one thing in court and change their position thereafter,” said Scott Witlin, an attorney for the group of unidentified parents.

In the case, which could transform teacher evaluations in California, Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge James C. Chalfant ruled last month that L.A. Unified had violated the law, known as the Stull Act. The plaintiffs’ attorneys had argued that the absence of a rigorous evaluation system that effectively identifies weak teachers for improvement or, if necessary, dismissal, deprives students of their constitutional right to educational equality.

Read the whole story

Bay Area man to attempt to swim length of Lake Tahoe

By Jennifer Shaw, Contra Costa Times

Keris Dahlkamp has quite the conversation starter these days – his latest goal of joining the 22 athletes on record for successfully swimming the length of Lake Tahoe.

While Dahlkamp has Iron Man triathlons under his belt, news of this estimated 15-hour aquatic feat, which will start about 2am Aug. 11, typically gets an incredulous response.

He is quick to reply, sharing his own relatively recent awareness of the level of genocide, pillaging and rape of people in the Congo, and his ensuing idea to promote his 22-mile swim as a means to educate others about the humanitarian crisis. Dahlkamp also is inviting swimmers to join him for any length of the lake they can muster.

Kambale Musavuli calls himself "one of the lucky ones," who managed to immigrate to the United States in 1998. A spokesman for Friends of the Congo now likens himself to "one of the Freedom Riders," traveling from city to city throughout the U.S. to generate support for the organization's Congo Connect Youth Initiative Project.

While the Congo native had heard of many kindhearted means to speak out against the atrocities during his travels, and while he says that "there's no small action," nothing has matched Dahlkamp's challenge.

"I've never heard of anyone swimming 22 miles for the Congo. This tops everything I've heard before … He's here in America and he's saying I'm going to use my talent and speak for these voices. Sometimes it can feel very hopeless, but what Keris is doing, that's very moving for me," says Musavuli of his

restored faith. “It’s just a matter of time before the world knows the situation, that six million people have disappeared from the face of the earth.”

During the laudable swim, Dahlkamp, a former Martinez resident who recently moved to Canyon, will measure his progress in micro milestones.

Read the whole story