Lake Tahoe News embarks on 3-part series about airport



Illustration: Joann Eisenbrandt

Allegiant Air was the last commercial airline to service Lake Tahoe Airport. The final flight was in August 2000.

Will commercial service return to South Tahoe?

Will the TRPA, League to Save Lake Tahoe and state Attorney General's Office let South Lake Tahoe do what it wants?

Have lessons been learned?

Will improvements to aircraft matter?

Will the noise of bickering be louder than that of the planes?

Read *Lake Tahoe News* July 5-7 as we delve into these issues.

Sobriety check in Incline

Village

The Nevada Highway Patrol, Washoe County Sheriff's Office, Sparks Police Department, and Carson City Sheriff's Office are planning a sobriety check point in Incline Village for the 4th of July holiday.

In addition to the check point, additional officers will be patrolling the area roadways throughout the weekend to look out for impaired drivers.

NHP also urges drivers to wear seat belts and refrain from using cell phones while driving.

Freedom of speech not guaranteed in the U.S.

By Dan Gillmor, Columbia Journalism Review

In December 2010, the major payment systems used to buy goods and services online decided that Wikileaks was no longer an acceptable customer. Mastercard, Visa, and PayPal summarily cut off service, putting Wikileaks into deep financial trouble and further marginalizing an organization that had become an object of fear and loathing inside the U.S. government and other centers of wealth and power.

While many in the new media world sounded an alarm, the response of journalists from legacy news organizations was mostly silence, except to take note of what had happened. By ignoring the implications of what had happened—a financial blockade of an organization engaged in recognizably

journalistic pursuits—traditional media people demonstrated how little they understood or appreciated the information ecosystem in which they also exist. And by failing to object, loudly, they gave tacit assent to tactics that should chill people who genuinely believe in free speech.

It was not the first time traditional journalists failed to grasp a fundamental reality: Governments and businesses are creating choke points inside that emerging ecosystem—points of control where interests unfriendly to journalism can create not just speed bumps on the fabled information highway, but outright barricades.

This is not just an issue for journalists in places like China or Saudi Arabia or Russia, where governments are creating more and more stringent restrictions on what people can say and do online. It is an American matter as well. In the developed world, Hollywood and other corporate interests have taken the lead in threatening the Internet's freewheeling nature—and they've had plenty of help from government.

The Obama administration has pushed gratifyingly hard to open up speech for dissidents in dictatorships, and decried censorship elsewhere. Yet the US government has also acted to curb online communications it deems objectionable. While this clampdown is often in service of the copyright lobby, the tactics have sometimes smacked more of authoritarian regimes than of the American tradition. The administration's campaign against Wikileaks and prosecutions of journalists' sources highlight the vulnerability of journalism, and the public's right to know, in this networked age, what government is doing in our names and with our money. Years ago, when mass media had achieved economies of scale that created significant barriers to entry, media critics worried about consolidation of a different kind. A small number of giant companies increasingly owned the media most Americans read, watched, and listened to each day. This was a legitimate fear, and while Congress allowed significant concentration it didn't allow

utter dominance by any single corporate entity. Even so, journalism was dominated by newspaper monopolists at the local level and a cozy oligopoly nationally.

In theory and, so far, mostly in practice, the Internet broke things open. We all came to own a printing press, we believed, and we could make what we created available to a potentially global audience.

But a new kind of corporate oligopoly is emerging. Coupled with increasingly controlling activities by government, often in concert with corporate interests, the new choke points threaten to re-centralize media, or at least return control to a few dominant parties. Who are they?

Start with telecommunications carriers. There are two main kinds: wired-line and mobile. Among the former, in most American communities there are, at most, two "broadband" service providers: the cable and phone companies. Keep in mind that both were at one time monopolies established with government protection. (Also keep in mind that cable is vastly superior in bandwidth in most places, in part due to the lack of fiber investment by the phone industry, and is rapidly becoming the de facto broadband provider where it's available.) These wired-line carriers believe that they should be able to decide what bits of information get delivered in what order and at what speed, if they get delivered at all. Think about what that means: the ability to play favorites in content. Most broadband carriers have instituted bandwidth caps; Comcast has even canceled the service of those who've used too much. Carriers are also becoming content providers themselves, as Comcast did when it bought NBC Universal, creating a plain conflict of interest.

This is why a principle called "network neutrality" has emerged in recent years. It essentially says that the carriers should not favor one kind of content, or conversation, over another. The carriers have challenged the Federal

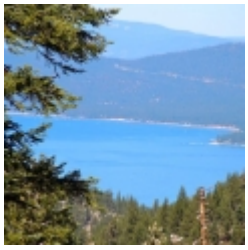
Communications Commission's tiny moves toward network neutrality, and it's not hard to see why. If they can have a duopoly, with little incentive to truly compete, they can use that dominance to cut deals with big content companies at the expense of smaller players, including what startup media operations might want to provide. And as the carriers become content providers themselves, the incentive to make these choices grows. Comcast says that its own streaming video service won't count against its bandwidth cap, unlike streaming video services it doesn't own; a loophole in the FCC's already-weak regulations may give the cable giant cover. (Note: I own a small number of shares in Netflix, which offers a video streaming service that does count against the cap.)

The serious potential for problems with wired-line broadband is nothing next to the actual situation with mobile carriers. They've already won the FCC's approval to discriminate in their network practices, and they have bandwidth limits a fraction the size of wired-line carriers' limits. Clearly they cannot handle the kind of traffic that a cable or DSL line can bear, given network limitations, but they're using relative scarcity to create customer-controlling business models. Recently, AT&T's mobile arm declared its interest in charging some application developers for preferred connections to their customers. Who could afford that? Companies like Facebook, certainly, but smaller players would be hard-pressed to compete in such an environment.

Read the whole story

Lake Tahoe venues among Nevada's best

Nevada magazine's annual poll of readers rates the state's best places to eat, drink and party, and two Lake Tahoe sites are among the winners this year.



Harvey's Lake Tahoe in Stateline was selected as best rural concert venue while Lake Tahoe-Nevada State Park in Incline Village won for best state park in northern Nevada.

Genoa also featured in several categories, including David Walley's Resort Hot Springs & Spa for a rural wedding venue and Genoa Lakes Golf Club & Resort for best rural golf course.

Read the whole story

Mitchell remains a strong voice in preserving Tahoe's past

By Susan Wood

With a glass of wine in hand and an incomparable view outside her Ski Run-area hilltop home, the woman who dedicated about half her life to Lake Tahoe history is sharing a bit of her own with a grateful community.

Betty Mitchell just turned 90 years old – but of course, one would never know it judging from her ongoing goals and the shape she's in. (The big party is this week.) She stacks her wood and still finds time to visit and help out at the museum run by the Lake Tahoe Historical Society, a group this charter member and past president has committed at least four decades to in South Lake Tahoe.

To many – Betty Mitchell is the Historical Society. Even Del Laine, herself a longtime anchor of this community, calls Mitchell "the heart of that organization." To think, she hated history as a child.

"Now they do a good job (of teaching it), but when I was a kid, they presented it badly. It was a bore," Mitchell said. The UC Berkeley grad had no interest in memorizing war years. She wanted to know why events occurred.

Nonetheless, Mitchell's blossoming interest in history came from her roots. Her father was a history buff, and like him, she would "shudder at the thought of losing everything," meaning the archives and artifacts that define an area.

"Here we have the best trails, the best lakes and the best beaches. They could have done so much more. They've put the emphasis in the wrong places. This year, they're finally putting the emphasis on

recreation. I'm glad to see that." — Betty Mitchell

"And that's what was happening here," she said of South Lake Tahoe.



Her involvement in the Historical Society has kept her healthy, moving and active. After all, it's difficult to think of a Cal alumni who majored in social services sitting and watching the world go by without participating.

Mitchell is modest, but not meek by any means.

In 1958, she and her late husband, Tom, moved to the Bijou area on Janet Avenue.

Back then, "Glenwood only went that far," she recalled. The Mitchells discovered they had to arrange for their two children, Pat and Linda, to get to school because the bus would only put neighborhoods on the route that housed at least seven students. This one had six.

Learning was crucial to the schoolteachers of the household. After serving as a pilot in the Army, Tom spent a lifetime in the teaching profession. After a career in social services, mainly in the San Joaquin Valley, Betty became a substitute teacher when their children were in school. The Livingston High School sweethearts moved here because "Tahoe had the best salaries for Tom," she said.

And of all the places to live, there was a prerequisite beyond money.

“I’m a mountain kid,” she said.

The Mitchells were accustomed to small towns with small schools. Betty represented one of five students who attended the two-room Yosemite (National Park) Grammar School, which still stands today.

“It still looks like it did when I was a kid,” she said.

The Mitchells seldom missed the every five-year reunion of their high school.

Eight years after moving to Tahoe, the couple had their Ski Run-area home built. It’s a homey house that has Betty’s character written all over it. The Declaration of Independence hangs on one wall. Antique bottles line the top of the kitchen cabinets. Tom’s Merced ranch homestead deed signed by President Andrew Johnson adorns another wall.

Despite the important hangings, the Mitchell home is dominated by windows. “You’d never be allowed to put this many windows in this house today,” she said, referring to TRPA rules.

The views are as rich with history and memories as the house.

One whole wall provides a panoramic mountain view, with Pyramid Peak dominating the landscape. During the Angora Fire five years ago, she watched in horror as the blaze crested the ridge and teased the Fallen Leaf Lake community.

“I saw that and wondered about Barbara (Craven),” Mitchell said of her friend, another longtime South Shore matriarch.

Five years before that, Mitchell was tested when the Gondola Fire raged up the ridge and threatened residents in the Saddle Road-Needle Peak area before the wind shifted and the blaze headed east.

The view of Lake Tahoe takes up another wall. And on the other side, she looks out at Heavenly Mountain Resort's Gunbarrel chairlift and Olympic run. In the winter, the twosome watched the ski activity – sometimes through binoculars for greater detail.

He'd announce when ski patrol were "bringing another body down," Mitchell says of her husband.

But in 1960, it was Squaw Valley that provided one of the most memorable times in Tahoe during Mitchell's 54 years here. The South Shore was also involved – mostly with building a bed base for the huge world-renowned endeavor. Beforehand, she and Tom worked as timers for pre-Olympic races.

Civic involvement was the mantra of the Mitchells.

Betty has been a member of Soroptimist International South Lake Tahoe since 1969 and once served as president. She was also on the first Sierra Nevada Region Public Affairs Committee.

Her involvement in women's issues became the guiding principle on what she chose to volunteer for. She led the Soroptimist club's El Dorado County Commission on the Status of Women and was a founding member of the South Lake Tahoe Women's Center (now called Live Violence Free). She even became the executive director for one year. She also was a member of the Lake Tahoe Children's Theatre throughout the 1960s.

Together, the Mitchells were among three couples who spearheaded the drive for the city of South Lake Tahoe to incorporate, because as Betty saw it: "There were no rules, and we needed some."

The incorporation was spawned out of a desire for city services such as snow removal and public safety.

"She's one of the tireless people who joined an effort or

cause and works at it, works at it and works at it," said Laurel Ames, another Tahoe pioneer who organized the city effort. She's known Betty for about 50 years and characterizes her as "warm, engaging and outgoing."

"You know that if you call her up and ask a question, she'll have the answer," Ames told *Lake Tahoe News*. Ames considers Betty as the "glue" of the community.

Betty supported her husband's independent ventures as well.

Late after the city incorporated, Tom served on the city Planning Commission. The panel witnessed a lot of action when it came to the early stages of the sign ordinance. To this day, the controversial rule dictates what type of and how many signs may be placed on city streets. Betty remembered the politics ran rampant – especially on an issue plagued with perceived favoritism. Tom didn't budge at not giving exceptions for the biggest businesses in town. The *San Francisco Chronicle* ran the story when most reporting agencies were afraid to.

"It was really kind of typical. In small town USA, you decide if you want to live some place, and the reasons you do, and you know you have to put up with stuff," she said. "I feel connected to Tahoe. The things I like about it are still here. I don't want to live anywhere else."

Regardless of her love for Tahoe, there was a time Betty was pushed over the edge.

When *Sunset* magazine published a spread about a dozen years ago about Tahoe, it featured the recreation and beauty of the North Shore while the South Shore was shown as a haven for gambling. She grabbed the magazine known as the bible of Western culture, drove to the South Lake Tahoe Chamber of Commerce office and left it on Executive Director Duane Wallace's desk. He wasn't there.

“I was so mad. I wished he had been there. Here we have the best trails, the best lakes and the best beaches. They could have done so much more,” Mitchell said of the *Sunset* magazine spread. “They’ve put the emphasis in the wrong places. This year, they’re finally putting the emphasis on recreation. I’m glad to see that.”

Her own favorite hike is above Red Lake to Winnemucca Lake, a hotbed for wildflowers and one place where Betty dropped some of her husband’s ashes after he died of cancer in 1994.

Despite her time with her children, three grandchildren and two great-grandchildren and her cat Buster plus her involvement with the California Widowed Persons Association, Betty admitted: “You never stop missing.”

Memories abound of her adventures with Tom. She recalled joining others to do her preferred hike in a one-way shuttle with one vehicle parked at Woods Lake and another at the Carson Pass trailhead.

And it was Betty’s vehicle Laine could remember most as the lighter side of this Tahoe mover and shaker’s life – “a larger-than-life utility vehicle” upon which a passing motorist would need to strain to see her behind the wheel.

“We all knew it was Betty on the way – short of height but never short of stature,” Laine told *Lake Tahoe News*. “Betty has been a strong force in the bedrock of the South Shore community and remains so today with her dedication to the history of our region.”

Toiletries make a difference with travelers

By Bee-Shyuan Chang, New York Times

Since she's been hopscotching hotels across the country for the last six years, touring as the violinist for the Brooklyn-based band Ra Ra Riot, Rebecca Zeller has had ample opportunity to inspect in-room skin care amenities. "It definitely matters what's on the sink," said Zeller, 28. "It's always a little bit of a reward, especially after a long flight."

Zeller particularly enjoyed the full-size Cowshed products lining the showers at the Soho House's High Road House in London. And in remote Marfa, Tex., an insider brand made an impression. "They have a cool hotel there called Thunderbird that has Malin & Goetz products," she said. "We were bowled over."

But she was disappointed by one so-called boutique hotel owned by a national chain. "They had this generic shampoo and body wash all-in-one dispenser literally installed in the shower, like at a bad gym," Zeller said.

As Americans and Europeans head into prime travel season, the hospitality industry has been upgrading soaps, shampoos and conditioners, switching hotel-branded bottles for the kind of fancy names you might find in a department store or newfangled apothecary.

Read the whole story

Pancake breakfast benefits Meeks Bay firefighters

The Meeks Bay Volunteer Firefighters Association's 44th annual Pancake Breakfast is July 7-8.

This popular fundraising event has been called "the best of its kind" in the area, and draws repeat visitors year after year. Proceeds from the breakfast benefit the Volunteer Firefighters Association, which donates much needed equipment to the Meeks Bay Fire Protection District.

Breakfast will be served from 8am to noon and will include pancakes, famous Meeks Bay Fire jumbo sausages, applesauce, milk, coffee, orange juice, and plenty of butter and maple syrup.

Meeks Bay T-shirts, sweats, aprons, and other logo items will be available for purchase as well as the best selling Meeks Bay Fire Ladies Auxiliary Cookbook. "Fire Chief" helmets will be available for the "little chiefs" visiting the station.

Breakfast is $9 for adults (over 12 years), $6 for children (6–11), and free for little ones under 5 years. Meet the Firefighters, get information on Defensible Space and home safety, and see the fire engines and apparatus. All will be on display for inspection by "children" of all ages..

Grant will help Nevada measure student achievement

By Sean Whaley, Nevada News Bureau

CARSON CITY – Nevada's Department of Education has been awarded a $4 million grant from the Institute of Education Sciences to develop a system to measure individual student achievement over time.

Nevada was one of 24 states to receive funding to support the design and implementation of Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems.

The grant will come to Nevada in a three-year cycle. The funds will allow the Nevada Department of Education much needed access to link, by the use of one unique student identifier, students starting from pre-kindergarten through high school and following them through postsecondary education and workforce development.

Gov. Brian Sandoval has asked that this data be used to both improve student outcomes and to fill Nevada's diverse economic job needs.

"All the accountability measures we have enacted require better use of data," Sandoval said. "This grant will move Nevada closer to a fully integrated system that follows learners from childhood to adulthood."

Julian Montoya, assistant director of Assessment Data and Program Accountability, said: "Having this type of P-20W data will allow us to develop an early warning system. With an early warning system, we can direct students to the type of college or career ready jobs and into a field which will allow them a successful outcome for both the student and their state."

Sandoval issued an executive order on Oct. 7, 2011, asking a state education panel to take the necessary steps to create a system to track students through their school years, following in the steps of other states as part of an overarching effort to reform education and improve student performance in Nevada. The grant is an important component of the effort.

That group, the P-16 Council, is working on the issue and will meet again July 5.

A national report showed that Nevada made progress in this effort in 2011. The Data Quality Campaign's seventh annual state analysis, Data for Action 2011, shows that states have made major progress building their student data systems. More states than ever – 36, up from zero in 2005, including Nevada – have implemented all of DQC's 10 Essential Elements of Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems.

Reno fire grows to 70 acres, no structures threatened

Reno Gazette-Journal

Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District Fire Chief Charles Moore said a Nevada Division of Forestry helicopter is also responding to the Pinehaven Fire.

He said the fire will ultimately be in Reno's jurisdiction.

"We were a unified command with Reno but I believe it's transitioning to a Reno command and we may be minimizing our role here fairly soon," Moore said.

1:30 p.m. update: The Pinehaven Fire has grown to 70 acres,

but is not threatening any structures, said Christie Kalkowski, a spokeswoman for the Sierra Front Interagency Dispatch Center.

Ground crews with 60 responders are on scene. Two single-engine air tankers are also attacking the blaze.

Read the whole story

Sleeping man attacked by mountain lion

By Matt Weiser, Sacramento Bee

A man was attacked by a mountain lion near Nevada City early Sunday while sleeping alongside a tributary of the Yuba River.

The California Department of Fish and Game confirmed the unusual attack after investigating the scene and the man's injuries.

Fish and Game said the man was traveling through Nevada County on a planned hiking trip when he decided to stop for the night to sleep. He laid a sleeping bag out on the ground and went to sleep. Around 1 a.m., he was attacked in the sleeping bag by a mountain lion for what he described as 90 seconds to 2 minutes.

The man said the animal bit and clawed him through the sleeping bag, through a cap he was wearing and through his clothes. The lion ceased the attack, looked at him from 15 feet away for another 15 to 30 seconds, then ran into the night.

Read the whole story