Edgewood Lodge permits approved; could open fall ’15

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – The Edgewood Lodge project kept its “no negative comments” streak alive Thursday with 11 positive remarks.

In a series of votes by the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Governing Board, the hotel project on Edgewood Tahoe golf course received not a single no vote or abstention from any board member at the Aug. 23 meeting.

Edgewood Companies, which owns the course and hundreds of adjacent acres in Stateline, has talked about making this area near the shoreline of Lake Tahoe more than a place for golfers.



A 154-room hotel will be built where hole 9 is now. Reconfiguring the golf course will be the first order of business; and that could be next summer.

There is expected to be no interruption to the annual American Century Championship golf tournament in July. What may pose a problem is parking.

In addition to the lodge will be 10 fourplexes. Those will range from 1,200- to 1,800-square-feet, while the lodge units

will be about 500-square feet.

Still to be determined is whether the hotel will come with a brand name that would be recognizable to the consumer. First the need for that would have to be determined. An Edgewood representative told *Lake Tahoe News* it looks like the need is not there.

In 2014-15, the lodge would likely be built. Financing, though, is an issue and will be the determining factor for when ground is broken.

The structures will be built to silver LEED specifications, with a goal of reaching gold. The other South Shore building meeting the U.S. Green Building Council's criteria is the Tamarack Lodge at Heavenly Mountain Resort, which is silver.

Many of the people who spoke Thursday talked of the combined economic and environmental benefits the lodge will bring.

"This will be the first true golf resort in Northern Nevada," Bill Hoffman, executive director with the Crystal Bay Visitors Bureau said.

While he acknowledged the two ends of the lake compete for the drive-up guest, the destination traveler likes to explore the whole lake. And golf, to Hoffman, is a component that brings people to the region and with the Edgewood Lodge would likely bring more visitors.

Even though the four-star hotel will bring a guest who can spend a bit more money than other lodging properties are charging on the South Shore, it has something for the average Tahoe resident. The now-private beach will be open to the public. And there is no intention of charging a fee, like some beaches do on the South Shore.

Plus, the bike trail will go through this property and hook up with the Stateline-to-Stateline trail that eventually will end

in Crystal Bay, but will initially go through Rabe Meadow to Round Hill Pines Beach.

Officials controlling South Lake Tahoe ball fields represent multiple interests

By Kathryn Reed

A clear case of conflict of interest reared its head Tuesday night at the Lake Tahoe Unified School District meeting, but no one put an end to it.

Steve Morales, facilities director for the district, is also a founding member of the Community Athletic Coordinating Council. This group has been overseeing aspects of ball field management in South Lake Tahoe since it incorporated as a nonprofit in 1989. It was also central to an agendized item about fields.

A school district official the night of Aug. 21 told *Lake Tahoe News* that Morales is merely the district's liaison to the CACC board.



Adults are making the ball field situation in South Lake Tahoe anything but child's play. Photo/LTN file

However, the 2007, 2008 and 2009 900 forms the nonprofit must file with the IRS list Morales as the president of CACC. No 2010 or 2011 forms were available online. Even if Morales is not a current board member, his history makes his allegiance suspect.

Donice Lenhardt, a former employee with South Lake Tahoe's Parks and Recreation Department, is listed as the vice president-treasurer in 2009; William Goss had those titles in 2008 and 2007 on the forms. (He listed the city rec center as his address.)

In fact, CACC uses the rec center as its address. At a minimum, this is unethical for city employees to be using taxpayer facilities for personal use even for mailing purposes.

It is not known if CACC work was done on city or school district time by CACC members.

While CACC was formed by district and city staff, it was supposed to be an entirely separate entity.

CFO Deb Yates said at the meeting this week that the district doesn't need CACC and that it will be up to the city how it deals with this group.

Morales, Lenhardt and Goss report no income from CACC on the forms. However, Morales' true connection to this group was not disclosed at the meeting. He did, however, act like he was representing CACC and not the district – which does pay him a six-figure annual salary. To avoid conflict, he should have recused himself from the discussion.

The certified public accountant signing off on the forms for those three years was Dave Olivo. Olivo is the elected treasurer for the city of South Lake Tahoe.

At the district meeting this week, board member Sue Novasel questioned the legality of fees collected in California benefiting Nevada. Morales said Douglas County was only involved at the get-go and a few years ago may have had some money given for improvements.

However, current CACC President Chuck Leonard told *Lake Tahoe News* last November, "(The CACC) maintains a central calendar in conjunction with the South Tahoe Parks and Recreation and the Douglas County Parks and Recreation departments and the Lake Tahoe Unified School District." That statement proves Nevada is still part of CACC.

It was also revealed this week that the district and CACC have each charged entities for the use of the same field at the same time. Yates said that won't happen again going forward.

Here is the 2007-CACC 990 form, 2008-CACC 990 form and 2009-CACC 990 form.

3-day SnowGlobe music fest returning to S. Lake Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

Turning the stage 180 degrees so the sound reverberates away from homes, ending the concerts at 10pm the first two days and at 12:30 New Year's morning, designating smoking areas, keeping the decibel level below 95, paying a $50,000 deposit and involving local businesses in the three-day event. Those are the criteria SnowGlobe promoters agreed to in order to bring the controversial music festival back to South Lake Tahoe.

While the South Lake Tahoe City Council on Aug. 21 agreed to have the techno bass-driven music event return Dec. 29-31, the final contract still needs to be drawn up.

With the council also on Tuesday passing an emergency no-smoking ordinance on city owned or operated property, the promoter would need to get a waiver to allow smoking even in a designated area.



SnowGlobe will be returning Dec. 29-31 to South Lake Tahoe. Photo/LTN file

The $50,000 deposit the city will collect is designed to pay

for any overtime staff – especially police – that may occur, as well as cleanup costs.

The 2011 event cost the city almost $20,000. Police officer overtime was $11,000, $5,000 went to cleaning the artificial turf field, and the remainder mostly went to unexpected overtime for parks and recreation staff.

Lake Tahoe Community College's board at last week's retreat discussed the prospect of the event returning. A vote is expected to be taken at the Aug. 28 meeting.

While the field where the event takes place is owned by the city, it is a joint use facility with the college. The college facilities are integral to pulling it off. Buses brought concertgoers to and from the college, and the gym was used as a green room of sorts.

LTCC President Kindred Murillo spoke at Tuesday's meeting, saying she supports the event. She practically lived at the college those three days so she knows intimately what went on, what worked and what didn't.

"This was a pretty well-behaved group of people," Murillo said.

What she told *Lake Tahoe News* is the board needs to decide if it will rent the facilities like it did last year or become a true partner. This could include being part of the marketing, having more of a say of what goes on and making money in a different way. LTCC's contract with promoter Chad Donnelly would be separate from the city's.

There is a SnowGlobe logistics team comprised of city, college, lodging, and tourism personnel. Dory Smith, a vocal opponent to the festival in the past, will join that committee.

He spoke at the council meeting as a resident who spent three

days last December dealing with sound checks and then the concerts. It was the never-ending bass that permeated his walls and affected him physically. And he's a musician, so he knows a few things about decibel levels, bass and subwoofers.

Smith and his wife, Diana Hamilton, were not the only residents affected by the noise. That whole neighborhood seemed to flood the city (staff, police, council) with complaints. People in Tahoe Keys heard the concerts, as did Echo View Estates.

While no one at the council meeting promised residents and guests would be 100 percent satisfied when SnowGlobe bands – many of which are more like disc jockeys making unique sounds – take to the stages, the goal is to significantly decrease the problems that occurred last year.

The boom, boom of the base, as Councilman Tom Davis called it, is what needs to go away. While that won't happen entirely because of who the acts will be, altering the stage, sticking to the time and having the lineup not include the heaviest bass acts at the end should cut down on the invasion of noise into people's homes.

City Manager Nancy Kerry said the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency had complained about SnowGlobe, but the bi-state regulatory agency is now silent.

"They have not let us know what the specific problems were," Kerry said.

Donnelly would like to eventually secure a multiyear contract for SnowGlobe in South Lake Tahoe. He has told city officials he is open to changing the date after this year, but needs to first establish South Lake Tahoe as SnowGlobe's home. That is why he is so committed to making sure the event works for all involved.

Tourism officials, while acknowledging some businesses

benefited from SnowGlobe at a time when no snow blanketed the South Shore, believe having the event another time would be more beneficial in a normal snow year because New Year's Eve is traditionally a busy time for the area.

But it was also acknowledged that having a place for people to go, especially Dec. 31, took some of the pressure off Stateline.

Police Chief Brian Uhler said he would like to see SnowGlobe become the destination for visitors and Stateline become a non-issue. As it is now, young people (those in their 20s and some not of drinking age) mill about the casino corridor – many in a stupor. There is no ball, no music, nothing.

Last year each night of SnowGlobe attracted about 10,000 people. Donnelly wants to increase that by 20 percent. He works with AEG – a world-renowned company that puts on festivals like Coachella and the New Orleans Jazz Festival.

Kerry officially becomes South Lake Tahoe's city manager

By Kathryn Reed

Nancy Kerry has lost part of her title with the city of South Lake Tahoe. That would be "interim".

The City Council in closed session on Tuesday agreed unanimously that Kerry should be the city's city manager.

When Kerry was appointed interim city manager in June this was to last until the fall. At that time the council was to decide if a full search should take place or if Kerry would be given the job.



Nancy Kerry

In the nearly two months since she has had the interim role, Kerry has demonstrated her ability to her five bosses in a manner that does not require them to see any more or talk to anyone else.

Mayor Claire Fortier told *Lake Tahoe News*, "The council has been very, very impressed with Nancy's capacity to deal with people and take on this city at a tough time.

"It is really gratifying to promote within someone so capable and so considerate and forward thinking."

Another consideration for making the decision now instead of in October is so during the budget process and election cycle the city manager position did not become a political issue.

Fortier with Councilwoman Angela Swanson will be working out the details of the contract. The contract is expected to be discussed in closed session Sept. 4, with it likely presented to the public Sept. 18.

Fortier would not speculate on what Kerry's salary or other benefits would be.

However, it is likely the contract will be for 30 months so this moves it out of the election cycle. Most city managers have been given a three-year contract, with annual renewals.

The 52-year-old Kerry is South Lake Tahoe's first female city manager. She started working for the city in 2008 in the now defunct Redevelopment and Housing Department. She became second in charge under former City Manager Tony O'Rourke about one year ago.

In her short time as interim city manager, Kerry has cleaned house a bit by letting go of Community Development Director Stan Sherer, reducing the number of medical marijuana collectives from three to one, and has begun an earnest effort to do things and stop talking about doing them.

Listening to community members and caring, even when disagreeing, is how Kerry approaches her job.

"My style is very participatory. I like to involve employees in decision-making," Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Kerry added that she is touched and humbled by the opportunity to be South Lake Tahoe's city manager.

South Lake Tahoe close to defaulting on parking garage

By Kathryn Reed

It has been 10 years since the South Lake Tahoe parking garage at Heavenly Village opened. It's been a financial boondoggle since Day 1. Today it is in technical default and the city is on course to default on the bond payments.

When the area near Stateline was redeveloped, the city of South Lake Tahoe opted to own the parking garage. Throughout the years it has lost various sums of money. Currently, it is operating at about an $80,000 a year loss.



South Lake Tahoe is running out of money to pay the debt on the parking garage at Heavenly Village. Photo/LTN file

The technical default is because revenues are less than expenses. Bondholders are aware of this. But when the fund balance reaches zero or is a negative number, then the whole garage is in default. It's possible this could occur in the next year if more money is not generated soon.

"Once all of the funds deposited with Bank of New York, Mellon have been depleted, a default on the bonds could occur if

yearly parking garage revenue is less than yearly debt service (principal and interest)," Debbie McIntyre, South Lake Tahoe accounting manager, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The exact consequences and steps that would be taken if the city defaults on the payments is not known.

"The supplemental reserve is $76,513. The reserve fund is $817,933, which is used during yearly operations," McIntyre said.

As of July 31, the remaining principal payment was $7.54 million and the remaining interest payments total $5,232,500 for a total remaining balance of $12,772,500. The final payments are due in fiscal year 2027-28.

The original bond from 2002 was $9 million. The soonest the bonds could be refinanced is December 2013, which might be too late, even if it were to help restructure the debt payments.

With California getting rid of redevelopment agencies, this has further complicated the matter in terms of who actually owns the garage.

"The land the garage is on was owned by the [redevelopment agency] and now the successor agency, but the buildings are owned by the [joint powers authority] established for the issuance of the bonds. But regardless, the bondholders have title to the revenue until the debt is paid off, so although regardless of deed, the ownership is the bondholders'," City Manager Nancy Kerry explained.

"In the case of this property, it is best to leave the ownership with the successor agency and bondholders until the debt is paid."

To try to prevent complete default, the city is looking at ways to generate more income. But when free unlimited parking is in one direction at the casinos and two-hour free parking

is at the center in the other direction, it is hard to convince people paying money for parking is worthwhile.

South Lake Tahoe and Heavenly Mountain Resort last week came to an agreement for people who have season passes to the resort to get a deal on parking. While there was a program in place last year, it did not get implemented until the snow had fallen.

Skiers who have an unlimited ski pass may buy an unrestricted parking pass for $299, while those with restricted ski passes may buy parking passes with blackout dates for $199.

Annual passes – which have nothing to do with the ski resort – are being lowered to $500.

City officials are also talking to PADMA to see if there are ways to get people to park at the garage and to have more of the Heavenly Village businesses be part of the validation program.

Park Avenue Development Maintenance Association is the organization formed in 2002 to maintain Heavenly Village. The two Marriott properties pay 55 percent collectively, Heavenly Mountain Resort 20 percent, South Lake Tahoe 20 percent, Trans Sierra Investments 2.5 percent, and Cecil’s 2.5 percent for the upkeep for the entire center.

Ambleside beckons the tourist who likes to play outdoors

By Susan Wood

AMBLESIDE, England – Billed as one of the most beautiful places on the planet, England's largest national park may be vast and full of superlatives – but it also holds the distinction as having a small-town spirit. The region of northwest England is welcoming, friendly and oh, so comfortable.

This is the place to feel at home – especially if you hail from another lake with stunning scenery and you grow up in the rolling, emerald hills of New England.

From the minute a visitor steps off the train at the Windermere station and boards a bus for a 10-minute ride to Ambleside, it's difficult to not be taken in by views that take your breath away. The scenery is filled with grazing sheep and cows, lush landscapes dotted with rocks dating back 500 million years, as well as England's largest, deepest lakes as serene as a plate-glass window.



Ambleside, England, is the perfect place to travel for people who like the outdoors. Photos/Kathryn

Reed

Arriving in the small, quaint village of Ambleside is like entering another world – with its notable stonewalls, cobblestone streets, tiny abodes and gorgeous flora that includes vivid purple foxgloves standing 6-feet high.

London has William Shakespeare. Bath relishes its past with Jane Austen. But this fantasyland of sorts has gained a worldwide reputation as being the home of Beatrix Potter, who wrote a series of children's books based on the lovable "Peter Rabbit." Potter's legendary rabbit, which turned 110 years old last month, makes up the vacation plans of thousands of Japanese parents who have religiously taken their children through the book series as they grow up. One may tour her nearby home.

Ambleside serves as the inspiration to artists, creative types and adventurers for hundreds of years. Poet William Wordsworth and C.S. Lewis, professor and author of the "Chronicles of Narnia" known to escape in its sheer beauty and embrace its atmosphere.

The small town is appropriately named. Many visitors can be found holding walking sticks, carrying packs and wearing hiking boots – ambling along.

Before going out to explore, it's highly recommended that visitors park their hiking boots in the front-entry of the Haven Cottage. There's a reason it won the AA B&B Friendliest Landlady of the Year in 2011. With rooms averaging about 85 pounds a night, the bed and breakfast owned by Tim Hall and Lindsey Kinley is homey. They take hospitality to a level beyond the highest peaks found in the Lake District.

"People come from all over. It was like the (United Nations) around here (recently)," Hall said, noting his guests from the United States, Belgium and Germany. One Scottish woman has

returned to the Haven Cottage 30 times. The place “stays busy every weekend throughout the year,” Hall added. The Lake District has come to be known as a four-season destination, but it’s summer that keeps the place hopping.

The B&B has much character in its exquisite décor, which is complemented by Hall’s insatiable humor. He bravely hung a sign at the entrance reading: “Hot beer, lousy food, bad service – welcome.”

In fact, visitors may want to stay just to hear Hall spin a yarn, tell a joke or serve up a puzzle for each guest before they devour the inn’s famously delicious breakfasts. (Note: If the intoxicating smell of his own vegetarian sausage recipe and roasted tomatoes grown locally isn’t enough to fill the senses, wait until the fresh baked bread comes out of the oven.) In the evening, a nightcap of liqueur or wine on the sofa in the living room is the perfect activity to cap off the day.

Ambleside sits on the northernmost corner of Windermere Lake in the Lake District.

Windermere Lake Cruises, which can be accessed out of Ambleside or Bowness to the south, runs a variety of cruises across England’s largest lake, which spans 10 miles and goes to a depth of 219 feet.

The boat cruise company uses old steamers, with one – the 122-year-old Tern – carrying the Olympic torch into the Bowness harbor in June amid a regatta of boats alongside and thousands of cheering spectators awaiting its anticipated arrival into port.

“Ten thousand people were gathered at Bowness,” said Windermere Lake Cruises staffer Jacqui O’Connor, who was on board at the time.

She was still smiling widely as she recalled the experience

aboard the Tern’s sister boat, a 75-year-old triple-decker steamer called the Teal. It takes out hundreds of visitors on its sunset jazz cruise in the summer. The enchanting two-hour cruise is one sure way to slow down life for the evening. Jazz from a local band and a full, tasty buffet complement the backdrop of amazing views. The scenery, especially as the sun dips into the horizon, is nothing short of spectacular. White swans float along the shoreline. Sprawling estates that look like mini castles poke out of the waterfront forest lining the lake. Vast green meadows dominate the hillsides behind the forest.

Those green hills also provide an excellent scenic route pedaling south to Coniston Lake – touted by Bing.com as one of the 10 most beautiful lakes in the world. It is one of 80 lakes in the Lake District in the Cumbria region. An 1859 steam yacht also takes visitors across its northern section. At half the length of Windermere, the lake also holds speedboat records.

The destination is definitely worth the trip via bike. (BikeTrek in Ambleside has hybrids for rent and suggestions for where to ride.)

The roads from Ambleside to Coniston are filled with offshoot paths where the national government trust has secured arrangements with local farmers to allow visitors to walk and cycle through the ranchland with its captivating green meadows, colorful flowers, clear streams and pretty mountains in the background. (Just remember to close the gates when passing through.) The single- or double-track paths are fun and sometimes challenging without ever feeling like too much for novice technical mountain bikers.

The round-trip ride, which provides a few elevation gains that are not for the faint of heart, takes about three hours to complete. But afterward, one of England’s famous ales may await a hardy rider in Ambleside without guilt. (Note:

Ambleside Tavern or Royal Oak Pub – especially the latter if a Wimbledon tennis match is on – are worth visiting.)

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Silver Lake provides ample fun for boaters of all kinds

By Kathryn Reed

PIONEER – It was hard to know where to look while paddling along Silver Lake. The natural scenery was as captivating as the people on their water toys.

At 7,200 feet, this lake in the Eldorado National Forest sits below Carson Peak. Scattered about are smooth granite "beaches" filled with sunbathers. Pockets of sand are interspersed with the rocks.

A few submerged rock islands make it appear as though people and their dogs are walking on water.



Sue Wood glides along Silver

Lake. Photos/Kathryn Reed

At times the lake is so smooth, the glassy water looks like one could walk across it. And in some ways one could say the water skiers were doing just that.

A sport I had not witnessed before was a “surfer” being pulled by a ski boat. Sometimes the person held a rope like a skier would, and other times let go to balance like a surfer and ride the wake. The person is just feet from the stern.

Encouragement from observers in the boat had the surfer trying to do a 360 like a wakeboarder would do.

Sitting idle, a couple fishermen had hauled in some trout. Rainbow, browns and Mackinaw call Silver Lake home.

Kayakers dot the water.

Even though motorboats are allowed on this small lake near the Carson Spur, they don’t dominate this body of water. This means being a canoeist or kayaker is a safe endeavor.

Inlets provide pockets of smooth water to explore. Get out early to stake out a spot on shore in one of these sheltered areas.

The only problem was the looming dark clouds moving in from the south. A slight breeze picked up and the water was no longer tranquil. Even Rusty, who was on his first canoe adventure, could tell the ride was becoming a bit more than an E-ticket experience. It was easier to lie down than for him to balance on four legs.

Instead of staying close to shore, as we customarily do, we decided to go across the lake to be close to the ramp before the thunder started booming on this first Saturday of August.

We had the canoe on top of the truck as the rain started to come down and the lightning filled the sky.

This body of water has had plenty of controversy surrounding it. In 2010, the U.S. Forest Service and Eldorado Irrigation District settled on agreements involving land swaps and water rights affecting the campgrounds and lake. Silver Lake was created from flows of the Silver Fork American River.

Getting there:

From South Lake Tahoe, take Highway 50 west. Turn left on Highway 89. Go over Luther Pass. At the T intersection (Pickett's Junction), go right on Highway 88. You will pass Caples Lake, Kirkwood and the popular Carson Pass hiking-parking area. Turn left on Kays Road to reach the boat launch.

Other things:

• Boat launch is $10.

• Hiking trails skirt the lake.

• Camping is walking distance from the lake.

• Kit Carson Lodge offers real beds.

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Kerry challenging people to be part of Tahoe's solution

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – It could have been the state of the city address, but in actuality was a call to action to the women in the room

to get more involved and be part of the change to make South Lake Tahoe the city it can be.

South Lake Tahoe City Manager Nancy Kerry spoke to Soroptimist International South Lake Tahoe on Aug. 15 about getting rid of the roadblocks that plague progress.

When asked if any of them had attended the Lake Tahoe Environmental Summit, not a single hand went up.



Nancy Kerry

She pointed out how at the summit the politicians all talked about what is wrong with Lake Tahoe and not what is right – and how no solutions were presented. Kerry wants the conversation to be about what is working, focus more on whatever that is, stop planning and start doing.

“I think the conversation, the dialogue and the change begin within each of us, and primarily among women. It is our nature to find solutions, agreement and get things done,” Kerry told the women’s organization during their lunch at Harrah’s Lake Tahoe.

To get there, Kerry said it is time to find what binds the people and agencies in Tahoe. Then focus on those similarities and find consensus.

“Capital investors don’t want to invest in a community that doesn’t know what it wants,” Kerry said.

Other locations like Livermore and Monterey – places the Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce led so called community

leaders to this summer to demonstrate progress – have control over their own destiny. They don't have the regional oversight that Tahoe has; which is really state and federal regulators dictating what can and cannot be done.

Pooled leadership is unique to Tahoe.

That is why consensus needs to be found because the city and five counties that make up the Lake Tahoe Basin must bow to others and not do what they envision without others giving their stamp of approval.

Kerry spoke of the 11,000 hotel rooms in the city and how that number far exceeds the room night demand. This in turns means the average daily rate stays low. That in turn means less hotel tax revenue for the city. She pointed out, though, that while people complain about the casinos for myriad reasons, it is Embassy Suites and Marriott in the city limits with the highest ADR on the South Shore.

Kerry also explained how those hotels were environmentally sound projects – not just economic boosters for town.

She said it's disappointing the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's Regional Plan update doesn't go far enough to help the dilapidated motels that often rent rooms on a weekly or monthly basis to be able to evolve into something more than what they are.

One Soroptimist asked about South Lake Tahoe becoming a pot capital. To this Kerry pointed out when she took office earlier this summer there were three marijuana collectives, now there is one.

"Fifteen thousand people have (medical marijuana) cards. It's ridiculous to think that many people are sick," Kerry said. She said the city would be keeping an eye on the remaining collective to ensure it follows the rules.

When it comes to any kind of smoking on city property, that could be resolved Aug. 21 at the City Council meeting. On the agenda will be an emergency ordinance to ban smoking of all kinds in city parks.

Another controversial item the council is expected to vote on – which was an item brought up at Wednesday's meeting – is SnowGlobe, the three-day music festival that reverberated through the Al Tahoe area and beyond in December. Promoters are asking to bring it back Dec. 29-31. (One of the Soroptimist didn't even know what SnowGlobe was.)

"I'll be there at the plug. It's easier than taking 400 phone calls," Kerry said in case the music goes past 10pm and is louder than allowed. Those were problems with last year's event.

Norah Jones serenades Harveys with range of tunes

By Susan Wood

STATELINE – From the moment she walked onto the stage filled with suspended seagulls and began her concert wearing cowboy boots and a bright, strapless dress, it became clear that Norah Jones would not be pigeonholed as an artist.

The singer, musician – who entertained a crowd of more than 4,000 Sunday night at the Harveys outdoor arena for the Lake Tahoe Summer Concert Series – allowed many songs off her new album “Little Broken Hearts” to dominate the performance.

She launched the concert with a slow, haunting “She’s 22,” which asks the listener: “Does she make you happy,” when she’s “so blue?” The mood set the stage for the rest of the evening, providing a moody haze that graced the Tahoe sky with a glorious sunset.



Norah Jones delivers a variety of music to fans Aug. 12 at Harveys. Photo/Jim Grant/Harveys-Harrah's

Mother Nature cooperated. And the crowd of wine-toting baby boomers politely accepted the musical journey Jones took them on.

But admittedly, the tunes she won five Grammy awards for and sold more than 25 million copies of spun the audience’s biggest applause. It was as though the fans remained hungry for those sultry, jazzy numbers from a decade ago off the “Come Away With Me” album. The compilation made her an instant success. Her second album “Feels Like Home” brought out the 33-year-old singer’s country flair, while the third “Not too

Far” followed by “The Fall” began dropping Jones into a more alternative sound.

It’s no wonder the award-winning singer was tagged earlier this year performing incognito in a blonde wig with punk rock band El Madmo, CapitalNewYork.com reported. She wants to do her own thing.

Jones has been known to be open to many sounds in whatever venue. The transformation begs the question: To what extent does an artist cave to audience demands in giving them the familiar as opposed to opening their eyes and ears as an ambassador for new music at any cost?

Jones seemed to pull off the latter based on the foundation of respect she’s received in the music world.

New haunting tunes of love lost, risk and even murder off “Little Broken Hearts” accompanied that soft, finely-tune voice. The upbeat, bouncy “Say Goodbye” declared: “Don’t you miss the good old days when you let me misbehave?” Then, the creepy “Miriam” hushed the Tahoe crowd with a tale of fatal jealousy.



Norah Jones and her band play one of two encores. Photo/Kathryn Reed

She even threw in “The Long Way Home,” a country tune by offbeat singer Tom Waits off the “Feels Like Home” album. Her

tribute to the man who could cross as an everyday, gritty barfly gave the audience an inner look into her own soul searching for something interesting and unique.

Jones' show (priced from $39.50 to $69.50) provided a journey of peaks and valleys, slow and fast, soft and hard – with some extremes from her four-man backup band engineered so hot it was difficult to hear that award-winning voice. At times, the pulsating bass was loud enough to vibrate the floor.

But no sooner than the crowd may have pondered chair dancing, she sat at the piano for an honest calling for her love's "heart to be true" with the bluesy "What Am I To You" off "Feels Like Home."

The most memorable song of the night was not dedicated to any man, but to her dog – with her canine's ultimatum: "It's him or me." She, in turn, rewarded him in lyrics written specifically for any red-blooded, canine-loving Tahoe female. "You never lie, you don't cheat," and have "no baggage on your four feet."

The crowd erupted in applause and laughter with a thorough understanding of the message.

"I guess this is the right audience for this song," she said with a big smile.

The audience stayed fully engaged for the next tune – her biggest hit from 2002, "I Don't Know Why."

And still, there was a two-song encore with another smash hit from the "Come Away With Me" ensemble – "Lonestar," written to match her Texas roots. Then, the band stood side-by-side again for the feel-good plucking number "Creepin In" from "Feels Like Home."

It appeared Jones felt like home in Tahoe, telling the crowd: "It's nice to be here," while appreciating "the lake is so

clear.”

Indeed, Jones may say she’s her own tough act to follow. And given the dynamic performance by Cory Chisel and the Wandering Sons, she may say the same thing about her opening band.



Cory Chisel and the Wandering Sons are destined to be the lead act one day. Photo/Kathryn Reed

“We’re happy to be in Tahoe for the very first time. We’re the mood setters. That’s our job,” said front-man Chisel, who added he was grateful to have their three-person ensemble’s “voices bounce off these beautiful mountains.”

The singer, guitarist donning a Jason Mraz-type hat delivered tunes both sentimental and introspective – bouncing from a love song to “the right person at the wrong time” to a caring tune about his new home state of Tennessee from “some natural born Yankees.” The song resembled a light kiss, and the emotion seemed real all over his face. The set ended with a rousing blues gospel tune.

Chisel’s sound and heart-felt messages are reminiscent of Bruce Springsteen or even the legendary poet, singer Neil Young – who appropriately so, packed the house last week with 6,500 fans on a weekday in Tahoe.

Country music superstar Toby Keith also delivered that many on a recent weekday night. Harrah’s-Harveys spokesman John Packer told *Lake Tahoe News* the concert series is “going great.”

“It’s better than last year,” Packer said.

And it’s not over.

The old lounge blues mixes with the 1980s pop blues when Joe Cocker and Huey Lewis and the News team up Aug 17. The next day, country sensation Sugarland – with its toe-tapping, finger-snapping style – will also play in Tahoe. Cabo Wabo’s own Sammy Hagar rounds out the summer Sept. 1 with the Red Rockers.

Weapons training keeps El Dorado sheriff’s deputies prepared for the worst

By Kathryn Reed

TAHOMA – Columbine changed so many things. No longer do officers wait for the SWAT team to arrive. Assault teams of three officers will go find the bad guy.

“If a gunman is killing people, it’s our responsibility to engage them,” El Dorado County sheriff’s Lt. Pete Van Arnum said. “We are constantly evolving our tactics and training.”



El Dorado County sheriff's Deputy Matt Harwood trains with his personal gun Aug. 14. Photos/Kathryn Reed

For the past two days the shooting range at D.L. Bliss State Park has been full of El Dorado County deputies getting certified on their weapons – mostly Glock semiautomatic .40-caliber handguns, plus rifles – which all patrol cars have, and some personal weapons.

“Most of our officers are encouraged to carry a handgun off duty,” Van Arnum said.

The Carson City IHOP shooting in September 2011 proved that unarmed military have little recourse.

The 1999 Colorado school shooting provided the old practice of waiting didn’t work.

Last month’s shooting in Aurora, Colo., at a movie theater proved how easy it is for mentally unstable individuals to acquire weapons.

In his years in law enforcement, Van Arnum has seen an increase in mentally ill people committing mass murder, as well as individuals seeking concealed weapons permits. More people were in his office after last month’s shooting for permits.

Sheriff John D’Agostini campaigned on wanting to uphold the Second Amendment – the right to bear arms. This includes

concealed weapons. For people living in the county, they must go through Van Arnum to get a weapon. In South Lake Tahoe, the police department regulates them.

The movie theater shooting also points to the need for officers to practice shooting at a suspect's head. Many bad guys now wear chest protection, but not even a gas mask – like the Aurora shooter had – will protect a shooter's head.

Van Arnum isn't one who believes limiting the size of magazines is going to matter much to the person intent on killing. If someone is skilled, they can reload in two to three seconds.

A 12-gauge shotgun is what the Aurora shooter started with. That's the same type of gun some of the deputies were getting certified on Monday and Tuesday.

"Everyone in a rural area has them because they are a bird shooting gun," Van Arnum said. "The are also effective at close range against people."

Even the Olympics – Summer and Winter – have events involving guns.

While deputies in Tahoe have not been involved in recent shootings, every time they pull their gun out of the holster it's considered using their weapon.

While this week's training was about target shooting, that isn't the only type of training the officers do. A court ruling has said they need to be trained in more realistic scenarios – to be able to run and shoot, reload on the move, take into account if a hostage is involved and those types of events.

Simulators have been brought in before. Those are provided by the state on a rotating basis to departments.

With ammunition costs increasing and budgets being cut, Van

Arnum said time at shooting ranges in the area is dwindling.

But training will never end because the possibility of needing to use their weapon is there every hour of the day and night.

“Most police shooting are within 7 yards and are over in two or three rounds. Often it’s at night with poor visibility,” Van Arnum said. “All of these guns have night sights so they glow in the dark.”

Paul Kuhn and Sonny Piazza are the instructors at the outdoor range. As the officers are being told what to do by Piazza, Kuhn explains how it’s necessary to practice shooting from the hip without time to get into a proper stance, line everything up perfectly or even have the second hand on the weapon before firing.

“Someone can be on you from 20 feet before you can draw your firearm,” Kuhn explained. “That’s why we train for it.”

Gradually the guys keep moving back until they are shooting from 20 yards. Two stances on their knees test their ability from those positions.

“Low kneeling is very stable and very uncomfortable. Your foot will fall asleep,” Piazza tells the deputies. But he explains the position will provide them a good base.

Targets are shaped like a soda bottle. They are told to rapidly fire two shots to the body and one to the head. If the suspect doesn’t go down after being shot twice, likely they have body armor on.

Then it’s time to knock the bowling pin over with a bullet as well as obliterate the orange clay target that is dangling.

Finally, the holes in the “bottle” are counted to ensure they have passed this quarterly test.

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