CalFire: Evacuation plans, emergency kits save lives

Publisher's note: ***This is the third of three articles from the Amador-El Dorado Unit of CalFire regarding the "Ready-Set-Go!" fire and life safety campaign.***

By Teri Mizuhara

CAMINO – "Leave your home before you are ordered to evacuate. You will not only be giving your family the best chance of surviving a wildfire, but you will also be helping emergency service vehicles by keeping the roads clear. Plan today and have at least two escape routes out of your neighborhood. Drive them in the day and night so you are comfortable with the routes. You don't want to guess how to get out of your neighborhood when heavy smoke and flames are surrounding you," says CalFire's Amador-El Dorado Unit Chief Kelly Keenan.

Preparation is the key to a smooth evacuation. Make sure your evacuation kits are prepared for every member of your family now in the event you have to evacuate later this summer. Your kit(s) should have enough supplies for a minimum of 72 hours (three days) without any outside assistance. Plan for a minimum of a gallon of water per day per person, non-perishable food, medications, clothes, toiletries, flashlights with spare batteries, radio, first aid kit, etc.

Don't forget about your family pets, they too will need their own evacuation kits with water, food, cages, crates, collars-leashes, etc. You can find more information at our website, FEMA, and the Humane Society.

"Don't forget to practice your evacuation drill. Everything you are planning on taking should fit in your smallest vehicle since you may not have your larger vehicle at home at the time

of an emergency. Review your plans, phone lists, meeting areas and other important details with your family members. Post instructions and lists in a highly visible area of your house and never stay behind and hide, it is the quickest way to becoming a fire victim. Remember, disaster preparedness begins and ends with you. Thank you for planning to survive," Keenan adds.

For more detailed information on what you have read, visit CalFire's website or call (530) 644.2345 to receive a free brochure on the Ready-Set-Go program and evacuation tips for your family and pets.

Mixed martial arts specialists being groomed in S. Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

Twenty-six seconds. That's all it took for Corey Carlson to win his first mixed martial arts bout this summer.

Now the 24-year-old South Lake Tahoe resident is training for a match at MontBleu in Stateline this fall. A date for the cage fight has not been set. Also in the ring will be Ryan McCarthy and Paul Hubbell of South Lake.

The trio train at Escobar Training Grounds in their hometown.



Corey Carlson stretches before he spars at Escobar Training Grounds. Photos/Kathryn Reed

“I love the shape I’m in,” Carlson says.

He lost his first two bouts in the 170-pound division. Now he fights at the 155-pound level. Between diet, taking cardio workouts seriously and being more disciplined he got into better shape and dropped the weight he needed to be more competitive.

Standing, talking to him he doesn’t look imposing – especially with his boyish smile. Then the video of his win in Reno is played. Abs of steel, biceps that bulge and legs of iron. Don’t mess with this guy.

Being in great shape, proper mindset and accurate execution is what will take him to the level he aspires to – the Ultimate Fighting Championships in Las Vegas.

Mixed martial arts have been around a little more than a century, with the popularity in the United States having taken off more recently. It’s practically a free-for-all in the ring. Boxing, wrestling, jiu-jitsu, karate and judo are all allowed.

Competitors wear boxing gloves and are bare foot. Punching the other guy while he's down is OK. Kicking is common.

A full round is 3 minutes, with three rounds being a full match. If a knockout isn't scored, then the winner is determined based on points.

Carlson trains just about every day. When he's not at the gym, he's on his bike or running. Having reconstructive ACL surgery 18 months ago after landing a kick the wrong way has not slowed him down.

Escobar Training Grounds – better known as ETG – is not the typical gym.

Cory Escobar, who owns the facility with wife Dori, likes to call it a school instead of a gym.

"Every day you are being taught," Escobar says. He's hobbling around with a cast on his leg – the result of a water skiing accident.

Escobar grew-up in this lifestyle with his dad having a gym in South Lake in the early 1990s. He lived here from 8- to 13-years-old, and then moved back at 18. The 30-year-old opened the gym four years ago, but this is the third location because they needed to expand.

Three distinct areas are set up, with the front being where adult martial arts classes are going on. In the center is the regulation-size boxing arena. Behind it is where kids as young as 3 are learning karate. When they are done the sparring class takes over the mats. This is where Carlson is.

Most people are not on the competition track. Instead it's about embracing the challenge of martial of arts.

Dori Escobar mostly teaches kids, with some adult karate classes. She has seen her students take the discipline and respect aspects learned at ETG and have them transcend to the

classroom in terms of improved grades.

“Respect is a big one. We work a lot on moral integrity,” she said.

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Lady A concert blurs lines between country and rock

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – If the phone rang at a quarter after one Saturday morning, blame it on Lady Antebellum. As an encore to their 17-song concert Friday night, the trio delivered their most recognizable song “Need you now.”

And to make sure the audience knew the lyrics, they were asked to sing the chorus as their own encore. After all, many at the sold-out concert at Harveys had been singing most of the night.

It’s a quarter after one

I’m all alone

And I need you now

Said I wouldn’t call

But I’ve lost all control

And I need you now



Lady Antebellum plays a sold-out show July 29 in Stateline. Photos/Kathryn Reed

The ballad earned Lady A, as fans call them, Song of the Year honors at this year's Grammy Awards. They collected four other statuettes that night – Record of the Year, Best Country Performance by a Duo or Group with Vocals, Best Country Song, and Best Country Album.

Having released their first album just three years ago, they aren't slowing down. Their next album "Own the night" will be in stores Sept. 13. They played songs from it, including the title track.

"That's the whole concept of the next album – own the night. Live in the moment," vocalists Charles Kelley told the crowd.

Hillary Scott and Kelley's voices are much more powerful live than recorded. Watching the two of them interact on stage is a bit like a music video with the subtle choreography.

Dave Haywood, while he sings, is better known for the work he does with his hands – whether it's stroking the keyboard, guitar or mandolin.

They write most of their work, though sometimes record songs from others. "Hello world" is one of those songs, which they

executed so well midway through the concert.

Scott rivaled Sara Evans' rendition of "A little bit stronger" – and with good reason, Scott penned the lyrics.



Charles Kelley and Hillary Scott

Kelley spent most of the time interacting with the audience, crooning to those in the front row as he paraded around the stage in jeans that left nothing to the imagination and a tight V-neck T-shirt.

"This is the most beautiful area I've ever seen. It's gorgeous," Kelley said.

Scott, too, played to the crowd. In particular she singled out 8-year-old Mackenzie, saying how "American honey" reminded her when she was the youngster's age.

Despite this being their third time to play the South Shore, most in the audience were first-timers to see the group live. Three years ago they made an appearance at the Hark Rock. In May 2010, Lady A opened for Tim McGraw. By that time they were winning Grammies and Country Music Awards. It's hard to know if that concert sold-out because of Lady A or McGraw.

While Troy Olsen put on a good 30-minute act before Lady A took the stage, he clearly was the warm-up guy.

The whole night started a half hour late to accommodate Mother Nature who thought it a good idea to unleash a downpour as

thousands of people were making their way to the outdoor venue.



Dave Haywood

Despite all the cowboy hats, at times it felt and sounded more like a rock concert with the five-member back-up band and the lights.

While all of this brought a tremendous amount of energy to the show and had people dancing more than sitting, the rock overpowered the country.

Being confused about the genre of music was reinforced when they played Aerosmith's "Sweet Emotion" and Prince's "Kiss."

After their 90-minute performance, my mom said, "It was good, but that was not country."

Playing Lady Antebellum's "I need you now" album in the car while waiting 50 minutes (no exaggeration) to get out of the parking garage had her back believing they are country artists.

Harveys Outdoor Concert Series has five more shows:

Aug. 9 – Phish – sold out

Aug. 10 – Phish – sold out

Aug. 13 – Big Four

Aug. 19 – Miranda Lambert with Little Big Town

Sept. 10 – Sammy Hagar & The Wabos.

South Shore election season dominated by incumbents

By Kathryn Reed

There is going to be a new face on the South Lake Tahoe Public Utility District board in December.

Marylou Mosbacher, who has served for 21 years, is not running for another term. She knows she will miss being on the board, but said at 82 it's time to focus her attention more on grandchildren and great-children.



Marylou Mosbacher

She is, though, hoping a woman fills her seat because she is currently the lone female on the board.

So far three people have filed for what is called seat No. 3 – engineer Randy Vogelgesang, businessman John Runnels and retired STPUD employee Claude Gunsch.

Dale Rise is seeking another term for seat No. 4. He is the only one so far going after that seat.

The three incumbents for the Lake Tahoe Unified School board have filed – Sue Novasel, Mike Doyle and Larry Green. No one has filed to challenge them.

Karen Borges has filed to retain her seat on the Lake Tahoe Community College board. Fritz Wenck, who has been on the board since the college started in the 1970s, has not filed. He did not return to a call to find out what his intentions are.

Student Michael Bischoff has filed for the college board.

The deadline to file for the November election is Aug. 12. If no incumbent files, the deadline is extended to Aug. 17.

On July 29, the three-member board that oversees Measure S, the recreation initiative passed in 2000, massaged ballot language for the revised Measure R. The changes don't alter the amount property owner pay each year. It changes how money can be spent.

Another item that may be on the Nov. 8 ballot involves the pension plan for South Lake Tahoe employees. The City Council on Aug. 2 will discuss whether voters should have a say in the pension issue.

Optimal cycling involves properly fitted bike, flexibility

By Kathryn Reed

Cycling is so much more than pedaling. To do so efficiently

and without injury takes a bit of understanding about how ones body relates to her bike.

That was the message Jason Collin, physical therapist with Tahoe Center for Orthopedics, dispersed Wednesday night.

Besides being a PT, Collin has been a professional bike fitter for the past eight years. While the average rider may not go through all the testing Lance Armstrong did that resulted in changing the seam on his outfit for better aerodynamics, there are things people can do to reduce injuries from occurring and to improve performance.



Physical therapist Jason Collin demonstrates flexibility tests for cyclists. Photo/Kathryn Reed

“I don’t fit people without cleats,” Collin said. “You can’t get it dialed in.”

With 30 percent of the power, on average, from cycling being from the pulling motion, that is lost without cleats.

“In the relationship between bike and rider, the flexible one has to be you,” he told the group of nearly 40 at Lake Tahoe Community College. “That is why you need to make sure your

bike fits.”

Coming from Southern California a few years ago, he thought working in South Lake Tahoe would mean dealing with a lot of mountain bikers. He doesn’t know why, but this mountain biking community isn’t big into getting their bikes fitted.

While he didn’t go through the whole process of an actual bike fitting session, which can last two hours and costs $100 or $199 depending on the level of detail, he did explain what it’s like.

Colleague Chris Kozlowski was his model of sorts as she allowed Collin to manipulate her leg to test her flexibility in her hip and leg muscles, as well as to see if both legs are the same length.

Posture, biomechanics, flexibility and strength of the rider are assessed before the bike is even considered.

A tight hip might be detected. While this is common in most cyclists, it’s even more predominant in woman. It’s also linked to women’s increased ACL problems. When it comes to cycling, if the knee tends to go out, this is an indicator of a tight hip.

Collin is a proponent of exercises and stretches that are relevant to the motion of the sport the person participates in. During individualized assessments the therapists suggest strengthening activities and stretches applicable to cycling.

With all the power in cycling coming from how the body transfers movement to the tiny pedal, it’s important the ball of the foot is on the pedal and the rest of the leg properly lined up. Knee issues are the common injury when from foot to hip the alignment is out of whack.

While being in alignment is ideal, that may not be possible at the get-go based on how the rider’s natural alignment is.

Forcing a straight alignment by altering the bike could lead to injury.

That is why the process is so individualized. And getting fitted for a road bike will not mean the same measurements will work on your mountain bike. The same goes for triathletes. They are all different sports.

When it comes to adjusting the seat the most common situation is to find people riding with it too low, Collin said. And sometimes it’s too far forward because people want to sit up straighter.

But creating a stable platform, as he calls it, will create power.

The place where more subjectivity comes in is with the handlebars, or cockpit of the bike. People complaining of neck, wrist and low back pain when cycling may need this part of the bike adjusted.

Much of this adjustment is about comfort.

For more information about a fitting, call (530) 543.5896 or click bike program.

This is one of a series of free lectures Barton Health has put on throughout this year. There are three more scheduled to date in the Wellness Lecture Series.

Inertia plagues South Tahoe

council regarding sign rules

By Kathryn Reed

What's another two hours of discussion about South Lake Tahoe's sign ordinance when it's been on the books for the past 15 years?

The problem is the issue wasn't resolved at 9:15pm Tuesday when the talking ended. The council directed staff to come back with revisions to the law. It may be October when the next round of jibber-jabber commences.



If South Tahoe creates a historical sign category, Sno-Flake may qualify. Photo/LTN

This was a continuation of the June 29 workshop. And like that meeting, everyone agreed inconsistent enforcement is a big issue.

"It shouldn't take six to 12 months to enforce the sign ordinance," City Attorney Patrick Enright said. Streamlining that process is something staff has been directed to do.

At times the heart of the issue seemed lost two nights ago as council members nitpicked about whether the U.S. flag should

be used as promotional material and whether garage sale signs are a nuisance. The irony being the flag isn't even addressed in the ordinance, as staff had to point out to the five during the July 26 evening workshop.

Councilman Bruce Grego's hang up was believing all signs will look alike, making for a homogenous setting.

What to do about historical signs like Sno-Flake and Stardust is also an issue yet to be resolved.

Hilary Hodges, Community Development director, said if business and property owners would use a bit of creativity, plenty of sign diversity would exist.

The main issue, though it didn't receive much attention until Councilwoman Angela Swanson made a passionate speech, is how to address the signs in the way of Caltrans' Highway 50 project from Trout Creek to Ski Run Boulevard.

Hodges said 31 non-conforming signs, with seven of them being multiple business signs, exist in that area.

Staff came up with an incentive plan where the city would fund partial replacement of freestanding signs in that section of town at a cost not to exceed $138,000.

While no action was taken at the meeting, it appeared the council wants to move in that direction. But it was also stated they want funding to be available for everyone as the roadwork phases continue.

To improve the roads, and put in curbs, gutters and bike paths is means signs need to be moved out of the right-of-way. The city needs to decide if it is going to allow the signs to be put back in or force the compliance issue during road construction.

Is now the right time to mandate enforcement of signs – therefore creating an expense for businesses or property

owners – or is waiting until the economy improves more prudent? Those are questions the council is wrestling with.

A freestanding sign can cost $10,000.

The smaller issue, though the one that gets more attention, is the use of temporary signs. The council is leaning toward allowing sandwich boards and banners for special events and limited time periods.

S. Tahoe considers doing away with 3 fire division chief jobs

By Kathryn Reed

A fire department without upper management except for a chief who divides his time with the police department.

That is one scenario on the negotiating table in South Lake Tahoe.

The city has a $1.5 million deficit gap to deal with before the next fiscal year begins Oct. 1. The reality is it must be closed in less than a month in order for staff to bring the budget to the City Council on Aug. 26. California cities must adopt a balanced budget.

In early spring when the council approved the five-year budget plan it included receiving concessions from the seven labor groups in the city to eliminate that $1.5 million from the

books. The city wants to save $1 million in pension cost by having employees pay their share – 8 percent for non-sworn personnel and 9 percent for sworn. (Police officers currently pay 6 percent; all others have taxpayers foot the bill.) The city wants to save the other half million dollars by having employees pick up more of the health care premium costs.

Fairly regular meet-and-confer sessions between the city and bargaining units have been occurring, but not everyone is at the table to do the heavy lifting that is necessary for the budget to be balanced.

The only contract that expires at the end of this fiscal year is the General and Public Works group. However, serious negotiations are not slated to begin with that group until Aug. 12 because the union changed representatives. This gives both sides limited time to reach an agreement before the council gets involved.

Two of the six groups that have agreed to negotiate a year before their respective contracts expire are the fire unions. One represents management – or the three division chiefs; the other group includes everyone else. (The chief is not in a bargaining unit.)

At the meeting July 22 with the fire safety management group, the city floated the idea of eliminating all three of their positions.

“There are all sorts of reasons why that is monumentally a bad idea,” Ray Zachau, fire marshal and division chief, said. “People seem to have forgotten we live in a fire prone area.”

He said building inspections, fuels reduction projects and public safety would be at risk with no division chiefs on staff.

Zachau emphasized the three at his rank have agreed to the pension and health care benefit concessions the city has asked

for, but they don’t understand the thought process in eliminating their jobs. This group doesn’t understand why when they’ve done what the city wants, they are being targeted for elimination.

The one known staffing change is Police Chief Brian Uhler will also oversee the fire department starting Sept. 1 when Fire Chief Lorenzo Gigliotti leaves.

Because of labor rules City Manager Tony O’Rourke is not allowed to discuss specifics about what is or isn’t being offered.

O’Rourke told *Lake Tahoe News* if all the groups don’t step up to the plate, jobs would be cut throughout the city. He has said this from the get-go, with the council knowing it would happen based on the five-year plan they adopted.

Just how many jobs and which ones would be eliminated if concessions are not made remains to be seen.

“Our single largest cost center is personnel. We will have no other choice but to reduce our staff,” O’Rourke said. “We are not going to raid the operating reserve.”

He said doing so to the tune of $5.2 million in the past was bad fiscal policy and allowed the city to not live within its means.

Compounding the problem is the city’s fiscal situation is worse than in March when the five-year plan was adopted because property tax values keep going down. That revenue stream is one of three key pieces for South Tahoe.

Fire management and city negotiators are scheduled to meet again Aug. 1.

As for the rest of the fire department, union representative Dan Sullivan did not return calls.

Labor and anti-trust laws prevent all of the city's bargaining units from meeting as one to come up with a plan that would save jobs and help them negotiate as a whole.

At the Aug. 2 City Council meeting it's possible the five will be faced with the decision whether to go to the voters about what to do regarding pensions for city employees. If voters have a say, it may not matter what is or isn't negotiated.

Construction begins on first student union at STHS

By Kathryn Reed

Five years ago when Ivone Larson became principal of South Tahoe High School her dream was to get rid of the building in the middle of campus that originally housed the auto and wood shops.

That wish came true this summer. And an even bigger dream was realized Monday with the ceremonial groundbreaking for the Student Union. The nearly 20,000-square-foot L shaped building should be ready for students for the 2012-13 school year.



A year from now a student union will

cover the dirt
at South Tahoe
High School.
Photo/LTN

No one was particularly fond of the structure.

“The shop building was the biggest piece of crap on this campus,” architect Steve Newsom said.

He added the new building will “reinforce the pedestrian traffic spine here. Ultimately, it would be great if that were a covered walk.”

The structure is a joint endeavor between Lake Tahoe Unified and South Lake Tahoe because of the grant from the state to fund the building that is situated behind the gym and in front of the Stadium View building.

The city will have access to meeting room space, which is something the town lacks. The three rooms may be opened into one.

In 2008 when voters passed Measure G, the school facilities bond, the budget called for $3.5 million to renovate the building. Then the prospect of the joint use grant from the state surfaced and was applied for. That brought in $4 million in matching funds.

Now the budget for the Student Union is $9.5 million. This is a rendering of the Student Union.

“This will pull people together,” Superintendent Jim Tarwater said July 25 during the festivities.

This will be the first time there will be room to feed all the students. Plus, it gives them a gathering spot instead of being dispersed throughout the campus.

Tarwater said the student culinary arts program would be able

to provide breakfast and lunch fare for meetings and events, with the district's food services backing up the students.

Nothing of the old building remains. It's a dirt plot waiting for a foundation. About 75 percent of the structure was able to be recycled at South Tahoe Refuse.

This will be the final entirely new building to be erected at South Tahoe High.

The sports medicine facility will be an 8,000-square-foot addition to the gym. Plans for it are headed to state agencies next week for approval.

In addition to the ground breaking, city and school district officials also toured the Theater Arts and Design Academy that will open next month at the start of the 2011-12 school year.

Expect the first performance in the new theater this winter – probably in December.

Officers investigating possible homicide in South Lake Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe police officers are investigating the death of a 52-year-old man as a possible homicide.



Officers said they were called by the dead man's roommate to their residence in the 3700 block of Forest Avenue at 3:15 Monday morning because the victim was not breathing and had sustained a head trauma.

Names are not being released of either man. The 55-year-old surviving roommate is being questioned, but had not been arrested as of noon July 25..

"At this point and time we are covering all of our bases," Police Chief Brian Uhler told *Lake Tahoe News*. With the roommate being the reporting party and the last person to see the victim alive, officers have a lot of questions for him.

An exact cause of death has not been determined by the medical examiner.

Uhler would not say if a weapon had been recovered. A search warrant was expected to be secured today so officers could further search the residence.

Uhler only characterized the men's relationship as roommates. The house on Forest is one-bedroom, and 416 square feet. Another person lives on site, but not in the same building.

'Twelfth Night' delights audience on shore of Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

INCLINE VILLAGE – Twins have a penchant for playing trickery on unsuspecting soles.

In “Twelfth Night” the confusion is not the intentional making of Sebastian and Viola. They don’t even know the other is alive. And to confuse things, Viola is passing herself off as a man.

Such are the mischievous musings of William Shakespeare in one of his more renowned comedic plays.

In its 39th season, the Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival is bringing “Twelfth Night” to the stage at Sand Harbor Tuesday-Sunday through Aug. 21.



Olivia, left, does not realize Cesario is really Viola in men's clothing. Photos/Kathryn Reed

After a year without Shakespeare, the Barb is back at this outdoor stage on the shore of Lake Tahoe.

This is probably the best outdoor theater in the basin. The rocky ridge above is majestic, though no mountain bikers can be seen on the Flume Trail from this vantage point. Plenty of people are still on the beach when the doors open and before the 7:30pm performance begins.

It’s a particularly warm night for Tahoe, though many are

prepared with blankets on the back of chairs.

This production was particularly good because of the strong projection of voices by the entire cast. Shakespeare can be difficult enough at times to follow that when actors' voices are meek or muffled, the audience can be left wishing for Cliffs Notes. This definitely was not the case two nights ago.

The cast is delightful, the story captivating and the setting exquisite.

Laura Welsh Berg is engaging in her role as Viola/Cesario, as is Carie Kawa as Olivia.

While love is an overriding theme is so many of Shakespeare's plays, there always has to be a twist. "Twelfth Night" does not disappoint in this realm.

Some of the humor is adult in nature, but would likely go over the head of the younger ones in attendance.

The only disappointment Saturday night was the attendance. In years past there was not a speck of sand to be found to put a chair on. Not so now. But those who filled the seats were appreciative of the superb acting.



"Twelfth Night" runs through Aug. 21.

No longer do people have to bring their chairs. Beach chairs are set up – something that has been going on for a few years

to maximize the space.

Gone this year are the added fees on tickets. The price ranges from $15 to $85. The most expensive – the ones closest to the stage – have more comfortable chairs and come with wait service for dinner.

Many people bring coolers full of food and libations, though an array of food choices is available.

One woman from Pasadena, at the festival for the first time, bought the cookbook “Shakespeare’s Kitchen” to take home.

On Mondays the stage is not dark, but instead the theater has various offerings from the Sierra Nevada Ballet tonight to Chautauqua to musical groups.

More information about Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival is online.