S. Tahoe students get a dose of ag education



Chris and Tom Celio of Meyers talk about how they use pack animals today in the Tahoe basin. Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

CAMP RICHARDSON – Small hands are sifting through the sand, dirt and top soil; others are getting a lesson in how pack animals are still used in the basin; another group is getting educated about fire.

These were just a few of the 29 presentations that nearly 700 third- and fourth-graders were visiting at Camp Richardson on Sept. 22 as part of Ag in the Classroom day. Each group was able to go to six of the stations throughout the day.

Ryder Preston is pouring a container of water into grass that looks like it is growing out of a gutter that has been cut in half. It's taking a while for the water to reach the bucket at the other end. This is proving how grass absorbs a ton of water. And at the end the water is yellowish. It started out pristine. Nutrients in the fertilizer help cause the discoloration.



Students get to feel soil as Brian Hirdman teaches them about what materials are good for growing plants.

Aaron Hussmann with the League to Save Lake Tahoe is demonstrating what a winter storm does when it hits different things on the ground – dirt, grass, wood chips with plants, and then what the water looks like that comes out at the other end.

This is the third year Tahoe students have been able to participate in the hands-on lessons, whereas it has been going on in Placerville for 14 years.

Avis Jolly, who runs the program, said this age group is targeted because they are able to grasp the various lessons that are being taught and it introduces them to things they

may not have been aware of. Teachers are given curriculum they may use before and/or after the field trip to continue on with science and other lessons.



Aaron Hussmann with the League to Save Lake Tahoe has third-grader Ryder Preston demonstrate how long it takes water to pass through sod.

One of those things is how important agriculture is to El Dorado County's economy. Apples are the No. 1 commodity, with grapes and timber near the top.

Chris and Tom Celio are on the far side of the grounds with their horse Dusty. He is used for packing and riding. Celio horses have been working in the basin since the 1800s when they used to bring milk from Meyers to Camp Richardson. Today, they carry tools, water and gravel for crews who are doing trail work for the Tahoe Rim Trail Association and U.S. Forest Service.



Amy Jo Storlie colors a watershed.

For Amy Jo Storlie, she liked the nutrition station where she learned she should probably be eating more protein, vegetables and fruits. At the watershed area she and her Sierra House Elementary third-grade classmates were coloring a photo to demonstrate what a watershed is.

“It’s important for kids to learn the lifecycle of food,” Adam Jones, Lake Tahoe Unified School District board member, told *Lake Tahoe News* as he toured the various stations. “This helps connect students to the land.”

When Americans understood weather was connected to larger forces

By Sean Munger

Two hundred years ago this week, the Great September Gale

struck New England. The “gale” swamped the coastlines of five states with storm surges up to 15 feet. It reduced dozens of ships in Boston, Providence, and other harbors to matchsticks, and destroyed houses, churches, and barns from Long Island to New Hampshire. Forests were leveled, with trees torn up at the roots. High winds hurled broken glass, bricks, and slate roof tiles through the streets of urban areas. The storm bent the steeple of Old South Church in Boston. Most modern sources record the death toll at 38, but it could have been considerably higher.

Though people didn’t use the word “hurricane” much back then, it assuredly was one, most likely a Category 4. The Great September Gale was the second major hurricane to strike New England since the coming of white settlers, and since that time, only the famous “Long Island Express” hurricane of 1938 is believed to have been more destructive.

I came upon the Great September Gale while I was researching Americans’ perceptions of climate during the 1810s. This decade is particularly interesting because the climate all around the world temporarily cooled for about a decade. And at the same time, many social institutions, including science, were in significant transition. The September Gale is one of numerous weather and climate events that people remembered and recorded, especially in their diaries. Some peoples’ descriptions of the 1815 gale took me back to a tornado I experienced as a teenager in Nebraska in 1988. After that storm, the streets of Omaha filled with branches and bricks, much like Boston’s after the gale. When I read a newspaper account, the centuries just telescoped into a common moment in time.

Hurricanes have loomed large in our consciousness lately. Last month, the nation observed the 10th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, an event whose meaning and legacy we are still quite painfully trying to evaluate. Unlike Katrina, the New England hurricane of September 1815 did not cause significant

demographic shifts or provoke hard questions about our responsibilities to care for each other in disaster situations, but it does provide an opportunity to consider Americans' attitudes toward storms—and our climate—then and now.

In 1815, most New Englanders called events of this size and intensity a "gale" or "tempest." In an era before detailed weather forecasting became widespread, people tended to view extreme weather events as simply a natural feature of the places where they lived. Their understanding of weather and scientific phenomena came from the kind of earthy knowledge, colored by folklore and astrology, found in popular farmers' almanacs. For example, the Boston-published Physician's Almanac for June 1817 is a dizzying jumble of planetary and zodiac symbols and precise notations of tides and solar positions. Simple advice such as, "Good weather for vegetation, if not too cold," and "Look for much rain," is interspersed with platitudes and sayings such as, "Weakness is the only incorrigible fault men have."

Americans' views about weather and climate in the 1810s were more holistic than ours today. Gales and tempests were related, many people thought, to phenomena like lightning, volcanism, and earthquakes. The 1815 storm occurred only a few years after the powerful New Madrid earthquakes in Missouri commanded public attention, and less than a year before the bizarre climate anomalies of the "Year Without Summer" (1816)—which involved snowstorms in June and killing frosts in the dog days of August. In the 1810s, the idea of an "electric fluid" surrounding and suffusing the world—disturbances in which manifested themselves as earthquakes, waterspouts, hurricanes, and thunderstorms—was quite mainstream. "[A]ll observation convinces us," wrote one author in an 1812 article in the *Port-Folio*, referring to this electric fluid, "that these phenomena are marked by its presence and arise from its agency." For most people the Earth, the oceans, atmosphere and

the heavens above it were all interconnected systems like those of a human body.

We ask very different kinds of questions today about the weather—and they mostly concern the future. Is that tropical depression going to become a hurricane? How strong is it going to be? Where will it come ashore? Many of the factors that made Katrina such a painful experience involved this future dimension, centering upon questions about what authorities should have known or done in advance of the storm's landfall. It's right that we ask these questions; the people of Boston and Providence could not prepare for the 1815 gale in advance. When they talked about weather, their preoccupations centered mostly on agricultural concerns: when to plant your winter wheat and when frosts could be expected that might damage your corn. Their conception of future weather was vague and mostly cyclical, tethered very tightly to natural rhythms observed in previous seasons. For them, the most important weather was that of the past.

Our current emphasis on weather in the future tense—and our reliance upon minutely specialized fields of expertise to explain scientific questions—has made it harder for us to appreciate specific weather events as part of a global ecosystem. Hurricanes are not a singular phenomenon. They are powered by warm sea surface temperatures and set in motion by wind patterns. The scientific consensus is that industries and other human activity are affecting these processes, driving up sea surface temperatures, increasing the intensity of hurricanes. Yet the connection between climate change and hurricanes is somewhat murky in public consciousness because it's impossible to prove that this individual hurricane or that one was "caused" by global warming. The compartmentalization and specialization of modern scientific disciplines has greatly increased our overall scientific understanding, but sometimes it makes it harder for us to see the forest for the trees.

For many New Englanders in 1815, it was intuitively obvious that everything in the sky, and most everything on the ground, was connected somehow to everything else. It would have come as no surprise to vintners in 1815 New England that wine grapes harvested in the aftermath of the Great September Gale tasted like salt. Some took the interconnectedness a step further, seeing in it a higher meaning. Shortly after the gale, a deeply religious young woman wrote in her diary, "[W]ho can tell what providence has designed by this judgment? We cannot think 'tis sent for nothing."

In 2015, we obviously know much more about hurricanes than we did 200 years ago, but looking back closely and carefully can be useful, too. History is more than a laundry list of problems or mistakes that we keep solely so we can avoid repeating them. Sometimes it's a reminder that the view from the present can be more narrow and restrictive than the view from the past.

Sean Munger is a doctoral candidate at the University of Oregon in environmental history. He is studying environmental history during the "Cold Decade," a period of temporary climate change between 1810 and 1820.

Flu vaccine expected to be better this year

By Victoria Colliver, San Francisco Chronicle

Federal health officials are urging Americans to start getting their influenza shots and emphasized that, unlike last year,

this year’s vaccine appears to be a good match with the strains of flu they expect to hit the U.S.

More than 170 million doses of the vaccine are being produced, 40 million of which have already been distributed to doctors’ offices and pharmacies. No shortages are predicted.

Global and national health experts hope to avoid a repeat of last year’s debacle when the predominant strain of flu – a variation of Type A, subtype H3N2 – had mutated from what scientists initially thought it would be. By that time, it was too late to create a new vaccine, which takes about six months to develop. By the time a new vaccine would have been created and distributed, the flu season, which generally runs from December through early spring, would have already begun.

Read the whole story

SLT councilwoman banned from talking to staff

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe City Councilwoman JoAnn Conner is no longer allowed to speak to city staff.

This edict came about last week after a closed session meeting in which the agenda item was the city manager’s review.



JoAnn Conner

City Manager Nancy Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News* on Monday that as a result of the review Conner is to have no interaction with staff and staff is not to engage Conner.

Kerry would not say why this occurred or why Conner is being singled out.

City Attorney Tom Watson, who met with department heads and had meetings with other staff about the new protocol, passed down the directive. All communication involving Conner is to go through him.

Watson deferred comment to the City Council.

Mayor Hal Cole and Councilman Tom Davis said it was a personnel matter and therefore they could not talk about it. Councilmember Wendy David told *Lake Tahoe News*, "Council is committed to running a professional organization where we can move our city forward in the best way possible." Councilman Austin Sass could not be reached.

Conner, who has one year left on her four-year term, acted like she wasn't aware of the communication ban when *Lake Tahoe News* called Sept. 21.

"I have to make some phone calls to find out what is going on," she said.

About 30 minutes later she emailed saying, "It is unfortunate internal issues have been made public. I generally deny any allegations and look forward to working with my colleagues to

resolve any issues and move forward with positive accomplishments."

However, 30 minutes before she was to attend the Sept. 21 Waste Management JPA meeting as the city's representative Conner lined up alternate Davis to fill in.

Conner is known to have a short temper, and use profanity and derogatory words verbally and in writing. Her targets have been staff, elected officials and community members.

Duane Wallace, who is a member of the chamber Conner used to be president of, said, "She can be very caustic to people who disagree with her. I think I'm just one of a bunch."

During the paid parking brouhaha Conner verbally berated people outside Grocery Outlet who were against the measure.

Former City Councilwoman Brooke Laine told *Lake Tahoe News*, "She would use colorful words to refer to me when she was talking to other people in the city."

Instead of using Laine's name, Conner's favorite two words for her were "f—ing b—-."

Laine had multiple examples of how Conner acted as a bully toward her beyond the name-calling.

Conner has been a bully for much of her tenure on the council. This was first documented in a column on ***Lake Tahoe News*** **in October 2013**.

While Conner has the right to be a bully and say what she wants, as a city councilmember she is an employer. She and the other councilmembers are the employers of Kerry and Watson.

Kerry and Watson, and the city as a whole, could be held liable if they don't take action to protect the rest of the staff. A handful of employees have approached the city attorney asking for guidance in how to deal with Conner's

abuse. No communication is one way staff can be protected.

Aside from the verbal and written abuse, there are staff members who are leery of crossing Conner in any manner because she has a concealed weapon permit and often has her gun in her purse at meetings.

Nevada missed worst of West's wildfire season

By Sean Whaley, Las Vegas Review-Journal

CARSON CITY – Wildland fires don't discriminate by geography, but due in part to some help from Mother Nature and just plain old luck Nevada has so far avoided the carnage seen elsewhere out West this summer.

For the season to date there have been 501 fires that have burned 42,153 acres in the Silver State, said Mike Klug with the Nevada Division of Forestry. Lightning caused 326 of the blazes while human activities accounted for the remainder.

The state saw 59,252 acres burned in 2014 and 162,841 acres burned in 2013, which was significant for Southern Nevada because of the Carpenter 1 fire. Nearly 30,000 acres of the Mount Charleston area burned in that fire in July 2013.

By comparison, nearly 1.9 million acres burned in Nevada in 1999, a record year for wildfires.

Read the whole story

Truckee being proactive about climate change



Truckee is taking steps to get a handle on climate change. Photo/LTN file

By Linda Fine Conaboy

TRUCKEE —Truckee Town Manager Tony Lashbrook last week said it is imperative the town starts acting on climate change.

This comes two months after he said that because of its location Truckee is not required to do climate action planning, but that big monetary incentives make it desirable to do so.

Lashbrook and others representing invested entities presented a second workshop, this time to Truckee Donner Chamber of Commerce members and guests, on Sept. 15. As this issue has heated up in the last two months with climate change being a factor in the drought and wildfires, so has the town's knowledge base.

The consensus was to get a handle on climate change now. Judging by questions and comments, this audience has gone beyond questioning the reality of climate change, and is anxious to move forward.

People at the meeting not only endorse things like charging stations for electric cars (eight are planned), one man said he's ready to purchase a hydrogen-powered vehicle. It just so happens that one of the two Shell gas stations in town is in the process of installing a hydrogen fuel pump. Hydrogen emits only water from a vehicle's tailpipe, not carbon dioxide and other nasty elements.

This Nevada County town is a part of the state's "fishhook," Steve Frisch, president of Sierra Business Council explained. As such, it is not required to have formal plans to address a changing climate. These counties are more rural with not enough population to become part of a metropolitan planning organization, and, consequently, not able to apply for some of the grants from the pots of funding available through California's MPO program. Because Truckee is outside the Tahoe basin is cannot be part of the Tahoe MPO established through the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

However, according to Greg Jones, vice president of the Sierra Business Council, and Frisch, this pot, funded by federal cap and trade regulation, is large, more than $2 billion in 2013-15, and guaranteed to grow in coming years. And it's worth going after Truckee's share.

To do this, Truckee has developed a process to address climate action planning, focusing on those activities that can be achieved in a cost effective manner. This includes, among other things, a greenhouse gas inventory, and maybe even more important, public engagement, Jones said.

In fact, in his presentation, public engagement is mentioned many times, along with conducting a greenhouse gas inventory,

establishing attainable greenhouse gas reduction targets, and creating a process to implement reductions and monitoring and track results.

He added that some of the benefits of a climate action plan include: saving taxpayers money, enhancing the economy, and job creation.

Since time was short and there were several speakers, each presented a pared-down version of what their organizations are doing in the pursuit of decreasing greenhouse gas emissions.

Steve Poncelet, public information officer and conservation manager at Truckee Donner Public Utilities District, said Truckee Donner PUD hasn't had a rate increase in years, while generating more than $800,000 annually as a cap and trade seller.

He also said TDPUD's water conservation programs are strong and that according to data, the use of charging stations is up. The question now is where to locate them. According to Poncelet, it costs $1 per hour to charge a vehicle.

Greg Sorenson, the president of Liberty Utilities, took a turn at the podium explaining his company has 49,000 customers locally who make use of Liberty's clean and renewable power generation, for the time being purchased from NV Energy. He added that 23 percent of the company's energy comes from renewable sources and that by 2016 that number will increase to 25 percent.

Liberty energy efficiency programs include: in-home energy audits, free CFL bulbs, refrigerator and freezer recycling and incentives for public schools to save energy. Additionally, the residential carbon credit program allows customers to generate their own power – net metering.

In 2016, pending approval, the company will offer a solar incentive program available to residential and commercial

customers and will establish a **50-megawatt power generating plant** in Luning, Nev.

“People are generating their own energy,” Sorenson said. “But they’re not on the grid. The argument is, when a customer needs the grid, how do they pay?”

To his way of thinking, there is no good solution to this problem yet. “How much contribution from solar customers should there be?” he asked. “There are still lots of questions to be answered. For example, what happens on cloudy days? How do you plan for intermittent outages? It’s coming down to storage and distribution.”

The path to sustainable energy and corralling greenhouse emissions remains somewhat bumpy, but Truckee is taking the challenge.

“We’re committed to moving forward with our greenhouse gas inventory,” Lashbrook said. “Once we scope that, we’re looking for money, several hundred thousand dollars. Even though we don’t have a plan yet, there’s a lot of good, effective work being done.”

Marlowe – Longtime South Shore doc retiring

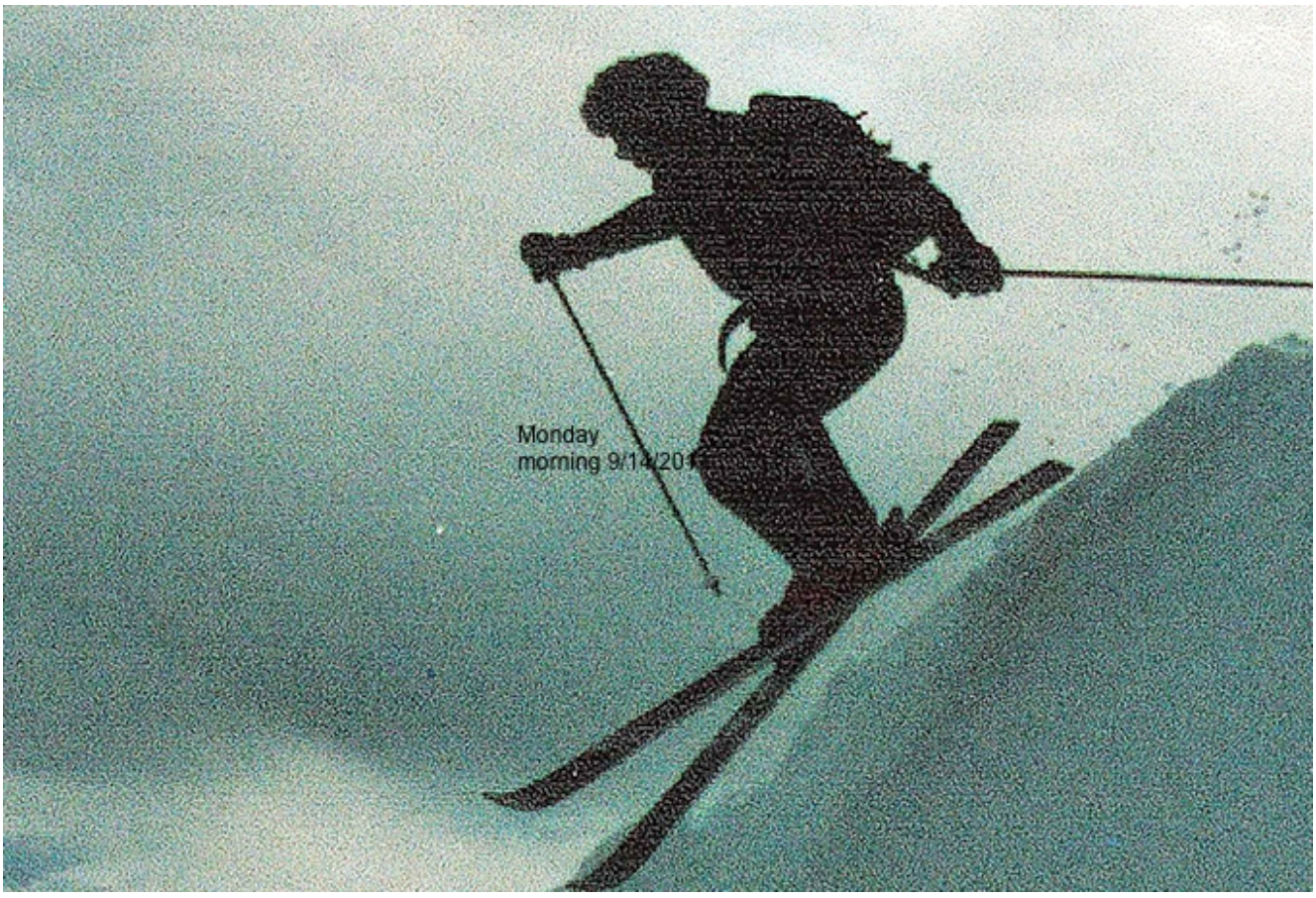
By Angela Moniot

Longtime physician Paul Marlowe this month will say farewell to his patients and the urgent care practice where he has provided care for 32 years as he embarks on an adventure with his. wife Lorraine.

The uniquely quirky and endearing Marlowe is known throughout the community for providing exceptional care since 1983.

Growing up in Oakland, Marlowe spent the winters visiting Lake Tahoe and remembers skiing at Squaw Valley during its second season of operation. Skiing has always been a longtime passion of Marlowe's. He was the team captain for his college ski team at UC Berkeley. While attending Cal, Marlowe fell in love with photography and recalls taking photos of campus protests against the Vietnam War.

"I was busy dodging tear gas and taking photographs of history in the making. I would be on the riot side avoiding rocks and tear gas taking pictures with Kodachrome 64," he said.



Paul Marlowe skiing at Kirkwood. Photo/ Steve Brooks

After receiving his undergraduate degree from UC Berkeley, Marlowe moved to Tahoe to coach skiing at Ski Incline (now Diamond Peak) and save money for medical school. While working

at Ski Incline, he also met his wife-to-be, Lorraine, who he adoringly calls his “dolly and the love of my life.”

Marlowe went on to attended medical school at the University Autonoma de Guadalajara, Mexico.

“Lorraine and I headed to Mexico in our Mercury Montego station wagon filled with books and toys. We would spend our free time collecting butterflies and roasting coffee. It was such a blast,” he said.

The couple returned to the United States and married in Incline Village and celebrated their honeymoon during a 45-mile backpacking trip near Kirkwood. Following his medical residency in Kentucky, Marlowe returned to Lake Tahoe to begin practicing medicine.

“Being a doc is totally cool. I get to wear a rubber tie [as he pulls on his stethoscope], kill bugs – the bacterial type – and make people happy,” Marlowe says. “It has been a great adventure and I have had the pleasure of working with the most remarkable team. Our office is what text books should be written about. I will miss our wonderful staff and patients.”

Longtime medical partner and family practice physician, Steven Brooks remembers the first time he spoke with Marlowe about starting an urgent care clinic at Tahoe together.

“I was in Chicago in a hospital looking at films with the radiologist and I took the call from Paul regarding the job opportunity at Stateline Medical Center, which is now Barton Urgent Care, in LakeTahoe. We had a nice chat regarding the setup of the facility and then he told me, ‘If you decide to move here be sure to bring your snorkel because there is so much powder you’ll need it!’ That statement closed the deal for me and we have been practicing together for over 30 years.”

Brooks continues to say that he could not have asked for a

better partner, colleague or friend.

“Paul is the kindest most caring person I’ve ever known, in addition to being an outstanding physician. His diagnostic skills are amazing and he takes the time with each patient to know exactly what is going on with them. I know I’ll probably never meet anyone like him again, he is irreplaceable. He has clearly earned his retirement but I will miss seeing his smiling face in our clinic. It’s going to be sad but knowing that he and Lorraine will be enjoying their retirement together full time makes me happy,” Brooks said.

When Marlowe isn’t treating patients, he enjoys mountain biking, skiing, canoeing, photography and traveling. While you can spot him skiing the trees out at Kirkwood, he often spends winter days in the backcountry skiing favorites like Mt. Tallac and Elephants Back.

The Marlowes’ next adventure will take them to their favorite places.

“We are going to hitch up our trailer and drive around America to see the big furries in the Tetons, hear the elk bugle during rut, and see Nebraska’s Sandhill Cranes migration. Nature is so much fun,” he said.

U.S. has growing love affair with bottled water

By Tara Lohan, AlterNet

This spring, as California withered in its fourth year of

drought and mandatory water restrictions were enacted for the first time in the state's history, a news story broke revealing that Nestlé Waters North America was tapping springs in the San Bernardino National Forest in Southern California using a permit that expired 27 years ago.

And when the company's CEO Tim Brown was asked on a radio program if Nestlé would stop bottling water in the Golden State, he replied, "Absolutely not. In fact, if I could increase it, I would." That's because bottled water is big business, even in a country where most people have clean, safe tap water readily and cheaply available. (Although it should be noted that Starbucks agreed to stop sourcing and manufacturing their Ethos brand water in California after being drought-shamed.)

In 2014 bottled water companies spent more than $84 million on advertising to compete with each other and to convince consumers that bottled water is healthier than soda and safer than tap. And it seems to be paying off: Americans have an increasing love of bottled water, particularly those half-liter-sized single-use bottles that are ubiquitous at every check-out stand and in every vending machine. According to Beverage Marketing Corporation, a data and consulting firm, in the last 14 years consumption of bottled water in the U.S. has risen steadily, with the only exception being a quick dip during the 2008-09 recession.

Read the whole story

Hundreds gather to celebrate South Lake Tahoe



South Lake Tahoe celebrates its 50 years with a parade on Sept. 19. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Susan Wood

Tears of joy and sentiment. Cheers of happiness and celebration.

In a burst of community pride, hundreds of people gathered Saturday on Highway 50 and Al Tahoe Boulevard leading into Bijou Community Park to mark a picture-perfect day for a parade and party to honor South Lake Tahoe's 50th anniversary.

For most longtime residents and even some newbies, it was one of the city's finest hours, or two, to witness 67 parade entries of floats, walkers, classic cars, fire trucks and appropriately a snowplow make its way through town that morning. Although the official 50th birthday falls in

November, the city and its citizenry took full advantage of clear blue skies and warm temperatures to honor the past, present and future of this resilient mountain town nestled in the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range.



South Lake Tahoe is celebrating the past and future. Photo/Kathryn Reed

“I’ve waited 26 years for this. What a good day to celebrate and see a little bit of history. Look there’s Old Smokey, putting out our fires,” said Kimberly Jamison, who runs the Mailbag at Highway 50 and Tahoe Keys Boulevard.

Jamison has lived on the South Shore for a quarter century and believes the most memorable times are the ones in which the residents celebrate what they share – community spirit.

She was joined on the corner in front of the shopping center where her business is located by a brand-new resident. The group enjoyed the old cars honoring the classes as far back as 1965, the city’s inaugural year.



Mayor Hal Cole spoke of how the city is on a path to making positive improvements. Photo/Kathryn Reed

“We’ve moved a lot, and we’ve never moved anywhere where it’s been so welcoming,” said Jessica Branson. She brought her three children Jonah, 10, Trevor, 7, and Nolan, 6, to the parade route to witness the spectacle. “We love it here.”

Up the highway, Kevin and Sheri Livingston came from Gardnerville and staged themselves near Al Tahoe Boulevard to cheer on their son Daniel. The 14-year-old boy marched in the Civil Air Patrol, a task his parents said he had looked forward to for quite a while.

“He wanted to be involved in a community project,” his father said.

Children who were spectators seemed just as engaged during the parade.

In a demonstration of community pride among three generations, grandma Sandy Jones joined her daughter Samantha Jones with her daughter Kiki, 6 – who attends Sierra House Elementary School, to watch the city throw its street party.

Sandy has lived with her daughter here for 30 years and wasn't going to miss it. The two huddled together, identifying participants as they went by. One of them yelled happy birthday to Samantha.



Mark Allen with Tahoe SUP. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Dance instructor Marcia Sarosik knows so many people, she fell behind her float and group who shimmied to "Dancing in the Streets." She ran down the street with a mock Olympic torch. Sarosik ran a leg of it in 2002 when the torch graced the town on its way to Salt Lake City.

The elder Jones reflected back on the past, recalling small, homespun parades in the late 1980s at Tahoe Valley. The youngest said she liked the present day, filled with ribbons and balloons. Kiki waited patiently for her cousin Emerson Hawkins, 9, to walk with the Lake Tahoe Vikings Pop Warner contingent.

The camaraderie in the community was unmatched.

"I like that everybody comes together here. We've gone through a lot in South Lake Tahoe," said Julie Incopero, a resident of

40 years who sat in a beach chair with her sheltie dog, Buddy. Incopero listed the Angora Fire of 2007 that ripped through 254 homes and the abduction of Jaycee Lee Dugard as a child as examples of a community in catharsis. She also mentioned appreciating how the community supported her when her daughter McKenzie got a blood cancer and needed help.

Some things you don't forget.

Apparently, members of the community didn't fail to forget how cycling guru Tom Wendell worked tirelessly to make the community more bike friendly.

As the parade resulting from the hard work of former Councilwoman Brooke Laine emptied out into the city's Bijou Community Park, dignitaries and bike advocates took the opportunity to dedicate its new bike park to a man who was undaunted in his pursuit to pass on the two-wheeling legacy – Tom Wendell.



Ted Wendell brought many people to tears with his

tribute to his brother, Tom, for whom the Bijou Bike Park was dedicated. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Wendell died a few years ago, but now his legacy lives on in the center of town in the shadow of the pine trees he rode through along with other destinations and journeys that exemplified his coveted life in South Lake Tahoe.

“Welcome to our new bike park,” City Manager Nancy Kerry said to hundreds of people gathered for the formal unveiling. The park represents a maze of gnarly jumps, banks and turns that mark a turning point in public-private partnerships for the city embracing its recreation-oriented heritage and future.

“This is the most significant recreation opportunity we’ve had in years,” Mayor Hal Cole told the attentive crowd of several hundred people. “This city is on a mission to make this town first class in recreation.”

Cole labeled the park a “perfect place to put his name” when speaking of Wendell.

The mayor was followed by the ever-so humble Assistant Public Works Director Jim Marino, who couldn’t seem to accept his award and instead dedicated his honorary plaque to his fellow city employees. He waxed poetic in speaking of the park, calling it a venue of “flow” that represents the “flow in life.”

Apparently, there’s no stopping the city now.

The park was billed as a training place for athletes as well as an ideal hangout for youngsters wanting to master the art of two-wheeling like life-long BMX advocate and city Recreation Coordinator Lauren Thomaselli, who also received an award, and city Parks and Recreation Commissioner Peter Fink, who pedals the talk of cycling. (He and his wife, Karen, did an 8,000-mile cross-country trip years ago.)



The parade was the length of four football fields. Photo/Susan Wood

“This is what a citizenship can do,” Pete Fink said, while looking out at the park.

Councilman Tom Davis, who has spent several years serving the city, called the project “your government at its finest.”

To those close to the subject, the bike park was long in coming – a project that prompted many to want to pick up and shovel to see it happen instead of sitting as a ream of paper on a shelf.

And no one knows that better than Ben Fish, who is president of both the Tahoe Area Mountain Biking Association and Bijou Bike Park Association. Fish held up a rough sketch he drew in 2011 to show what can happen when you take an idea and hand it over to a visionary like Kerry, an open-minded city council and building types like Marino. He received more than a plaque and bike socks for his efforts. His wife, Amy, wheeled out a

new bike on behalf of TAMBA. She was in tears when she honored his dedication with the gift.

Just as attendees were on the edge of heart-tugging sentiment, Wendell's brother, Ted, took the microphone and reduced many to tears in discussing his brother Tom's tenacious efforts to "do the right thing" by his community and support all things and venues that were bike friendly. Wendell, who Cole describes as "a gentle giant," showed up at countless meetings with a smile and charm.

"He never wavered from his convictions, whether they were popular or not," Wendell said of his brother, Tom. "He was always trying to make things for the better."

The brother listed things that Tom did to exemplify passion and pursuit of outdoor recreation – including his Zen-like time on his mono ski, surfing longboard and his bicycle billed as his most treasured possession.

"He was always in the present. He had that gift, and he shared it with everyone," Wendell said.

Brutally heart-warming, Wendell said he'll remember Tom's favorite lines: "C'mon, the best part is the uphill," "What ropes? Sorry sir," and "That looks pretty safe, doesn't it?"

Tom Wendell had an adventurous spirit that didn't go unnoticed. And now it's being passed on.

Ted Wendell told the crowd he came down to the bike park and ran into a young rider who called the course "so totally sic," meaning awesome.

It was as though Tom was there between the trees as the city of South Lake Tahoe moves into another half century, cultivating recreation advocates of a new generation to take part.

Ted Wendell reminded everyone, "Tom would say: 'Be the change

you want to see.’”

Ag secretary on quest to cut food waste

By Karen Matthews, AP

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced a goal this week to cut the amount of food that Americans waste by 50 percent by 2030.

“The United States enjoys the most productive and abundant food supply on Earth, so too much of this food goes to waste,” Vilsack said in New York City, where he was joined by food-industry representatives and officials from the Environmental Protection Agency.

Vilsack likened the effort to reduce food waste to the anti-littering campaigns of the 1960s and ’70s that shamed Americans for tossing trash out car windows. “This is the logical extension,” he said. “This is the next litter campaign.”

The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that Americans waste 133 billion pounds of food every year, or 31 percent of their overall food supply.

Vilsack said other nations waste similar amounts and the U.S. must lead a global effort to use food more efficiently. “This is an opportunity for us to make a statement and provide leadership,” he said.

EPA officials said the massive waste is a problem not just

because the food could feed the hungry but also because it ends up in landfills and affects the environment.

“Twenty-one percent of all the waste in landfills is food,” EPA Deputy Administrator Stan Meiburg said. “Once it’s there, it produces methane, which is a greenhouse gas.”

Leslie Sarasin, president and CEO of the Food Marketing Institute, a food retailers’ trade association, said the industry supports cutting food waste because it operates on a “razor-thin” margin of 1 or 2 percent.

“Reducing food waste at all levels in the food chain – farm, factory, store and home – is certainly one of those issues with economic and emotional appeal,” she said.

The officials spoke at a facility in Long Island City, Queens, operated by the nonprofit City Harvest, which started in 1982 as an effort to salvage excess food from restaurants. City Harvest now takes donations from businesses and farmers and delivers it to 500 food banks and soup kitchens.

Vilsack toured the warehouse packed with donated produce like carrots that were too big to sell and called it “truly inspiring.”

He said the campaign to cut food waste includes educating consumers about how long to keep food before it must be thrown out.

He said he recently used the USDA’s new mobile FoodKeeper app to determine whether chicken salad in his refrigerator was still good.

It was, and he ate it.