

SnowGlobe chasm grows as dissenters organize

By Kathryn Reed

While a segment of the South Lake Tahoe community is rallying to silence SnowGlobe, the fact is the contract calls for another year of the three-day electronic music festival.

“Absent violations, they are holding the 2018 event,” interim City Attorney Nira Doherty told *Lake Tahoe News*.

SnowGlobe is expected to be on the March 6 agenda as requested by the council. It will likely only be discussion since the contract is already in place.

At the Feb. 6 meeting a **settlement regarding the field** was approved by the council without any discussion. Promoter Chad Donnelly was at the meeting, but did not speak.

There is little gray area regarding the festival. People love it or hate.

It is an economic force. Hoteliers, restaurants and other tourism related businesses say the South Shore is no longer always busy over New Year’s Eve. In years without snow, like 2017 was at that time, having an event like SnowGlobe brings people to town. About 12,000 people attend each of the three nights.

Donnelly says since the festival started in 2011 it has had a \$50 million impact to the local community.

Then there are the people who are literally rattled by the bass for three days. This isn’t a two- to three-hour concert like what takes place at Harveys in the summer. It’s about nine hours for three days. The Stateline concerts have an earlier curfew. SnowGlobe goes to midnight or 1:30am depending

on the day.

No Globe Alliance is organizing to get rid of the event or move it from the community ball field on Al Tahoe Boulevard.

This group of local residents in a position paper stated, "This event has unfairly displaced local residents, invaded our homes with noise, closed access to whole neighborhoods, exposed our forests to unnecessary and dangerous potential for fire and attracted visitors who do not reflect the family friendly Lake Tahoe we want to be."

Donnelly put together a SnowGlobe summary that he has circulated among the business community, and which city staff has been privy to. *Lake Tahoe News* sent each of the electeds a copy of the document and asked for thoughts about SnowGlobe 2018. None of the five responded.

LTN asked Donnelly if there is a point when he might say enough is enough based on the struggles he has had here. No answer. However, his summary states he still wants a long-term contract.

While the city and Donnelly have a contract that covers 2018, there are out clauses.

"Paragraph XXIV ... allows either party to cancel the contract with five days' notice by setting forth the specific violations of the special event agreement, temporary activity permit or facility use permit. The terminating party has to give the other party the chance to meet and correct violations before the termination is effective," Doherty explained.

While the town may be divided about SnowGlobe, attendees want more. Pre-sales for 2018 are sold-out.

Bowman doesn't repeat, Alpine skier takes bronze



Maddie Bowman in the qualifying round in South Korea. Photo/Brian Walker

Maddie Bowman will always be an Olympic gold medalist, but she was unable to add to her collection of hardware at this Winter Games.

Bowman, who grew up in Meyers and calls Sierra-at-Tahoe her home resort, was unable to land any of her three runs in halfpipe freestyle skiing. The event was Feb. 20 in South Korea – Feb. 19 Tahoe time.

After falling on her final run she laid in the bowl of the halfpipe in tears. Her mom, Sue Perpall, went up to make sure her daughter wasn't hurt beyond her pride being wounded. Bowman was hoping to defend her gold medal from 2014.

The U.S. did medal. Brita Sigourney who grew up in Carmel and trained at Alpine Meadows took home the bronze. In 2014, she finished sixth at the Sochi Games.

The gold went to Cassie Sharpe of Canada, while Marie Martinod of France earned silver.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

How 10 days in ICU changed Anderson

By Laura Ratliff, Today

Last week, Olympic snowboarder Jamie Anderson became the first female snowboarder to win not one, but two gold medals. The successful run came on a day with temperatures were in the single-digits and 30 mile-per-hour wind gusts challenged riders.

In an interview with “Today’s” Willie Geist, the Olympic champion says that her mindset was crucial to her success.

Getting that calm outlook, however, came after a harrowing injury that almost derailed her career.

Read the whole story

SLT, city manager brouhaha continues

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe City Council members on Feb. 20 will again discuss the future of City Manager Nancy Kerry.

The closed session item is listed as: public employee discipline/dismissal/release. This was the same wording used for the **Feb. 12 special meeting**. At that time there was no reportable action.

Sources have told *Lake Tahoe News* the city and Kerry are working on a settlement. She is owed nine month's severance if she were to be let go without cause. As with all employees, she would also be entitled to compensation for unused sick and vacation time.

Still, though, no one has come forward to say what has led the city and Kerry to be on a path to part ways.

On Feb. 6 Kerry was mandated to turn in her work phone and key card for access to city offices, though she is still technically the city manager. She is receiving her regular paycheck, but is not doing any work. She is not taking sick or vacation pay, nor is she on administrative leave.

"Nancy is currently on regular paid status," Debbie McIntyre, director of finance, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "The Finance Department has received no direction from City Council regarding Nancy's pay status, and as such she will remain on paid status until direction is given. An exempt employee receives full pay whether or not they work full hours, and their pay doesn't change if they work more than full hours, just the nature of the exempt status employee."

Councilman Austin Sass has said people have complained about Kerry, but to what extent is not known. People complain about bosses and colleagues all the time. Councilman Tom Davis said no official complaints have been filed.

Lake Tahoe News on Feb. 8 asked the city: "How many complaints have been filed against each of the last three city managers? How many employee lawsuits have been filed against Kerry, O'Rourke and Jinkens? What was the outcome of them?" The city has not provided the answers.

Lake Tahoe News knows of **one former employee who filed a lawsuit** during Kerry's tenure, which was settled. There are no other known complaints. This speaks to why Kerry in her five-plus years as city manager had only received glowing reviews, including as recently as June 2017 when she was given a 5 percent raise.

Kerry's fall from grace comes with more questions than answers.

The relationship became strained once interim City Attorney Nira Doherty came on board.

The only thing known for sure is that **Mary Egan of Municipal Resource Group** came in last October to assess the culture of the city at the request of Sass, who was mayor at the time. Egan never provided the city with a written report. She talked about her findings in closed session Jan. 23.

Lake Tahoe News requested all correspondence with MRG prior to the contract signing as that would be public record. Suzie Alessi, the city clerk, handles all Public Records Act requests. Again, no response.

Alessi was resent a different PRA on Sunday, with acting City Manager Jeff Meston, Mayor Wendy David and Doherty copied on the email.

Alessi's response to everyone about this reporter was, "I am really tired of feeling harassed and bullied by her."

Again, Alessi is failing to do her job. As an elected official her boss is the people, no one at the city.

Tahoe's state senator shelters accused harasser

By Melody Gutierrez, San Francisco Chronicle

SACRAMENTO — When the state Senate investigated sexual harassment allegations against a high-ranking legislative staffer three years ago, the house's handling appeared to be done quickly and decidedly. The staffer, Steve Davey, was placed on paid leave and ultimately resigned as chief of staff at the request of his boss, Republican Sen. Ted Gaines.



Ted Gaines

But Davey wasn't without a job. Gaines' campaign hired him immediately, even as the investigation continued, then kept him on after the allegations were substantiated. In fact, a Chronicle review of documents released this month by the Legislature and other public records show that legislative employees who were disciplined for sexual harassment, even

those who were fired or forced to resign, often faced no long-term effects on their careers.

Some even came out ahead.

Read the whole story

Government puts outdoor industry size at \$373B

By Frederick Reimers, Outside

The outdoor recreation economy is officially a big deal. On Wednesday, the federal Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) released numbers detailing the economic power of the outdoor recreation industry, showing it comprises 2 percent (\$373.7 billion) of the entire 2016 U.S. gross domestic product.

It's an impressive figure that puts it on the scale of industries like construction (4.3 percent); legal services (1.3 percent); agriculture, including farming, forestry, and fishing (1 percent); and, most significantly, mining, oil, and gas extraction (1.4 percent). The report also stipulates that the outdoor industry is growing by 3.8 percent, a faster rate than the overall economy (2.8 percent).

The BEA report was two years in the making, initiated when President Barack Obama signed the Outdoor Recreation Jobs and Economic Impact Act. Signed in 2016, it directed the federal agency to measure the outdoor economy with the same tools it uses to chart other industries and the economy as a whole.

Read the whole story

The mystery of the 'Red Violin'

By Sean McAlindin, Tahoe Weekly

There are few things humans like more than a good mystery – other than solving one, of course.

When Elizabeth Pitcairn's grandfather put forth a \$1.6-million secret bid at a 1990 Christie's auction to win ownership of the legendary Red Mendelssohn Stradivarius violin, she was just shy of her 17th birthday.

In 1720, Antonio Stradivari crafted the historic instrument at his small shop in Cremona, Italy. It is said to be from the golden period of Stradivari's work, which includes some of the most acoustically perfect creations ever achieved by man.

For nearly two centuries, the whereabouts of the violin were unknown. Those years were beautifully reimagined in the fictional 1998 Canadian film "The Red Violin."

Read the whole story

Caesars to check 'do not disturb' rooms daily

By Wayne Parry, AP

One of the world's largest casino companies will check its guests' hotel rooms every 24 hours, even if they have a "Do Not Disturb" sign hanging on the doorknob.

Caesars Entertainment told the *Associated Press* it also is considering giving panic buttons to its employees to enable them to quickly summon help if they are in danger or feel threatened. The company will implement the new policy soon at all its properties worldwide, spokeswoman Noel Stevenson said.

The company, which owns 47 casinos in five countries – including Harrah's Lake Tahoe and Harveys – becomes the latest hospitality firm to adopt new room check policies after a gunman broke windows in his Las Vegas hotel room and rained bullets down on an outdoor concert in October, killing 58 people and injuring hundreds before killing himself.

Read the whole story

Experts: Miracle March can't save California

By Amy Graff, San Francisco Chronicle

Amid a winter marked by more sun than storms, California is desperate for rain and snow.

An end-of-winter burst of wet potent California storms, aka a Miracle March, is the only hope to bolster the Sierra Nevada snowpack and boost the rainfall totals, but meteorologists say the odds of this happening are almost none.

Even if a few wet weather systems sweep across the state in March, they're unlikely to bump the state up to normal

precipitation totals for the season.

“Once we get into late February, we’ll begin to have a better look at how the global patterns are setting up for March and then we’ll be able to talk a little more clearly about probability,” says Brian Garcia, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Monterey.

Read the whole story

Sensational soups at Tahoe restaurants



Buffalo wing sauce is the secret ingredient at The Alpine Club’s tomato soup. Photo/LTN

By Kathryn Reed

With the temperatures about to plummet in the Lake Tahoe Basin, it means soup is a good option for staying warm.

There are wonderful choices in the area. Here is a sampling:

It's a rarity to find chili on a menu – especially without meat. At Freshies in South Lake vegan tofu chili is a regular item. A bowl (\$4.75) is an outstanding bargain. It's super hearty. It has a good kick, but isn't too spicy. It could be a meal unto itself.

Azul in Heavenly Village also has veggie chili on the menu – \$4.50/cup, \$8.50 for a bowl. Sue called it an excellent bowl of chili with added texture from mini tortilla strips on the side. Spices were good without setting her mouth on fire. She tried to detect the sweet flavor, thinking it may have been nutmeg.

Blue Angel Café in South Lake Tahoe regularly has more than one soup as a special. I've never been there when there was not a vegetarian option. On this particular night I had the cream of cauliflower and Sue had the Southwest black bean. Each cup was \$5.50. I had never had cauliflower soup. This was a tasty surprise. I'm not sure of the secret ingredient, but something that made it a little sweet. It could have been in the cream. Lots of chunks of the vegetable made it more substantive. The black bean was a little milder than expected, but Sue liked all the beans. My go-to soup that is often on the menu here is the tomato-basil. This is my favorite place for soup – year round.

The spicy lentil soup (\$7) at Artemis in South Lake Tahoe is another one of my favorites; it's on the menu year round. The consistent quality is outstanding – lots of lentils, and wonderful Mediterranean spices – and it is vegan. It can be a meal or a side.

Another lentil soup (\$8) worth trying is the one served at The Pub at the base lodge at Sierra-at-Tahoe. It is so thick, much more like chili than soup. Cilantro comes through as a distinct spice. Lots of chickpeas in it, too.

The only disappointment in the soup at Primo's was that I got a cup instead of a bowl. I had the soup/salad combo, which comes with a cup of the soup of the day. On this particular day it was vegetable pasta, which seemed so appropriate at an Italian restaurant. More veggies than pasta fill the cup – fine by me. They are perfectly cooked – not mushy, as can be the case with some veggie soups. Oregano and basil dominated the flavors. A cup is \$6, a bowl is \$8 at this South Lake Tahoe restaurant.

At the Loft at Heavenly Village two soups are always on the menu – tortellini in brodo (\$7/cup, \$10/bowl) and tomato bisque (\$6/cup, \$9/bowl). Sue had the one with meat, noting the mini meatballs aren't so mini. "It was a bigger bite than I wanted, but I wasn't motivated to cut them in the cup. I could tell the meatballs were soaked in the light chicken broth that I would hardly call rich as the menu states." It was good, but could have had more flavor. The tomato bisque had a nice thickness, but didn't taste like the tomatoes were roasted as the menu states. It was also a bit on the sweet side for my taste.

A classic is tomato soup and grilled cheese. The Alpine Club at Northstar Village nailed it on both. This is a private restaurant for members of Tahoe Mountain Club. (I was a guest.) A common problem with tomato soup is that it's too sweet. This is because sugar is often added to cut down on the acidity, but that's really not necessary. But this was not a problem with this ski lunch. However, there was an ingredient in the soup I couldn't put my taste buds on. Come to find out it was buffalo wing sauce. Find a member – this \$10 combo is a bargain.