Tahoe Sports Medicine Symposium coming to Tahoe in August

Tahoe Center for Orthopedic will host its annual Tahoe Sports Medicine Symposium on Aug. 3-4 at Harveys in Stateline.

Keynote speaker will be Michael Fredrickson from Stanford University. Additional speakers will be several Barton Health orthopedists, radiologists, physical therapists, athletic trainers and physicians, the symposium is geared toward providing an update of current trends in sports medicine including musculoskeletal care, evaluation and treatment algorithms for surgical treatment, rehabilitation and injury prevention.

For more information on the Tahoe Sports Medicine Symposium, call (530) 543.5767.

Volunteers needed Tahoe Rim Trail 2012 work crews

The Tahoe Rim Trail Association is looking for volunteers for work crews to improve the safety, connectivity and recreational quality of the Rim to Reno trail system. Workdays begin July 14 at the Mt. Rose Trailhead at 9am to 4pm and will continue every Thursday and Saturday until Oct. 20.

Last year, 500 people volunteered, completing 1.75 miles of

new trail between Galena Falls and Relay Peak, while U.S. Forest Service and Nevada Conservation Corps crews completed several miles of the trail leading south from Reno.

The association hopes to recruit 1,000 volunteers for its 2012 effort.

The Rim to Reno trail system will connect existing trails and create a new system that includes loops and will be accessible through the Mt. Rose Summit Trailhead, U.S. Forest Service's Thomas Creek and White's Creek Trailheads, and Washoe County's Galena Creek Regional Park, Lower White's Creek and Lower Thomas Creek Trailheads.

To volunteer, register online or contact Lindsey at (775) 298.0239 or via email at trails@tahoerimtrail.org.

Opinion: A way forward in California's water wars

Publisher's note: ***This editorial is from the July 8, 2012, Los Angeles Times***

Southern California's most important lake is located in a distant part of the state and has a name most of us wouldn't recognize. Clifton Court Forebay, between Oakland and Stockton, forms the manufactured headwaters of the manufactured river known as the California Aqueduct, which over four decades has supplied millions of residents from the Bay Area to the Mexican border with drinking water and thousands of growers from Santa Clara to Santa Maria to San Diego with irrigation. Engineers warn that in the event of a major earthquake, Clifton Court could fail and the aqueduct

could run dry, leaving much of the state without that water for three years or more.

Even without a big quake, though, the forebay, the aqueduct and the water they bring are under threat.

Clifton Court is at the southern end of the remarkable region known as the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta, where the snowmelt from the western Sierra drains into the San Pablo and San Francisco bays and forms the briny heart and lungs of the state. For thousands of years the delta was intermittently marsh and dry land, shallow sea and freshwater wetland, changing with the daily rise and fall of the tides, the annual patterns of mountain precipitation and the more mysterious rhythms of drought, flooding and seismic upheaval. The delta we know today was created in the 19th and early 20th centuries when Chinese laborers began building levees of dirt and tule, letting dry land appear and allowing farmers to grow asparagus, grain and fruit trees.

Read the whole story

Volunteers needed to help remove Eurasian watermilfoil

Volunteers are needed to help remove one of Tahoe's most prolific aquatic invasive weeds, Eurasian watermilfoil, during a community event at Baldwin Beach on July 15.

The project is a partnership of the League to Save Lake Tahoe, the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, and the U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit. Preventing the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species is a top

priority for all three agencies.

Volunteers will be working in a large swale (similar to a shallow pond) adjacent to Lake Tahoe, which is infected with Eurasian watermilfoil. Help is needed to remove barriers, pull out dead milfoil, and install new barriers in new sections of the swale. All ages and abilities are welcome to participate.

Registration is required. For more information or to sign-up, contact Flavia Sordelet with the League to Save Lake Tahoe at (530) 541.5388 or email events@keeptahoeblue.org.

Veteran Lake Tahoe showroom workers ensure a good time

By Susan Wood

STATELINE – In the diva world of entertainment, the "d" in maitre d' could stand for David McClure with a capital D.

That's because much like a shining star can carry a show's performance, this host extraordinaire standing at the door in the dapper tuxedo can make an experience at the MontBleu's showroom in Stateline.

After three decades on the job in September, McClure has seen it all over the years – including his casino change names, owners, management and budgets.

This modest local is the rock of the entertainment facility, where he caters to customers from high roller guests to visitors camping out around Lake Tahoe for the weekend.



David McClure talks about the performers who have been in MontBleu's showroom. Photos/Kathryn Reed

And this summer, McClure and company take the act out in the parking lot for the casino’s new outside concert series that expands the concert venue from seating for 1,600 in the showroom to 6,000 outdoors. The concerts are designed to complement Harveys Lake Tahoe’s longtime version across the street. A night of reggae led the series. In keeping with its youthful image, the next one features members of the Sublime group.

The 62-year-old host would be the first to admit he doesn’t personally follow the hip, new music of the day. McClure preferred acts over the years involve the old-time entertainers. His favorite involved his mother. When his father died, he took her to see the late slapstick comic Red Skelton.

“I’ve still got the picture,” he said.

McClure also enjoyed a show in the early years of Lionel Ritchie’s career. Ritchie danced a lot, and his band played several instruments on stage. There was even a player piano carted in.

But it’s the guests who bring McClure to work with a smile on his face.

“My job is to change people’s experiences. You never know who will be standing in front of you,” he said of the people waiting to be seated. “People plan their whole vacations around who they can see and when they can see them.”

As an example, many women have asked to sit to see certain band members of the Moody Blues up close and personal.

“Women are the most vocal,” he said.



Connie Bowland demonstrates working in the showroom isn't just greeting guests.

And many of the men seem to go along with seeing the shows to please their mates.

McClure’s job involves customer service, entertainment and a little psychology. He’s also a bit of a historian. For instance, he learned long ago that if Kenny Loggins ended up playing in Tahoe over a holiday weekend he would refrain from performing on the actual holiday back when he played here.

“He likes to relax (that day),” he said.

McClure knows all about that. He unwinds with his two cats and

loves driving around Tahoe in the wee morning hours.

“You have the road to yourself. It’s an amazing time in Tahoe before people get up,” he said of his night shift.

Opposite schedules – such is the world of entertainment.

McClure’s brush with the industry started early when he grew up in Marin County, home to some huge celebrities from the San Francisco Bay Area. He would skip school to see the original Jefferson Airplane group, which spawned the careers of Grace Slick and Mickey Thomas.

“I wrote off Thursday classes to see them,” he said.

He liked Lake Tahoe and would visit occasionally from the Bay Area. He took on odd jobs, including a construction stint at Squaw Valley in 1970 where he “could pound a nail.”

After graduating from a San Francisco hotel and restaurant management school in 1977, McClure never looked back from the hospitality world. It’s been a whirlwind – especially with the number of shows Caesars Tahoe once scheduled.



Anthony Whalen is assisted with his uniform by David

McClure.

The showroom wait staff used to see each other about every night. Now they'll go weeks apart – with the exception of the busy summertime. On the night of Bob Saget's show over Memorial Day weekend, the staffers enjoyed a reunion of sorts with longtime usher Artie Farokhpar and McClure's assistant, Connie Bowland, excited to get back to steady work. Before that show, Bowland breezed in to the main wait staff room from her other job, a common practice for hospitality types in Tahoe trying to make a living, Farokhpar pointed out.

At age 75, Farokhpar had worked for years with Horizon's Carnival Cabaret show before retiring, semi-retiring and coming on board with the MontBleu staff recently. He and his wife see it as a way of getting him out of the house, he joked with his coworkers.

The crew chats enthusiastically like a group of old friends while trying to get the pre-show work done. All this is done crammed into the small office space that resembles more of an oversized closet. McClure prepared 2009 South Tahoe High School graduate Anthony Whalen as his newest member of the staff on his first night. This meant getting him suited in proper dress attire. Meanwhile, Farokhpar needed a bow tie. McClure quickly came through and handed him one.

The staff has been forced to improvise as in replacing their own suits, having fewer steak-dinner-like perks and dealing with the loss of a wardrobe room. The latter was the result of remodeling at the casino, which the staff calls "the poor stepchild of Las Vegas."

In their one small space, signed photos of celebrities such as comedian Joan Rivers, country singer George Strait, rock guitarist Carlos Santana and pop singer Olivia Newton John line the walls. Six photos were missing as someone broke in years ago and stole them. Still, the loss goes unnoticed as

the staff is focused on the job at hand.

Bowland reviewed messages from management regarding who would be attending the show that night. A newsletter called “Bleu notes” laid on her desk. She admits special seating instructions may come in at the very last minute. She commended their “ringleader” – McClure – for pulling it all together when attendees surprise the staff with added guests at the door. And sometimes fewer employees for the night means jumping in to sell or take tickets.

There is essentially no room for divas – “except on stage,” a staffer belted out.

“We’re like a second family, but we haven’t worked that often all together, so we have to catch up,” Bowland said.

She enjoys the whole environment – meaning the staff and the work. She believes taking the shows outside will be good for the Lake Tahoe market.

“Anything new is going to be good,” said Bowland, who came on board at the casino in 1979 as a cocktail waitress before settling into the showroom under McClure.

“I like meeting people from all over. Everybody’s in a good mood. They can ask us anything, and we do it,” she said.

She especially relishes working for McClure because he demonstrates grace under pressure in tough situations.

Ditto was the sentiment from Farokhpar about working under McClure’s supervision.

“He is a nice guy, helpful and part of the old school where you help each other,” the usher said.

Farokhpar sees his job as giving their customers a “warm feeling” about being in the showroom set up to make them feel special.

He and Bowland agreed genuine customer service is a lost art at times – especially in Tahoe's revolving door of businesses and transient employees.

"I just tell them a little smile and a little thank you won't hurt you," Farokhpar said.

DCSD board continues to try to sell Kingsbury Middle School

The Douglas County School District Board of Trustees paved the way for changes to several policies, approved a vendor for a repaving project at schools and agreed to keep the former Kingsbury Middle School on the market after not receiving any bids for the Zephyr Cove property.

The school board also received an update from Principal Brian Frazier on Jacobsen High School in Gardnerville, a court-ordered and short-term alternative school for teens in 16 of the state's 17 counties.

Frazier said that 55 percent of the school's students leave the school showing one or more years' growth in reading skills, 67 percent exit showing one or more years' improvement in math skills and 66 percent leave with a year or more bump in their science skills.

Students are at the school for an average of four months before they are transitioned back to their school of origin.

“I think your numbers are extraordinary considering you only have them for four, four and a half months,” said Ross Chichester, board member.

Frazier also presented on changes to the school district’s policy for students in transition, or SIP. He said during the 2007-08 school year, there were 33 homeless students in Douglas County. But due to the recession, that number has jumped every year until it reached 294 homeless students in the 2010-11 school year. Last year, the number dropped to 257 students.

The changes to the county’s SIP policy that Frazier discussed, and the board approved, were to create a uniform procedure for all schools and to be sure it complied with state and federal law.

Lisa Noonan, DCSD superintendent, reported that no offers have made to buy the old Kingsbury Middle School at 1900 Echo Drive, Zephyr Cove so the board agreed to continue advertising it for another three months.

A contract to do repaving work at CC Menley and Jack Valley elementary schools and Pau-Wa-Lu Middle School was awarded to West Coast Paving, the only bidder on the project.

Lyn Gorrindo, assistant superintendent of education services, presented changes to the school’s policy on temporary guardianship of students and parent conferencing as well as a new policy called “Recognition of Religious Beliefs and Customs.” All were approved for a first reading.

The board also continued to discuss developing a form and procedure for the board to self-evaluate its performance. A decision was tabled because Sharla Hales, board president, was absent.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Sierra Rose yacht waits to be resurrected

The Sierra Rose luxury yacht remains submerged in water at its dock in the Tahoe Keys Marina a couple days after it first sank.



The Sierra Rose at its dock on July 9. Photo/Anne Knowles

Local officials who are monitoring the incident said owner Mike Stewart is working with a crane operator to raise the boat out the water within the next few days.

“We were told they are trying to refloat the boat,” said Lauri Kemper, assistant executive officer of the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Lahontan Region.

The water control board was called to the marina early Monday morning along with other area agencies, including the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and the California Emergency

Management Agency, to ensure that the boat was not leaking oil or other fluids into the waters.

“We determined that they had a fuel tank full of diesel and a full sewage tank,” said Kemper, “but there were no leaks and the tanks were intact and completely sealed.”

“There are no environmental problems and it is being highly monitored by Lahontan, the TRPA, El Dorado County Environmental Management, Fish and Game, the South Lake Tahoe Police Department, the fire department and the Coast Guard,” said a spokesperson for the marina.

Robert Spinnota, the marina general manager, was not available for comment. Stewart, the boat’s owner, did not immediately return calls.

Stewart and several guests were on the boat early Monday morning when it began to sink, according to Lt. Dave Stevenson with SLTPD. *Lake Tahoe News* initially reported that no one was on the boat.

“The owner was onboard and a couple couples,” Stevenson told *Lake Tahoe News*. “The owner found the leak and everyone stepped off the boat and onto the dock.”

SLTPD is currently conducting a vessel accident report, but Stevenson said the cause of the problem appears to have been some kind of mechanical failure with the boat’s water system.

The 85-foot Sierra Rose is a multi-million dollar yacht available to rent for $2,000 a night. It sleeps six and, according to its web site, features a fully-appointed kitchen, two master bedrooms with private baths, hardwood floors, a closed circuit video system and a 20-foot, all-mahogany speed boat.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

How to keep kids happy on a long road trip

By Joshua Glenn and Elizabeth Foy Larsen, Slate

More of us will be traveling this summer, and travelers are increasingly seeking vacations with “substance.” For families, this can mean trading mouse ears for yoga mats, taking history tours, and spotting northern pintails in state and national parks.

There’s another advantage to such vacations with substance, of course: They can be money-savers. With airfares climbing, some airlines charging fees for families to sit together, and gas prices going down, more and more of us will be embarking on these soul-enriching outings in our cars. Unfortunately, for kids, there’s almost nothing meaningful about being strapped into the back of the family van while Missouri and Kansas whiz past. Not only are road trips boring, but they also require kids to sit still for hours on end, half-stoned on the same movies that are used to pacify them at home.

That’s a shame when you consider that most of us remember our pre-kid road trips so fondly. Part of the appeal of piling into a car with a group of buddies was that you’d inevitably get to know your fellow travelers in new, often surprising ways. From the minute you pulled into traffic, everyone tacitly agreed that for the course of the trip, the everyday rules of life would not apply. You’d eat differently, sleep differently, and have different kinds of conversations and experiences. In this liminal state, grown-ups often start to

act more like kids: A bag of Twizzlers transforms into a perfectly acceptable breakfast, and acting out scenes from Life of Brian suddenly becomes a completely rational way to get through a two-hour stretch of freeway.

Read the whole story

LTWC takes in two motherless cubs from Nevada City

Two motherless bear cubs captured in Nevada City last week are now at the Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care.

The California Department of Fish and Game delivered them to LTWC after the agency received a call and found the mother dead from an unknown cause and then trapped the cubs.

“I didn’t notice any trauma or a shot and scavengers had already gotten to her so it would be very difficult to determine the cause of death,” said Marc Kenyon, environmental scientist with the department’s black bear, wild pig and mountain lion program.

The bear cubs were transported Friday to LTWC, where they are being treated for body lice before they can be placed with three other bear cubs the sanctuary was already caring for.

“They were loaded with ticks and foxtails in their ears,” said Cheryl Millham who operates LWTC with her husband Tom.

Dr. Kevin Willitts, who owns Alpine Animal Hospital, treated the cubs, who weighed 25 pounds and 27 pounds, said Milham.

The cubs will stay at LTWC until the winter, when they will be

placed into hibernation, tranquilized and transported to a den prepared by Fish and Game.

Two of the cubs already at LTWC are from a case in North San Juan, north of Grass Valley, in which a man was found trying to sell them after killing their mother. The third cub was found in Hoopa, near Eureka.

Two other cubs were recently captured in Alpine Meadows when Fish and Game put down their mother after she broke into a house there. Because the cubs entered the home, too, Fish and Game is holding them while looking for a permanent home for them in a zoo or wildlife sanctuary rather than re-releasing them into the wild.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Placer County sheriff phasing in Chevy Tahoe as new patrol vehicle

The Placer County Sheriff's Office has started to phase in a new vehicle, the Chevy Tahoe two-wheel drive SUV. Sheriff's officials selected the Tahoe when Ford announced it would no longer manufacture the department's current patrol car, the Crown Victoria.

The sheriff's office evaluated the Chevy Tahoe, as well as available Ford and Chrysler products, and chose the Tahoe for the price, larger cargo area and its suitability for the county's varied terrain. The Tahoes are lower priced than the Crown Vics; they were purchased for $26,209 versus $28,348 for

the Ford vehicles.

The new patrol SUV’s also sport a new striping and lettering package. The reflective green stripe and gold lettering stand out from hundreds of yards away on the street.