Restaurant industry on hiring spree

By Darrell Smith, Sacramento Bee

Restaurant hiring outpaced overall employment growth nationwide year-over-year, and one in five eateries plans to increase its staffing in the second half of the year, according to the National Restaurant Association.

The industry trade group, in its quarterly employment report, said restaurant employment rose 2.7 percent nationally from June 2011 to last month, compared with the 1.3 percent overall increase in total employment nationwide.

Hudson Rhiele, an association senior vice president, called the hiring climate in his industry "an improved, but not optimal, environment."

Still, there are positive takeaways for California's $64 billion restaurant industry, the nation's largest with more than 1.4 million employees.

Rhiele said restaurant hiring in California outpaced national hiring both in the industry and overall year-over-year.

Read the whole story

Busted pipe likely sank

Sierra Rose; boat still in Tahoe Keys Marina

By Jaclyn O'Malley, Reno Gazette-Journal

The $3.2 million, three-story luxury yacht that sank more than two weeks ago while chained to a dock at Tahoe Keys Marina remained in the water Wednesday, while workers continued attempts to remove it.

Sierra Rose owner, Michael Stewart, on Wednesday did not immediately return a call for comment. Officials have said a private contractor would be responsible for the yacht's removal from the lake.

Staff at the Tahoe Keys Marina Yacht Club, where the vessel sunk July 9, said Wednesday afternoon that it still was submerged in the water. The yacht is nearly 86 feet long with its own helicopter pad. It was still touching the bottom of the lake, employees said.

California water and environmental officials have been monitoring the yacht for fuel leaks or other contaminants. They have reported no issues found so far.

The use of a crane and pumping out thousands of gallons of water from the inside has only minimally lifted the yacht out of the water. Marina officials have said its sheer size and continual leaks have delayed a quick removal.

The yacht is believed to have sunk because of a "machinery and equipment failure," said Lt. Dave Stevenson of the South Lake Tahoe Police Department, which is investigating the incident as a vessel collision. He said a broken water pipe is likely the blame.

No damage estimate was available.

About 3am July 9, Stevenson said that the yacht owner and some guests had awakened after the boat began to shift after water began to flood the insides. He said the group had earlier believed there was a leak in a water pipe and shut it off.

But it didn’t work, Stevenson said.

A final cause will be determined after the boat is reinspected following its removal from the lake, he said.

At the time of the sinking, the yacht was chained to the dock at the marina. During the sinking, the boat lifted up parts of the dock, damaging it, Stevenson said.

No injuries were reported.

The Sierra Rose was known as the largest, noncommercial boat on Lake Tahoe.

‘War Horse’ – a theatrical sensation, moving book

By Kathryn Reed

LONDON – War is hell. And sometimes you don’t have much say about whether you will be a soldier. Your country says fight. You don the uniform or you flee and face prison.

But for the animals, well, they never have a choice. The cavalry charges on. The nays of the horses are not heard as a resistance, if they are heard at all. In WWI almost 10 million horses died on the battlefield.



While "War Horse" is sold-out most days-nights in London, on occasion tickets are available at the theater the day of the show. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Joey. He was one of those horses that fought in the battles of World War I and fought even harder to live until the conflict was declared over.

While Steven Spielberg brought the story of Joey to life on the big screen, it was Michael Morpurgo who in 1982 published the book “War Horse” from which the screenplay was adapted.

In 2007, “War Horse” became a theatrical sensation in London at the National Theatre. Today it continues to be performed for sold-out audiences at the New London Theatre on the West End. It comes to the Curran Theater in San Francisco starting Aug. 1.

I cried during the movie, then earlier this month in London at the play and later during my trip abroad as I read the book.

The book, as I expected, goes deeper into this incredible horse’s life. In fact, it is told through his voice – what he sees, hears and feels.

Before the book begins, Morpurgo writes, “In the old school they use now for the Village Hall, below the clock that has

stood always at one minute past ten, hangs a small dusty painting of a horse. He stands, a splendid red bay with a remarkable white cross emblazoned on his forehead and with four perfectly matched white socks. He looks wistfully out of the picture, his ears pricked forward, his head turned as if he has just noticed us standing there. … those who look more closely will see, written in fading black copperplate across the bottom of the bronze frame:

‘Joey. Painted by Captain James Nicholls, Autumn 1914.’

“His story is written so that neither he nor those who knew him, nor the war they lived and died in, will be forgotten.”

While the book is my favorite of the three formats of “War Horse”, the play is magical. It’s astonishing to see the horses “come to life” through puppetry.

When I was told puppets were involved, I envisioned strings from the rafters. It’s nothing like that.

In fact, these horses in many ways seem real. The puppetry does not distract from the show. Three people operate each horse – two underneath, and one at the head.

I suppose it took some imagination to be convinced these were horses, even galloping at times, but it was unconsciously that I convinced myself.

“War Horse” is definitely a book worth reading and a play worth seeing.

K’s Kitchen: Experimenting with fennel

By Kathryn Reed

Don’t worry, Joy assures, me. She tells me there are always recipes in the box so if I’m not familiar with something, it won’t be any big deal.



Well, last week’s community supported agriculture box came with fennel and no recipe. I don’t cook with fennel unless a recipe calls for it and I don’t remember what recipe last called for it so I couldn’t go find it.

I emailed Joy and her sister, Teri, asking for help. Back came a link to a recipe I had just come across. I kept searching on the Internet – mostly because I was curious to learn about different ways to cook this vegetable. Something kept at me to find one where the fennel could be served cold.

Below is my adaptation of many that I read.

I chilled it overnight, which seemed to bring out the flavors more.

First we had this with breakfast, and the next night with dinner. Being in England earlier this month showed me how yummy it is to eat what Americans would consider non-traditional breakfast foods at the first meal of the day – things like roasted tomatoes and sautéed mushrooms.

Serving this fennel dish – just a couple tablespoons on each plate – for breakfast provided a cool, crisp complement to the eggs and potatoes.

I used the round cucumbers because that’s what came in the CSA

box. But any would do. Instead of three round, use one regular one.

A special treat for Sue and me was using the honey from the Lancaster hotel – where we stayed in London. The hotel on the edge of Hyde Park brought a half million honeybees to its roof in 2009. The honey is then used in some of the hotel's restaurants.

Fennel-Cucumber Salad

2-3 fennel bulbs

3 round cucumbers

1 T honey

1 T rice wine vinegar

Thinly slice the white part of the fennel so they are in rings or half rings. Thinly slice the cucumbers, then cut in half. Add honey and rice wine vinegar.

Mix well.

Chill a few hours or overnight.

S. Tahoe dog park to include agility features

Wood chips and a fake fire hydrant are not enough for Tahoe's dogs.

An infusion of play structures will be arriving at the dog park in South Lake Tahoe.

South Lake Tahoe police Sgt. Josh Adler told the City Council last week to expect things like a tunnel, balance beam, split log and jump.



Dogs will soon have more to do than sniff each other at the South Lake Tahoe dog park. Photo/LTN file

The department's K9 units will be allowed to use the features for training. And they will also be used during the annual K9 trials in September.

When the police dogs are training the big dog area will be off-limits to the public, but the small dog area will always be open. Adler expects the police dogs to be at the park a couple hours a month. The public is welcome to watch this training.

The money for the features – which is not to exceed $20,000 – is being split with the city paying 80 percent and the South lake Tahoe Police Canine Association picking up the remainder.

South Tahoe had been borrowing canine equipment from Douglas County. But those plastic apparatuses are breaking down and

need replacing.

The features will be placed in the back of the park, so the bulk of the area is open for the dogs to run around in.

– Kathryn Reed

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Stateline post office is renting boxes again. A worker told *Lake Tahoe News* the office is not on any closure list.

• Don Felder, former lead guitarist of the Eagles, will be at Northstar on Aug. 17 at 8pm. Tickets (800.466.6784) are $26.

• Sunnyside in Tahoe City is one of OpenTable's 2012 diners' choice award winners for the most scenic view restaurants in the U.S.

• July 26 is the 22nd anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

• September's Tour de Tahoe – Bike Big Blue is a 72-mile bike ride around Lake Tahoe the helps benefit the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation. For more information, go online.

Washoe Meadows Park may be integral to Meyers' future

By Kathryn Reed

MEYERS – *Meyers is an ideally situated spacious and walkable mountain community that values sustainability, health, wellness, and the natural environment. Uniquely concentrated with year-round outdoor sport and recreational opportunities, the Meyers mountain culture is the hallmark of our thriving local-based economy, boasting a diverse commercial and retail environment, welcoming visitors and providing residents with an extraordinary place to live, work, and play.*

That is the recently adopted vision statement for Meyers. Those words lay the framework for this South Shore hamlet as it goes about putting itself on the map in a more definitive manner.



California State Parks may need to do an Historic Structure Report on the Celio barn in Washoe Meadows State Park. Photo/LTN file

Gone is the Meyers Roundtable; with Wednesday night being the last meeting. In its place will be the Meyers Advisory Council. The first meeting will be Aug. 15 at 6pm at Lake Valley firehouse on Highway 89. At that meeting the council

will be appointed and work officially begins on developing the Meyers area plan. That will be an official document that will ultimately need approval by the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

Part of that plan will include Washoe Meadows State Park and Lake Valley Recreation Area. The latter is better known as the home of Lake Tahoe Golf Course.

“We want to help the community be a recreation hub. Our park is right in the middle of this recreation hub,” Steve Musillami, chief of the State Parks Planning Division, told the more than 30 people at the July 25 meeting.

Most of Wednesday’s meeting was about the future of the state park and golf course.

While a lawsuit regarding the reclassification of the land and CEQA irregularities is still tied up in the legal process, the State Parks people carried on as though that did not matter. When asked about it, they said they were not at liberty to talk about it.

In January, the California State Park and Recreation commissioners upheld their earlier decision to swap land between the adjoining park and recreation area in order to allow for the golf course to remain 18 holes after the Upper Truckee River is restored.

Musillami spoke about how 100 percent of the golf course is now in a stream environmental zone, that 6,200 linear feet of the course are along the river and 850 would be when reconfigured if they do what they want, and that the boundary of the course would shrink. The latter means fewer holes are likely to be on what locals still consider to be State Parks land.

The state has money to design how the Upper Truckee River would meander. (That can’t go forward until the lawsuit is

resolved.) Money for the first phase of trail improvements is also in hand.

Parks officials are on a year-to-year agreement with American Golf Corporation to operate the golf course. The concessionaire contract will eventually go out to bid with the presumption whatever company is selected will foot the bill to change the golf course to accommodate the river restoration. The parks department could put all sorts of criteria into the request for proposal – like different winter activities must be offered or the clubhouse could be more than it is today.

This golf course at one time was touted as being the No. 3 money generator for the State Parks system. On Wednesday it was said to be No. 5, making about $600,000 in the last year. The agency's website shows it at No. 50 with revenue of $503,998 in 2010-11.

"People know the golf course, but not what is behind it," Musillami said. "We don't want to have a park out there that no one visits."

That is why his agency wants to be part of the Meyers plan.

But the state agency has some work to do. In the next month or two folks in Sacramento will decide what level of planning document to create for Washoe Meadows – a general plan would be the most extensive or it could be something much less. Each comes with different levels of environmental review.

No matter what the planning process, plenty of meeting attendees voiced their opinions about what they would like to see the area evolve into.

Daunelle Wulstein and others want to make sure equestrians still have trails to ride on and bridges that are safe for their horses to cross. Norma Santiago spoke for several people in asking for the future concessionaire to offer more than golf – to be a center that involves biking, kayaking and more

than snowmobiling when it snows. Some talked about refurbishing the Celio barn; maybe even making it a destination for diners on cross country skis or snowshoes. Lynne Paulson wants biking and hiking trails by the river and not the golf course. Kristi Boosman wants fertilizer use to be reduced. Sue Novasel was not alone in wanting mountain bike trails to be plentiful. Rene Brejc wants the Meyers commercial corridor to link to the park.

Scuba class offered at S. Tahoe Rec Center

The South Lake Tahoe Recreation Center is looking for 12- to 16-year-olds who are interested in becoming lifetime scuba diving certified.

The program is July 30-Aut. 3, 9am-4:30pm. Cost is $395.. Equipment rental included, with minimal personal gear needed.

Preregistration required by July 27 – (530) 542.6099.

Chemicals don’t have to be used for weed removal

By Sunset

Hand pulling or hoeing is your first line of defense against weeds, especially annual and biennial kinds. If you’re diligent for several years about removing these before they set seed, their numbers will decline significantly.

Perennial weeds are harder to manage. Once they’ve passed the seedling stage, they develop rhizomes, bulbs, tubers, or extensive root systems that aid in reproduction. Pulling usually doesn’t remove these underground structures completely, and the weeds can resprout from fragments left behind. It’s best to dig these weeds, removing as much of the root system as you can — a process you may need to repeat several times.

Don’t leave pulled or hoed-out weeds lying on bare ground, since they may take root again. Leafy annual or biennial types that do not yet have flowers or seeds can safely be relegated to the compost pile, as can the top growth of perennial weeds (before seeding). But roots of perennials (dandelions and quack grass, for example) should be tossed in the trash rather than composted — as should any weeds that have set seed.

Read the whole story

Blood drive in South Lake

Tahoe

Did you know blood donated from just one person can help save up to three lives?

Barton Memorial Hospital Auxiliary invites everyone to consider giving blood Aug. 6.

Stop by Embassy Suites (first floor ballroom, 4130 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe) between noon and 6pm.

The next donation date is scheduled for Oct. 1 – same time, same place.

For more information, contact Dan Kerr at (775) 588.2376 or (775) 781.5345.