More seniors decide not to live with adult kids

By Anita Creamer, McClatchy Newspapers

SACRAMENTO – In a spirit of gratitude and giving back to the parents who raised them, Bill and Jackie Merz's daughters have extended a generous invitation.

"They both live in Chicago now," said Bill Merz, 75, a retired Sacramento State psychology professor. "One was willing to put an extra floor on her house and install an elevator for us so we could live there. The other wanted to convert her basement for us.

"I told them we'd have somebody shoot us before we did that."

The Merzes, who live in their own home in Roseville, adore their extended, close-knit family, which also includes two sons in California and 11 grandchildren. But the idea of living with the kids in their older age leaves them cold.

"My first reaction was, 'I don't want you telling me what to do,'" said Jackie Merz, who is also 75 and a retired teacher and counselor.

Most older adults tend to be a bit more euphemistic about it: Typically, they say that they don't want to be a burden to their kids, or that they don't want to impose. But statistics show a plainer truth. In huge numbers, seniors relish their freedom, and they want to live on their own as long as they can.

Read the whole story

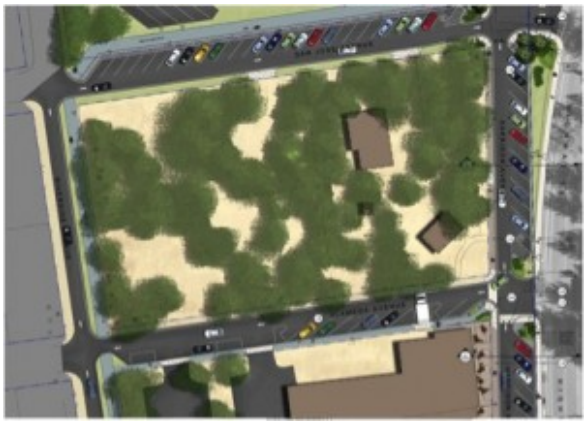
Harrison Avenue upgrades on target for summer ’13

By Kathryn Reed

A year from now motorists should know which way to drive on Harrison Avenue and how to park. This is because the multimillion dollar project that was first talked about in 1995 is expected to go out to bid in the fall, with construction beginning in May 2013.

This small stretch of roadway in South Lake Tahoe in many ways is like a frontage street. Parking and pedestrian access have long been issues. And they were exacerbated last summer when Caltrans put in curb and gutters along Highway 50 that cut into the city street.

With more than 70 percent of the property owners ready to form an assessment district, city officials on Tuesday agreed to finish the planning. By the time the project is done, the intent is to have transformed this area into a destination, to an even greater extent than what occurred with the improvements along Ski Run Boulevard.



What streets in the Harrison

Avenue area could look like.
Rendering/Design Workshop

It will also serve as an extension to Lakeview Commons.

“It will really beautify the whole area and make that the center of town,” Councilman Tom Davis said.

Some businesses are talking about upgrading their properties at the same time the city does its work so things are torn up once and even more visual improvements are made.

While it is a road project, that isn’t all it is. Besides increasing circulation to the entire area – not just Harrison Avenue, it will improve safety, deal with erosion concerns – so it is a water quality project, aesthetically upgrade this location, and ideally help attract new and retain current businesses.

Coleen Shade, planner with RO Anderson in South Lake Tahoe, explained to the council how some of the streets in the area are going to be one-way and in some cases one lane, diagonal parking will increase the number of spots, paving stones will be used for the sidewalks, crosswalks will be colored concrete, a multi-use Class 1 bike path will go along Riverside Avenue, light standards similar to Ski Run will be erected, and a gateway sign at the boat ramp end will be installed.

It’s possible some of the old retaining wall that was disassembled at Echo Summit last year could be turned into seating walls in this hub. Some of those stones have been incorporated into Lakeview Commons.

While all the improvements are on public property except for a few easements, property owners are paying for some of the upgrades. Their total share is nearly $800,000, which is divided among them based on a formula they agreed to.

One way this area is different than Ski Run is that the property owners are assessed the fee, not the businesses.

Mike McKeen, who owns the Pinnacle Real Estate building, and Duncan Sennott, who owns Sno-Flake Drive-In, attended the July 17 meeting. They both praised the city for its efforts and are looking forward to the changes coming to their neighborhood.

While the funding is in place for the remainder of the planning, the construction dollars are not all secured, though the city knows where it would like the $3,394,170 to come from. Besides the property owners paying $792,235, the COP bond will kick in $1.5 million, the CTC has verbally said $500,000 is available form the stormwater quality funds – but the board has not voted on this, and the CTC is being engaged regarding funds for the bike trail. If that doesn't come through, the city wants to use Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality improvement (CMAQ) dollars from 2014-15. This would require the project taking two years.

Hilary Roverud, director of Development Services, said the two properties that have not signed on are the Pine Lodge behind Sno-Flake and Pichetti Winery. She said the former supports the project, but is financially unable to participate. The latter, Roverud said, is concerned with San Jose Avenue becoming one-way headed east it will be difficult for people to access the tasting room. But Roverud said it's possible a driveway could be created off Harrison Avenue.

Parking is a concern of Councilman Hal Cole's.

"You can't force people out of cars by eliminating parking," he said.

While the project will add more than 80 spaces to what exists today, Cole and others worry that may not be enough, especially based on the popularity of Lakeview Commons.

Twenty-six spots will disappear from Harrison Avenue, while

that same number is added to San Jose Avenue. This is largely done by having people park diagonally instead of parallel.

The city now owns the lot at Harrison and Modesto avenues next to the *Tahoe Daily Tribune*. That land will be parking.

More slots are also expected to be added to the triangular shaped lot where boat trailers go. El Dorado County and the California Tahoe Conservancy are being consulted about that.

3-day golf workshop for youths

Ages 12-16 can learn how to improve their golf skills and technique July 23-25 with local pros on three local golf courses.

Spaces are still available for this $150 camp. Stop by the Rec Center at 1180 Rufus Allen Blvd., South Lake Tahoe to register or call (530) 542.6056.

Residential burning throughout Lake Tahoe Basin

prohibited

U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit is suspending residential burning, also known as “dooryard” burning, effective July 18 through the remainder of fire season.

The prohibition applies to debris burning on private, state and federal lands of El Dorado and Placer counties in the Lake Tahoe Basin. Residential debris burning is already banned within the city of South Lake Tahoe, and in the Tahoe Douglas and North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection districts in Nevada.

Lake Tahoe weather conditions have generally been hot, dry and windy, leading fire protection officials to move to end residential debris burning due to increased risks. The ban is for residential burns only and does not prevent federal, state and local fire managers from conducting prescribed fire operations necessary for fuels reduction on public lands.

The ban also does not prohibit small, contained campfires on private land outside South Lake Tahoe, built by the property owner or with the written permission of the property owner.

Remember never to leave campfires unattended and always extinguish them properly – drown, stir and feel.

The residential burn ban will remain in effect until temperatures, winds and humidity allow for safer conditions.

Celebs take to Edgewood Tahoe

to practice for ACC

STATELINE – While it was obvious by the levity on the course that the score didn't matter Wednesday, plenty of practicing was going one.

Hall of Fame running back Emmitt Smith spent hours on the putting green under the watchful eye of a throng of fans. He is a regular at the annual American Century Championship Tournament at Edgewood Tahoe.

Later in the afternoon he was joined by Hall of Fame running back Jerry Rice.



The driving range is popular July 18 at Edgewood Tahoe. Photos/Kathryn Reed

Hank Haney, who used to coach Tiger Woods, was on the course offering instruction.

Former quarterback Vinny Testaverde was over at the driving range about this time. Brandi Chastain, former soccer player, was nearby doing an interview.

John Elway, ex-QB, and Dan Quinn, former NHL star, took their time on hole 16 as they turned it into a private practice putting area. When Elway finally made his way toward hole 17 he was mobbed by fans.

Current QB Alex Smith of the 49ers also faced a throng of fans – who he accommodated with autographs after teeing off from

the 12th hole.

Thursday is the celebrity-am event starting at 7am, with the actual tournament being Friday-Sunday. This is a list of times, including television coverage.

– Kathryn Reed

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Burglary at pot club lands 2 people behind bars

Two people are in custody and a third is being sought in connection with a burglary at Patient2Patient, the medical marijuana collective facing closure by South Lake Tahoe officials.

The dispensary was broken into the night of July 8, with officers being called to the property the next morning.

“The suspects stole a variety of items and intentionally caused extensive damage to the interior of the establishment,” according to a press release. July 18 is the first time police disclosed any information about the theft or subsequent arrests.

Ronald “Ronnie” Gionta, 19, of South Lake Tahoe was arrested July 12. A second suspect, a 16-year-old male from South Lake Tahoe, was arrested July 17. Both face felony burglary charges.

“We suspect a third person, a former collective employee, provided the alarm code to the two suspects who actually forcibly entered the establishment to commit the crime,” officers said.

Anyone with information should call the police department at (530) 542.6100 or Secret Witness at (530) 541.6800.

— Lake Tahoe News staff report

South Tahoe explorers conquer competition

The South Lake Tahoe Police Department’s Explorer Post brought back several trophies from the July 13-15 traveled Central Valley Explorer Competition in Tracy. The team of Joey Acker, Daniel Loyola, Allison Roberts and Hector Vasquez as well as adviser, police Officer Rebecca Inman made the trip.

The competition included 28 explorer teams from Northern and Southern California competing in 14 events. The events varied from conducting a traffic stop to rescuing people taken hostage on a bus.

The South Lake Tahoe team took first place medals and trophies in Traffic Stop, Vehicle Search, Burglary in Progress, Hostage Negotiation and interacting/assisting a mentally disturbed person.

They took a second in the Obstacle Course and third place medals and trophies in the Bus Assault, High Risk Stop and Crime Scene Investigation.

The group also took home the coveted Chief’s Award Trophy for being the top team at the competition.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• “This Ol’ House,” an old-fashioned melodrama, is being performed July 28-29 from 5-6pm at the Dangberg Home Ranch Historic Park. The event raises money for the ranch; tickets are $30. An optional, $15 barbecue will be served after the show. For more information, call (775) 783.9417 or go online.

• The Bed & Breakfast Inns of El Dorado County are hosting their second Rummage Sale on Aug. 18-19 from 11am to 4pm at The Barn, 6111 Pleasant Valley Road in El Dorado. For more information, go online.

• The Truckee-Tahoe Chapter of the Experimental Aircraft Association is offering free flights for kids and a chance to meet Chesley “Sully” Sullenberger on Aug. 26 at Lake Tahoe Airport. Children must register in advance on Aug. 25 at the Lake in the Sky Airshow at Lake Tahoe Airport in order to participate.

Assemblywoman calls for investigation into State Parks

By Matt Weiser, Sacramento Bee

Assemblywoman Beth Gaines on Tuesday called for an investigation into fiscal practices at the California Department of Parks and Recreation after the *Bee* revealed an unauthorized vacation buyout program cost the department more than $271,000.

In a letter Tuesday, Gaines, R-Rocklin, asked the state's Joint Legislative Audit Committee to undertake the probe. The vacation buyout "raises serious concerns about the potential for other waste, fraud or abuse that may be occurring in this department," she wrote.

On Sunday, the *Bee* reported that a deputy director at the Department of Parks and Recreation carried out the buyout program in 2011 without getting approval from the California Department of Human Resources, as required by state law. Due to the state's precarious budget condition, no vacation buyouts have been approved by that agency since 2007.

The secret program, in which employees at parks department headquarters were allowed to sell unused vacation time back to the state, came at the same time the department was planning to close 70 parks to achieve $22 million in budget cuts.

Details of the buyout program were laid out in two investigations: an internal parks department audit and a follow-up investigation by the state attorney general's

office. The *Bee* obtained copies of both investigations from the California Natural Resources Agency, which oversees the parks department.

The name of the official who carried out the program was redacted in the investigative documents, and state officials declined to name him, citing laws that forbid disclosing personnel matters. But numerous sources identified the official as Manuel Thomas Lopez, who was deputy director of administrative services at the parks department. Lopez was demoted in October and resigned in May, according to state officials.

Read the whole story

Kids invited to Truckee Fishing Derby at Cold Springs Pond

Kids will have a chance to show off their fishing skills at the 24th Annual Truckee Fishing Derby on July 21 from 9am to 1pm at Cold Stream Pond behind Donner Memorial State Park.

The event is open to the public and admission is free for children 12 and under. Children should bring their own gear and tackle, although some may be available to borrow. For more information, go online.

To volunteer for the event, contact Dill at (530) 448.6620.