Youth bike rodeo coming to South Tahoe

The Lake Tahoe Bike Coalition along with the Boys & Girls Club will be producing a Bike Rodeo on Aug. 17 starting at 2pm at the Boys & Girls Club in South Lake Tahoe.

The rodeo will include a bike safety check, proper fitting of helmets, and instruction on safe bicycle handling skills.

South Shore Bikes will be on hand to perform bike safety check and the California Highway Patrol, with the help of the Bike Coalition, will administer the bike safety education.

For those interested in participating as a sponsor, vendor or volunteer, contact Ty Polastri at BikeTahoe@aol.com.

Beach bash to raise funds for Tahoe man’s medical care

In May, Lake Tahoe resident Sean Riley suffered a traumatic brain injury as a result of a succession of blackouts and falls.

Sean is an off-road tour guide for Lake Tahoe Adventures and his wife, Georgette, works for the Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority and Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce.

Sean has been hospitalized all month, but plans are to bring him home soon. He is doing well, but does have some issues with comprehension and memory as a result of the injury, and has a long road to recovery requiring extensive therapy, home

supervision and care.

Not only is the care incredibly expensive, it is also not subsidized by programs Georgette has been applying for. In addition, she has had to decrease her work hours (and income) to travel to Renown Medical Center in Reno since the May incident.

On Aug. 15 from 5-8pm there will be a Beach Bash Benefit at Zephyr Cove Resort to help the family with the ongoing care expenses, which are anticipated to be as much as $2,000/day until Sean’s condition improves. There will be a beach BBQ dinner with live music and a no-host bar, silent auction, live auction, and raffle. Funds raised will be used to help pay for Seans’s continued medical and therapeutic care.

For more information about donating, click on the form; for information about the event, click on the flyer.

Opinion: Being on a jury is a duty we should embrace

By Kathryn Reed

If I were accused of a crime, I would want to be tried by a jury of my peers. I would want people to carefully consider the evidence presented and decide if there were a reasonable doubt that would preclude them from rendering a guilty verdict.

While at times our system seems to be guilty until proven innocent, the Founding Fathers had it correct in their premise that everyone is innocent until proven guilty.



This is not a concept the world embraces. And it's a concept we often take for granted. It's also a process that involves all of us of voting age. It's a responsibility we should not shirk.

For the second time in my life (the other was college) I actually had to go to the courthouse for jury duty. On Monday night when I called the number to see if I needed to show up, I was filled with self-pity when the recording told me to be there at 8:30am.

Until I became self-employed, I had always wanted to serve on a jury. I've always had a fascination with the law and criminal justice system. The self-employed thing was going to make it difficult to serve on what was likely to be an eight-day trial.

I had to be reminded why it was an honor to be called.

"Civic duty" is what my mom called it when I was emailing her from court whining about being stuck inside on a beautiful Tuesday in Tahoe. At least from my office I have a window.

Judge Suzanne Kingsbury told the assembled group our willingness to serve as jurors is one thing that makes this country so great.

These two smart women made me reconsider my reluctance to spend the better part of the day at the El Dorado County courthouse in South Lake Tahoe.

Thirty-seven names were called to fill the first two rows. A few dozen of us remained in the back rows. We were all sworn

to tell the truth.

During a break in the jury selection process I looked at the accused sitting alone at the table and wondered what he must be thinking as he looked at this diverse group that could have a profound affect on his life.

(Both sides face the “audience” during this process instead of the judge, as is the case when the trial is under way.)

He was certainly dressed better than everyone in the room except for his attorney who also had a tie on. His dress shirt was nicely pressed.

(Some prospective jurors had to be told to take their hats off, many were in T-shirts, most had nothing on that resembled being professionally dressed.)

Undue financial hardships, a pre-paid vacation and being a sole caregiver were likely reasons to be excused.

Two men with medical issues were told to get a written excuse from their doctor. A woman with young children was told to see if her husband could get time off from work to care for them. Firefighters were told if they were called to a wildland fire, the judge would adjust the schedule.

Then the charges were read. The defendant was accused of committing sexual penetration with a foreign object, child molestation and sexual battery.

Two women approached the bench and were subsequently dismissed. They looked shaken.

Kingsbury reminded the group that she was not asking them to put aside their beliefs, but to have an open mind.

We all would want that. We all owe that to the accused.

More questions for the first two rows. As answers were given

the attorneys took notes.

At 10:50am we are dismissed for lunch; told to return at 1:30pm.

The case had been settled in that time. We were free to go.

Kingsbury couldn’t tell me the settlement agreement at that time, but said to check the transcripts today if I really wanted to know.

What I know is that it felt good to be part of the process. Jury duty never arrives at a good time. Nor is serving likely to be a good time. But sometimes it’s about doing my little part to make the system work. I would want that if I were the accused.

Money available to help Truckee area residents with landscaping

Homeowners are eligible to receive up to $1,000 rebate for landscaping labor and materials until Aug. 1 through the River-Friendly Landscaping program through the Truckee River Watershed Council.

For implementation after Aug. 1, the rebate drops to $400 until funds are exhausted.

River Friendly Landscaping improves water quality by assisting residential property owners in voluntarily reducing or preventing soil erosion. It covers older and established neighborhoods in the Truckee River watershed within Truckee, Placer County, Nevada County, and Sierra County.

The program is completely voluntary.

The Watershed Council provides free site evaluations, site plans, and resources for homeowners. Call Andy Otto at (530) 550.8760, ext. 3.

Foreclosure possible for Embassy Suites S. Lake Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

Embassy Suites Lake Tahoe's parent company is in financial trouble.

Ken Corporation of Japan, which has owned the hotel property since December 2000, is looking to refinance a loan in order to stay solvent. (Hilton continues to operate the hotel and the Echo restaurant.)

Max Saito, representative with Ken Corp., told *Lake Tahoe News* the $3 billion corporate bond the company is repaying involves multiple properties.



Embassy Suites is in financial trouble. Photo/LTN

“We are negotiating a term so we can have better terms for the loan. It’s not necessarily that we cannot pay,” Saito said.

However, the company first defaulted on its payment in February.

In April, the appraised value of Embassy Suites was $36.3 million. This is down from $79.3 million in 2006, when the loan went through. The loan represents more than 160 percent of the value of the property.

Although room nights are being generated this summer, this past winter hotels throughout Lake Tahoe were empty because snow was not falling. Plus, the entire Lake Tahoe Basin is still stuck in a recession, no matter what national pundits say. The current unemployment rate for the city of South Lake Tahoe hovers at 15 percent.

Saito kept reiterating the property is neither in foreclosure nor is it on the edge of it. But that is not what others are saying.

According to Trepp, a leading provider of information, analytics and technology to the commercial real estate and banking markets, “The servicer is dual tracking foreclosure as well as a possible modification.”

Saito said he believes a modification will be successfully

negotiated.

Asked what the worse case scenario would be. Saito told *LTN*, “If we can’t renegotiate the loan, then it’s the normal course for a foreclosure. Someone else buys it; either the lender or different owner.”

Ironically, Ken Corp. bought the property in a bankruptcy deal.

KOAR-Tahoe Partners was unable to keep up with it payments to Mitsui Trust & Banking Co. The firm had a $53 million seven-year construction loan because it was trying to convert 188 of the rooms to time shares. KOAR went into default in summer 2000. That’s when Ken Corp. stepped in.

The hotel opened in December 1991. In December 2006, it underwent a $3 million renovation. It is the largest hotel in the city limits.

USFS providing diverse speakers, movies on South Shore

The Summer Keynote Speaker Series at Taylor Creek Visitor Center continues every Thursday evening through August at the Lake of the Sky Amphitheater.

Programs in August include “An Evening with Mark Twain” on Aug. 2 at 7pm, “Leave No Trace” on Aug. 9 at 8pm, “Winged Flight at Night” on Aug. 16 at 8pm, “Stargazing” with Richard Combs on Aug. 23 at 8pm and “Wild Things” on Aug. 30 at 7pm.

The visitor center also offers an assortment of visitor and kids programs daily as well as “Wild Outdoor Movie Night” Saturday nights through August. Upcoming films include “Bears: an IMAX movie featuring bears of the world” on Aug. 4 at 8pm, “Beaver: an IMAX movie featuring beaver behavior and more” on Aug. 11 at 8pm, “Bees: Tales from the Hive” on Aug. 18 at 8pm and “World of Raptors” on Aug. 25 at 8pm.

These programs are sponsored by the Forest Service and the Tahoe Heritage Foundation. The Tahoe Heritage Foundation is a nonprofit organization that works with the Forest Service to conduct interpretive and environmental education programs in the Tahoe. Donations to the Tahoe Heritage Foundation are welcomed.

The Taylor Creek Visitor Center is located approximately three miles north of South Lake Tahoe on the lake side of Highway 89.

For more information and August dates call (530) 543-2674 or go online.

Nevada looking for logo for 150th anniversary

By Richard N. Velotta, Las Vegas Sun

The committee planning Nevada’s 150th birthday celebration is

seeking the public's help in designing a logo to be used to publicize the event.

The state's Sesquicentennial Planning Committee, working with the Nevada Cultural Affairs Foundation, said Friday that it has issued a request for proposals for a design to reflect the 150th anniversary of Nevada statehood and the tagline "Battle Born. Nevada Proud."

Submissions are due at 5pm Aug. 23.

The yearlong statewide celebration will be observed between Nevada Day 2013 (Oct. 31) through Nevada Day 2014.

Applicants will be required to submit 10 copies of the proposal that include color copies of the logo design and flash drives, CDs or DVDs with the logo design used in at least three applications.

How much will the winning applicant get? A lot of fame but little fortune.

Read the whole story

LTCC Foundation receives $5,000 from Korbel

Fourteen athletes vied for the title of Korbel Hole-in-One Champion on July 20 at the American Century Championship at in Lake Tahoe.

Wind was not on their side in this inaugural contest. John Elway unleashed a drive landing him 6 feet, 7.5 inches away from the pin.

If someone had gotten a hole in one. they would have received cash from Korbel as would have the Lake Tahoe Community College Foundation. But because no one hit the hole in one the Champagne company gave the full $5,000 to the foundation.

Life-size Lego creations to be constructed at Heavenly Village

The Lego Group is coming to Heavenly Village in South Lake Tahoe to take residents and visitors on a Brickation from July 25-Sept. 4.

This pop-up Lego experience will include activities, hands-on experience, and summer themed life-size Lego models.

Everyone can help build a large, custom Lake Tahoe mosaic Sunday-Thursday form 10am-7pm, and Friday-Saturday from 10am-8pm.

Poll: Legalize sports betting in California

By Jim Sanders, Sacramento Bee

Why go to Nevada to bet on the Super Bowl or March Madness?

Californians overwhelmingly want the right to gamble on sports events in their state, too, judging from Field Poll results released this month.

Fans love watching professional or collegiate teams, and it’s common now to bet with friends or through an office pool on big games, said Mark DiCamillo, poll director.

“If they’re going to do that anyway, you might as well legalize it and have the state reap some tax revenue from it,” DiCamillo said. “I think that’s the reason for the support.”

Legalizing sports betting has become a national issue after New Jersey lawmakers voted this year to defy a federal law limiting sports betting to Nevada, Delaware, Oregon and Montana.

In California, Senate Bill 1390 has been proposed by Inglewood Democratic state Sen. Rod Wright to legalize sports betting if Congress alters the federal ban or it is thrown out in court.

Read the whole story