Opinion: South Lake Tahoe on the right track

To the community,

I’m writing to show my gratitude for the recent strides being made toward making our town a better place to live. The free concerts at Lakeview Commons, the bike path improvements, and the modernization of our schools are examples of how our community is moving in the right direction.

And by revamping our town, we’re also protecting our lake. Right now, 74 percent of pollutants running into Lake Tahoe come from aging strip commercial development and roadway network harming both our economy and environment.

I realize this progress is only the beginning of a bigger picture of improvement envisioned by many in town. In particular, I‘ve been following the TRPA’s Regional Plan update (RPU) process and I support its vision to create a walkable, bike-friendly and basically safer place for us to live, work and raise families.

Our family enjoys living here, but often we don’t feel safe walking or riding our bikes around city streets. As a LTCC PE instructor and parent involved with the Spanish immersion program at Bijou, as well as youth sports, I’ve heard similar concerns from friends and families (of not feeling safe walking around or biking within our town). It’s reassuring to know that the RPU is addressing these issues in the following ways:

Creating town centers that are walkable, bicycle and transit-friendly;

Increased connections between town centers that result in fewer auto trips;

Revitalization of existing “Town Centers”;

Replace/upgrade buildings for environmental protection and energy efficiency.

With the RPU and the help of various organizations in town, I envision a place where people are out of their cars more, taking public transportation, walking and riding bikes all within a safe infrastructure. SLT is finally headed in the right direction. Let’s all get involved and help create the best outcome possible. If you want your voice to be heard or would like more info, check out the user-friendly website TahoeFuture.org. It’s helpful and includes comprehensive info all in one place.

Here’s to our renewed South Lake Tahoe.

Jen Spina, South Lake Tahoe

Then and now: Corner of Hwy. 50-Park Ave. changes





He re’s a pairing of Highway 50 at Park Avenue – 1965 compared to 2012.

Notice the 1965 stoplight islands in the center of the roadway, and all the ugly overhead wires.

– Bill Kingman

Tahoe company takes the mystery out of backpacking

By Kathryn Reed

Hiking is one thing, but staying overnight in the woods is a whole other experience. What to bring? How heavy should the pack be? Bring water or filter it? Sleeping pad or the ground? Tent or stars? Real food or that packaged stuff? Bear can or wing it? Permit or just go?

Backpacking can be a daunting experience even for an avid hiker or car camper. It’s an experience Renee Gorevin wants to share with more women so they feel comfortable in the woods.



Renee Gorevin's company Tahoe Treks teaches women all about backpacking.

Photo/Provided

As someone who has been backpacking more than half her life (she started at age 23), Gorevin spent years in the woods with her husband, Mark. She came to realize she depended on him to take care of most things. Then about 15 years ago she started going on overnighters with female friends. She had to rely on herself.

“This was a huge transformation for me as a woman,” Gorevin told *Lake Tahoe News*.

“Nature provides perspective in your life. It’s not all about me. There is this big thing out there. I feel like you can’t have too many women who have experienced that.”

That is how Tahoe Treks was born.

This is the first summer Gorevin and her posse are offering multi-day backpacking excursions for women 18 and older. For now, six rookies will be paired with two experienced backpackers from Tahoe Treks. (People who have backpacked before are welcome.)

“My desire and goal is to stay small and maintain quality. And the other part is the leave no trace – to not have an impact on the area,” Gorevin said of why group sizes are limited.

Even though three levels of excursions are offered, a certain amount of fitness is required – like being comfortable to walk five miles with a pack at elevations that could reach 9,000 feet.

While trekkers must provide their pack, tent and most everything but stove and cooking equipment, Tahoe Treks advises people what to bring so people are prepared.

In fact, the first couple hours of each trip are spent at the trailhead with everyone emptying their backpacks to assess the

contents to decide if something should be left in a vehicle.

Gorevin has training for guiding through the Tahoe Rim Trail Association. As a longtime teacher in Lake Tahoe Unified School District, she knows how to educate.

Tahoe Treks is a nonprofit, which allows the company to offer the guided trips onto U.S. Forest Service land. However, Gorevin said the federal agency is still reluctant to have her charge for her services on public lands. That is why the company's website says "donation" instead of "fee" for the trips.

Gorevin will be donating her services each year with one trip for young women ages 14-18 who might not otherwise have an opportunity to backpack.

She is also working on a volunteer component for Tahoe Treks, which may involve carrying out other people's trash or helping with campsite inventory.

This season's trips will be into the Desolation and Mokelumne wilderness areas.

Beyond teaching women the finer points of backpacking, the trekkers will also be taught about the principles of Leave No Trace, the differences in stoves, how to use a bear can (even though one is not required on any of the 2012 trips), how to filter water, and what wilderness areas are all about.

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Notes:

• Tahoe Treks is online

• Email: info@tahoetreks.org

• Telephone: (530) 318.0516.

Group of doctors wants to ban milk from schools

By Laura Hibbard, Huffington Post

The Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, a national vegan and physician group based out of D.C., has filed a petition with the U.S. Department of Agriculture asking for milk to be banned from school lunches, according parenting site BabyCenter.

According to the report, PCRM claims that the beverage is "…high in sugar, high in fat and high in animal protein that is harmful to, rather than protective of, bone health."

Despite the American Heart Association's recommendation that children between ages 1 and 8 drink around two cups of reduced-fat milk a day, the PCRM asserts in its petition there are better ways for youngsters to get their calcium.

"Children can get the calcium they need from beans, green leafy vegetables (e.g., broccoli, kale, collard greens), tofu products, breads and cereals. Additionally, a wide variety of non-dairy, calcium-fortified beverages is available today including soy milk, rice milk and fruit juice, all of which provide greater health and nutritional benefits compared with dairy milk."

Anne Goetze, a registered and licensed dietitian at the Oregon Dairy Products Commission, told the Capital Press that while calcium is available in other foods and beverages, it couples many other necessary vitamins as well.

Read the whole story

Reno takes its tourism message on the road

By Bill O'Driscoll, Reno Gazette-Journal

Reno's primary tourism agency has reached into the past to move into the future.

A refurbished 1951 Willys Jeep station wagon, loaded with outdoor gear and bearing promotional slogans, is the Reno-Sparks Convention & Visitors Authority's vehicle to get there.

The freshly painted "Washoe Willys" was introduced Wednesday by the agency as a logical way to promote the Reno-Tahoe region as a year-round tourism attraction.

"Cars are a great conversation starter," Chris Baum, CEO of the RSCVA, said at a news conference in downtown Reno.

"And a cool car is something a lot of people are interested in. This will draw people to the story we're trying to tell, that while we have gaming, we're a four-seasons region."

He said studies show that 55 percent of Northern Nevada tourists will gamble, "We have to get them here under other pretenses. We've got to change the conversation from gaming to outdoors."

The vehicle bears the RSCVA's logo on its doors and proclaims "4 seasons – 1,000 reasons" on the side and "Find your passion" on the back.

Rear windows sport stickers of businesses in the area's Special Events Coalition. Atop the rig sits a kayak, water and snow skis, fishing pole and golf clubs.

Inside, the original dashboard and three-speed stick remain, but the bench seats were rebuilt and re-upholstered.

“Anybody looking at this is bound to see something cool,” Baum said.

While the “Washoe Willys” is an early authentic sport-utility vehicle complete with four-wheel-drive and deep-tread tires, Baum said it’s been gussied up for city streets, too.

“It’s designed to go over boulders, but we made it a little more street-able,” he said. That includes chrome bumpers and a chrome front license plate frame reading “Reno, Nevada.”

Baum said he found the vehicle on the Internet as a partially restored Willys Jeep that already had a modern Buick V-6 engine installed. With the help of several local businesses, he said the “Washoe Willys” was born at a cost of “under $30,000.”

And it won’t just sit inside its home, the Reno-Sparks Convention Center. The RSCVA staff will take the Willys to trade shows, as well as special events in the region, beginning with next week’s Reno-Tahoe Open and, in two weeks, Hot August Nights.

“We think this is the best way to represent the cool things we as a region have to offer,” Baum said.

Foreign travelers flocking to U.S.

By Alex Kowalski, Bloomberg

For Leon Goldberg, the used clothes piling up at the lost-and-found at the New York Marriott Marquis hotel on Times Square are the latest sign tourists are spending.

“People come over with empty suitcases, and we see them leave with full suitcases,” while abandoning their older garments, said Goldberg, the director of sales and marketing at the 1,957-room hotel.

Spending by overseas visitors on everything from airfares to hotel stays climbed 8.1 percent over the 12 months ended in May to $13.9 billion, figures from the U.S. Commerce Department show. The increase was almost double the 4.2 percent gain in total exports. Purchases by foreign tourists count as exports, which have been among the mainstays of the three-year economic expansion.

More Latin American and Asian visitors are offsetting a slowdown in trips from Europe, where a weaker euro is making travel to the U.S. more expensive. The pickup in tourism, which Federal Reserve Chairman Ben S. Bernanke called a “bright spot” in the economy, is benefiting companies such as Marriott International Inc. (MAR), City Pass and San Francisco Shuttle Tours and bolstering the labor market.

“Tourism has been an over-performer,” said Chris Lafakis, a senior economist at Moody’s Analytics Inc. in West Chester, Pennsylvania. “This is an industry that’s fully recovered from recession.”

Victoria Varraza, who is visiting Washington from Culiacan, Mexico, said yesterday her family comes to the U.S. to shop. The 22-year-old said her parents book their hotel, airfare and activities with Expedia Inc. or Travelocity Holdings Inc.

Read the whole story

Guided full moon kayak on West Shore

California State Parks and West Shore Sports team up for this unique full moon kayak at Ed Z’berg-Sugar Pine Point State Park on Aug. 2.

Experience the magic of Lake Tahoe at dusk while learning about the area’s unique history. The atmosphere is peaceful and calming, yet spectacular.

No experience is necessary and this activity is suitable for all ages. The tour is $25 per person and includes park entrance, kayak rental, life vests and instruction.

Wear synthetic clothing rather than cotton (swimsuit, shirt, shorts, lightweight pants, jacket and warm cap). Bring water, retainer strap for glasses and water shoes. Proceeds benefit the Sierra State Parks Foundation.

Meet at the North Boathouse on the day use side of the park at 7:30pm for the two-hour adventure.

Reservations are required by calling (530) 525.9920. Space is limited.

Chipotle proves fast food can

be sustainable

By Joel Stein, Time

I would not be hired by Chipotle because I'm not happy enough. This information was delivered to me – gently and kindly – by Joe Miranda, the chipper, plump, patient manager at the Los Angeles branch where I had spent the morning grilling pasture-raised steaks, peeling locally grown avocados and dicing antibiotic-free chicken.

The rapidly growing restaurant chain has 13 official characteristics every employee must have, and four of them basically mean happy. But if Miranda thinks I'm not qualified to make burritos because of insufficient cheeriness, then there is no way Steve Ells, the founder and a co-CEO of the company, could get a job at Chipotle either.

Sitting at the unfinished-wood conference table at Chipotle's small, sparse, exposed-brick offices in New York City, Ells at 46 is skinny, fashionable, passionate, exacting, candid, digression-proof, smile-free and unwilling to suffer even fools who are writing a long profile about him. The reason his employee-incentive program works, Ells explains, is that it makes happy people pleasers behave more like him. Miranda is one of about 300 restaurateurs—promoted from Chipotle's 1,300-plus managers – who get stock options, a company car and, most important, $10,000 for each employee they develop into a general manager. The program has spiked profits at the restaurateurs' branches.

"That's because restaurateurs started firing their low performers," Ells brags. "And their mediocre performers. What fast-food place ever lets go of mediocre performers?" Seriously, Ells could never land a Chipotle lettuce-dicing gig.

Ells, however, is amazing at inspiring these shiny, happy

people he has so little in common with. That’s because he does not believe he is selling burritos, and his employees are eager to believe that too. Instead, they believe they are saving the world. Saving us from food without taste. Saving us from obesity. Saving us from chemicals. Saving us from ecological disaster. Saving us from torture of animals. Saving us from blandness. Saving us from unhappiness.

These are things people are willing to pay for. Chipotle has nearly doubled its number of U.S. restaurants since 2006 and tripled its revenue to $2.3 billion last year. There are now some 1,250 locations serving about 800,000 people a day in the U.S., the U.K., Canada and France. Its revenue grew 23.7 percent in 2011; its stock rose nearly 20 percent in the past year and 800 percent since it went public six years ago. Because the average tab at Chipotle is larger than at a typical fast-food place—$9 in 2011, or nearly double the average tab at McDonald’s—Chipotle’s restaurant-level margins, at about 26 percent, are among the highest in the industry, despite its spending more on food than its competitors do.

Ells has created a new category of restaurants designed to bring elevated food to the masses, a strategy that has been copied by Five Guys burgers and fries, Chop’t salads and Taco Bell’s new, suspiciously Chipotle-like Cantina Bell menu, which is supervised and marketed by Lorena Garcia, a chef who appeared each week alongside Ells last year as a judge on NBC’s America’s Next Great Restaurant.

Read the whole story

TRTA taking sign-ups for backcountry camp

Join the Tahoe Rim Trail Association for 2012’s first Backcountry Trails Camp on Aug. 10-12.

Backcountry camps are a Tahoe Rim Trail Association tradition and your contribution to build and maintain the Tahoe Rim Trail builds on the work of 25 years of backcountry camp volunteers. Camp will be near Barker Pass on the west side of the Tahoe basin.

Volunteers of all ages and skill levels are welcome to attend.

Food will be provided, but in order to offset this cost the camp is $55. Scholarships are available. Families are welcome, and children’s camping equipment is available upon request.

For more information or to register, call Morgan Fessler at (775) 298.0232.

Volunteers must bring their camping equipment, and must wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants, boots and work gloves; bring sunscreen, bug spray and plenty of water. Check the weather reports and bring additional clothing as necessary. The Tahoe Rim Trail Association will provide hard hats, trail tools, volunteer kitchen staff, and crew leaders to guide and support trail work.

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1 arrest in shooting in S.

Tahoe, 2 others sought

One South Lake Tahoe resident was arrested July 27 in connection with an alleged gang shooting and two other residents are being sought.

The shooting was on June 27 in the area of Bonanza and B streets. During the investigation officers said they determined a shooting had occurred and there was an exchange of gunfire between a pedestrian and the occupant of a vehicle that was driving past him.

“It does not appear that anyone was injured in this incident and no one has sought medical attention at the local hospitals for a gunshot wound,” officers said in a press release.

Felony arrest warrants were obtained for Jahem Barton, 19, and Cesar Caro, 19. Jamal Darrion Coffer, 21, was also identified as being involved in this incident and a search warrant was obtained for his residence as well.

In the early morning hours of July 25, officers attempted to arrest Barton at his residence and served the search warrants at Barton and Coffers’ residences located in an apartment complex on B Street. Barton and Coffer were not at home and appear to have fled the area.

During the search of the residences evidence of gang affiliation was found, however, no firearms were recovered. Officers are not saying what the evidence is.

On July 27, Caro was located at his residence in the area of Glenwood and Fairway area. He was arrested on the outstanding felony arrest warrant. Similar gang evidence was found, but no guns, officers said.

Caro was booked into the El Dorado County Jail on a charge of attempted murder with bail set at $150,000.

A felony arrest warrant has been issued for Barton who is wanted on charges of participating in a criminal street gang and a criminal street gang member carrying a concealed firearm.

Coffer is wanted for questioning in this case.

Anyone with information on the whereabouts of Barton and Coffer should call the South Lake Tahoe Police Department at (530) 542.6100 or Secret Witness at (530) 541.6800.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report