Students tackle subject matter many adults never deal with

By Kathryn Reed

When students at Mt. Tallac High School graduate a week from day, they will have left behind a collection of work that is compelling and heart-wrenching. The subject matter in many cases deals with issues these teens this early in their lives should not even know exist.

Some of the material delves into issues they are interested in, other subjects hit close to home. The topic can be anything, but most are about a serious subject.

Estefany Flores with her daughter. Photo/Provided

“I decided to make my project on teen pregnancy because I went through a lot of the same experiences I discussed in my project,” explained Estefany Flores. “For example, being confused, feeling alone, feeling sad, and even thinking about having an abortion. I also did this so girls going through this realize that they aren’t alone.”

This is her PowerPoint on teen pregnancy.

Teacher Eileen McEwen has her students make a proposal, research the options and then create a PowerPoint about the subject.

“The PowerPoint project allows them to meet state requirements and have real world skills,” McEwen said.

Besides learning a skill set that will last them a lifetime, part of the project’s goal is to identify a problem and find a solution for it.

“If we don’t find answers, we just have more problems,” McEwen explained.

Jennifer Marroquin had shaken baby syndrome as her topic.

She is one of the Tallac students who has presented her PowerPoint to the Lake Tahoe Unified School District board to demonstrate the skills they are learning at the continuation high school.

Denisse Robles this school year had fetal alcohol syndrome as her topic. It talks about how this is the leading cause of mental retardation for babies born in the United States.

“It shows the wonderful things the (South Lake Tahoe) Women’s Center does,” McEwen said of that PowerPoint. That’s part of the research component – talking to local agencies about what they do to help people with particular problems.

In the process of creating the PowerPoint the students figure out visually what works in terms of using colors, fonts, point sizes, lighting, background, text over photos and other graphic elements.

Music is also integrated into many of the presentations.

They also learn about being able to tell a story, so to speak, through the slides. They must incorporate 500 words of their own writing – not just statistics – into the PowerPoint.

Besides being graded by McEwen, the PowerPoints are subject to peer review by fellow students. And to ensure plagiarism has not occurred, McEwen will run some information through a website that checks for cheating.

Mt. Tallac students graduate June 10 at 11am on the football field at South Tahoe High School.

Dugard says Garridos stole her life; couple sentenced in kidnap, rape of S. Tahoe girl

By Maria L. La Ganga, Los Angeles Times

PLACERVILLE — Nearly 20 years after Jaycee Lee Dugard was abducted while walking to a school bus stop, the couple who pleaded guilty in her kidnapping and rape were sentenced Thursday to prison terms that could keep them behind bars for the rest of their lives.

Phillip Garrido, a 60-year-old convicted rapist, was sentenced to 431 years to life in prison. His 55-year-old wife Nancy was sentenced to 36 years to life in prison.

Jaycee Lee Dugard not

long before she was abducted in South Lake Tahoe.

In recommending that Garrido receive a sentence of 431 years to life in prison, El Dorado County District Attorney Vern Pierson described the serial rapist as “a sexual predator who stole the childhood and innocence from an 11-year-old child. Defendant Garrido’s actions caused her mother Terry Probyn to have to endure an 18-year-long nightmare.”

Before the Garridos’ sentencing Thursday in a Placerville courtroom, a tearful Probyn addressed the court. “How could someone take away the one person in the world I loved so deeply? Where is she? Is she hungry? Is she cold? Is she hurt? My baby was gone and all my dreams turned to nightmares. She was a vulnerable child and I was unable to help her.

“During 18 years away, I could hear her crying, not with my ears, but with my heart. I could feel her pain, not with my body, but with my heart…. I lived in hell on earth. It was you Nancy Garrido and Phillip Garrido that broke my heart.”

Probyn then read a statement from her daughter, who did not attend the hearing: “To Phillip Garrido, I hated every second of every day of 18 years because of you. To you Nancy, I have nothing to say.”

Before sentencing Phillip Garrido, Judge Douglas C. Phimister said the “defendant lacks a soul. What you have done is beyond horrible. May you think long and hard about what you did.”

Read the whole story

Nevada budget deal reached, TRPA dissolution still on table

By Anne Knowles

CARSON CITY – An amendment to the bill to withdraw Nevada from the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency unless the bi-state regulatory body is reformed was introduced Wednesday by TRPA board member and Nevada Secretary of State Ross Miller.

Miller said the amendment would alleviate problems within the TRPA by changing the agency's voting procedures which now hamstring the group and keep it from doing meaningful work, including producing a Regional plan for the Lake Tahoe Basin. The last Regional Plan, developed in 1997, was supposed to expire in 2007.

"We're four years overdue for getting a Regional Plan in place," Miller said. "That is unacceptable, and it's due to the strict voting requirements. Something has to give."

Gov. Brian Sandoval, second from right, is

joined by legislative leaders Assemblyman Pete Goicoechea, R-Eureka, left, Assembly Speaker John Oceguera, D-Las Vegas, and state Sen. Mike McGinness, R-Fallon, to announce a budget agreement June 1 at the Nevada Legislative Building in Carson City. Photo/Lisa J. Tolda

Miller's amendment would require nine votes to adopt, amend or repeal environmental standards, or threshold carrying capacities, or a Regional Plan, policies or procedures. To get a project approved under Miller's amendment, four votes from board members of the state where the project is located and a total of nine votes would be needed. Currently, projects need five votes from members of the state's project and a total of eight votes. The board is comprised of 14 voting members, seven each from California and Nevada, and a non-voting member representing the federal government.

“There have been instances in the past where getting five votes from one state (to approve a project) was problematic,” Miller told *Lake Tahoe News* after his testimony, citing Boulder Bay, the mixed-use project at the site of the Tahoe Biltmore Casino in Crystal Bay. The hotel-casino project was approved by the TRPA in late April after a four-year process.

Roger Wittenberg, president and CEO of Boulder Bay, also testified before the Assembly committee. Wittenberg said if he had to do it all over again, he would not have gone forward with his project because of what he called the uncertainty of the TRPA approval process.

During questions from the committee, Assemblywoman Teresa Benitez-Thompson, D-Reno, suggested that a multi-year approval process for such a large development was not onerous.

Wittenberg said he had no complaints about what he called an arduous process or the TRPA staff, which he said was exemplary.

“It comes down to a vote with people from out of town who then leave. If the vote is fact-based and based in science, I’m fine with it,” he said. “But if it’s politically based, I have a problem with that.”

Wittenberg said he was neutral on the bill, but urged lawmakers to do something to accelerate redevelopment of the lake so projects like Boulder Bay don’t take 10 or more years to complete.

“The problem is not what we’re doing at the lake, but what we’re not doing,” he said.

But several opponents to the bill said changing the voting structure wouldn’t solve any problems.

“Even if the bill passes, it won’t solve what its proponents allege,” said Kyle Davis, political and policy director for

the Nevada Conservation League & Education Fund in Reno. “You can change the voting structure, but if a project violates the Compact, then the court will strike it down.”

Davis also said that the purpose of the existing voting structure was not to require a super majority, as critics of it say, but a bi-state concurrence in which Nevada and California have an equal say in decisions affecting the lake.

Scientists opposing the bill drove home that point.

“The two states have to work together and the TRPA provides a framework for that,” said Alan Gertler, senior director for Clean Technologies & Renewable Energy Center at the Desert Research Institute in Reno. “You can’t have two players marching to the beat of a different drummer.”

The controversial bill drew an overflow crowd of homeowners, environmentalists, developers and gaming lobbyists June 1.

“This isn’t my first road show on a contentious item and it won’t be my last,” said Chairwoman Marilyn Kirkpatrick, D-North Las Vegas, who urged all those testifying to be respectful.

The committee meeting was overshadowed during an afternoon break when Gov. Brian Sandoval and leadership from both houses had a press conference to announce they had reached agreement on a $6.25 billion budget.

That deal raises about $620 million by extending several taxes that were about to expire for two more years. Among those is the modified business tax, but the deal calls for the exemption of about 115,000 small businesses.

Government Affairs adjourned for the Assembly floor session at 3pm without finishing. The committee will continue to hear more testimony on SB271 Thursday at 9am.

The bill attempts to reform the TRPA to avoid the state’s

withdrawal from the agency. But the reforms, including changes to the voting structure, would have to be approved by the Nevada and California Legislatures as well as Congress.

Shortened Greenway bike trail out for environmental review

By Kathryn Reed

It's not exactly what planners had hoped to bring to the table, but the proposed 3.86 miles of bike trail being studied would connect a significant chunk of South Lake Tahoe.

Though still known at the South Tahoe Greenway, the environmental documents being released today do not provide a continuous trail from Meyers to Stateline. Instead, the route under review goes from the end of Sierra Boulevard at Barbara Avenue to Van Sickle Bi-state Park at the state line.

Money and land ownership are preventing the full 9-plus miles from being studied as this point.

"Connecting to the Y, connecting to Meyers are important parts of the overall network in South Lake Tahoe," said Sue Rae Irelan, program analyst for the California Tahoe Conservancy. "It's certainly not off the table. It is still part of the bike and pedestrian master plan."

Irelan has been working on this project since 2002. Four years

ago the thought was pavement would start to be laid this summer. Clearly, that isn't going to happen.

First, the environmental impact report and the U.S. Forest Service's environmental analysis will be out for comment for 30 days. The final environmental documents should be done this fall. At that time funding will be sought. Not a penny is in place to build this trail.

Irelan said having the final environmental documents signed off is a criterion for many funding sources to start writing checks.

When California was flush with cash the CTC had relatively easy access to money for projects like this. Not so anymore. But the agency is going forward with planning so it can seek funding.

The soonest Irelan foresees any ground being disturbed for the Class 1 trail is 2013. Even then it's likely this stretch of trail will be built in phases.

Irelan won't put a dollar figure on the trail, saying others are working on those estimates, which should be available this month. It has been costing between $1.5 million and $2 million per mile of bike trail in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

When it comes to building the boardwalk bridge over Trout Creek, the expense shoots up.

One thing that will keep costs down is much of the land is high-capability and disturbed – meaning laying the 10-foot-wide asphalt trail won't be as expensive.

The Conservancy owns much of the land that follows the old Caltrans right-of-way. (At one time a four-lane highway was going to be built by the state.) The Forest Service, city and county also have land along the route.

The route will allow the Sierra Tract area access to Lake

Tahoe Community College and the Bijou area a trail to Bijou Community Park.

“What we recognized is we need to make the highest value links that we can to produce the network benefits people are looking for,” Irelan told *Lake Tahoe News*.

With the trail that is in place now, this section of the Greenway will provide a little more than 4 miles of continuous cycling through the center of South Lake Tahoe to Nevada.

There is still a chance the Stateline demonstration part of the Stateline-to-Stateline bike route will break ground this year. This, then, means eventually having an even longer continuous trail. The Forest Service needs to sign off on paperwork for movement to begin.

For the Greenway, it will start on the east side of Barbara near where Caltrans dumps snow at the end of Sierra Boulevard. It will follow Martin, cross over Trout Creek via a new bridge, head toward the South Tahoe Public Utility District on Meadow Crest, and then connect with the trail by the ball field at Lake Tahoe Community College.

It connects to the bike route on Al Tahoe Boulevard for people wanting to get off there.

Then the Greenway crosses Al Tahoe, following along the edge of Bijou park on the old Caltrans right-of-way toward Glenwood Way. From there it crosses some neighborhood streets before angling toward Herbert and Aloha.

At this point it heads toward Pioneer Trail. It hits Ski Run Boulevard, crosses Pioneer Trail and hooks up with David Lane. A steep grade will require it to wind a bit, along with the need to build retaining walls.

The route stays upslope of Pioneer Trail, following the old right-of-way to Van Sickle park where it will end below the

barn.

“The trail we are designing is capable of being plowed. We would have to find a separate funding source for that and that has not been real obvious,” Irelan said.

What isn’t plowed, she foresees being used as a cross country ski trail in the winter.

The document may be viewed online as of 5pm today or at the Conservancy’s office on Third Street, the Forest Service office on College Drive, the county library on Rufus Allen Boulevard – all in South Lake Tahoe, or the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency office on Market Street in Stateline.

An open house is scheduled for June 15 from 6-8pm at the Forest Service office, 35 College Drive, South Lake Tahoe.

Slashing victim in another battle – perp up for parole

By Kathryn Reed

Susie Rizk Laney was nearly shredded to death at the hands of a former boyfriend. Looking at her and listening to her it would be hard to know the hell she has been through. That is, until she rolls up her sleeves, lifts her shirt above her waist and pushes aside her shoulder-length hair to show her neck.

Scars.

They are everywhere on her body.

Susie Rizk Laney is fighting to keep the man who tortured her in prison. Photos/Kathryn Reed

They are the physical reminders of what Steve Wasserman did to her on Oct. 25, 2005, with a 2-foot-long Samurai sword. Their daughter who was 4 at the time watched as daddy tried to kill mommy at their South Lake Tahoe home.

Laney had gotten a restraining order against Wasserman the day before the attack. But a piece of paper is little deterrent to a desperate, angry man with a freshly sharpened sword.

“The last thing my daughter saw was me bleeding to death and then she didn’t see me for four weeks,” Laney said. She was 35 when the incident occurred. Wasserman was 32.

She praises God for the strength to live, to carry on each day. Laney also believes it was the Lord’s intervention that led her to meet and marry Shannon Laney. Although he is a sergeant with the South Lake Tahoe Police Department, the incident is not how they met.

The two started dating in 2007 and were married the following Valentine’s Day. Laney adopted Harmony after Wasserman agreed to give up his parental rights. Now it’s a family of five with Laney’s two children from a previous marriage.

“I was praying for protection over our lives after the attack. I never expected He would send me a police officer,” Laney said. “My God used something so tragic and turned it into something so beautiful. It is a perfect union. We are best friends.”

The Laneys sat down with *Lake Tahoe News* to discuss the latest chapter in this ordeal and to bring the community up-to-date with where Susie Laney is since the near-fatal attack that left her with 19 cuts, requiring more than a dozen surgeries and how she is coping with losing the range of motion in her hands.

Emotionally, Laney is now confronted with Wasserman being eligible for parole. His hearing is July 25 at 1pm. If he were granted parole, he would be let out in October 2012.

Wasserman was given a seven-year to life sentence for burglary, aggravated mayhem and the use of a deadly weapon. He accepted the plea deal the day the jury was being interviewed. He had threatened to plead insanity, which could have let him out on the streets sooner. This is why Laney didn’t push for attempted murder.

What the Laneys want is for Wasserman to stay behind bars while Harmony is still a child. He could be put on a three-, five- or 15-year cycle for parole hearings. They want him on a 15-year cycle. That would put Harmony at age 24 before he were able to come up for parole again.

They have no intention of letting Harmony see Wasserman until she is an adult – assuming she wants to then.

“This guy needs to be stopped. He almost got away with murder,” Laney said. “It’s not about revenge. It’s not about payback. It’s about protecting my family.”

Scars are a constant reminder of the ordeal Susie Rizk Laney went through.

Her husband says, “We believe in forgiveness, but we don’t have to forget what a threat he is to us or anyone else.”

He believes Wasserman would be a repeat offender.

Worst-case scenario if Wasserman is let out next year, is the Laneys believe they would have to home school their children, hire someone to stay at the house if the sergeant is working and be always looking over their shoulder.

For the most part, though, the Laneys lead a normal life. They do the typical family stuff – camp, wakeboard, go to church.

But Laney admits not a day goes by that she isn’t reminded of what happened to her. She has to look at the scars every day. She knows it’s her daughter’s biological father who did it to her.

She spent 1½ years in physical and occupational therapy. Her right hand was nearly sawed off. Her knee plate was cut in half. She couldn’t talk or walk. She wasn’t able to comb her daughter’s hair, let alone take care of some her own basic needs.

“It’s not always easy, the recovery process,” Laney said.

“Certain things have been taken away, things I can’t do. I get frustrated and mad.”

While mother and daughter have been to counseling, both are in a stable mental state now. The nightmares have subsided. Harmony knows what happened, remembers the day vividly.

“She remembers her dog licking the blood off her mom’s head,” Shannon Laney said.

The Laneys say Wasserman knew what he was doing, that the attack was premeditated. Officers apparently found a hit list at his home with names of people he planned to kill.

Laney can’t say enough good things about Officer Ric Martinez who stormed the San Francisco Avenue residence and saved her life.

“He’s my hero,” Laney said. Martinez arrived to find Wasserman over Laney with the sword on her heart. Blood was everywhere.

Laney is working for an orthopedic surgeon. She is able to share her story with others, to bring them hope, to show them that life does go on.

A Facebook page has been set up to keep people informed about what is going on regarding Wasserman’s parole hearing. Pictures of Laney when she was in the hospital show some of the gravity of her wounds.

Letters to the parole board are due July 4. Address letters to: Confidential, Classification and Parole Representative, Mule Creek State Prison, P.O. Box 409099, Ione, CA 95640; RE: BPT Hearing 7/25/11; Steven Wasserman-F41068.

Take time to remember what Memorial Day is really about

War is one of those seemingly necessary evils in our society.

Today – Memorial Day – is when we pause to remember those who lost their lives fighting for the United States. It's a day to put aside our political differences and personal beliefs that led to the deaths of these men and women.

These lost lives are no less significant because we don't agree on what led to their deaths. They died fighting for what our government deemed a worthy cause.

Don't blame the soldiers for the job they do. If you disagree with the battles being fought, then deal with the lawmakers. The soldiers who keep marching, keep training, keep fighting – they deserve our respect and our thanks.

Memorial for South Lake Tahoe men who died in the Iraq conflict. Photo/LTN file

Lake Tahoe News takes this time to salute those who given the ultimate sacrifice for our country.

The ones who died deserve a moment of silence today – and more

often. Take a moment from your long weekend and remember that many people have an empty chair at the picnic table today.

Go to one of the many ceremonies at the cemeteries and military halls. Place a flag on the marker of a grave of a soldier. Toast to those who are not with us.

Hardly any community has not been touched by the death of a soldier – including Lake Tahoe.

Some died in combat. Some died in training.

Those who aren't listed are the ones who took their lives because they did not know any other way to conquer the demons they were ravaged by.

Not all of those who died volunteered to serve in one of the branches of the military. But those who join one of the branches today do so willingly. That is to be commended – especially in the world we live in today. Most of these people will see a tour of duty overseas in hostile areas where U.S. citizens are not always welcome.

It is naïve to think the numbers of military deaths will ever be nil. But we must not ever forget those who have died fighting to make the world a better, safer, more livable place.

The *Washington Post* keeps a running list of those who have died in the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts. While news sites seem to keep these conflicts off the front pages, they are always front and center for the thousands of families who worry each day that the dreaded call will come saying their loved one has died.

We owe it those who have died to not forget them.

Below is a list of the wars, or whatever the government chose to call it, where the U.S. engaged in combat, the dates of the struggle, and the number of people the country lost in the

fight. Of course, the numbers in the last two categories keeps growing.

Conflict	**Dates of conflict**	**Number of casualties**
War of Independence	1775-1783	25,000
Northwest Indian War	1785-1795	1,221
Quasi-War	1798-1800	20
Barbary Wars	1801-1815	35
War of 1812	1812-1815	20,000
1st Seminole War	1817-1818	30
2nd Seminole War	1835-1842	1,500
Mexican-American War	1846-1848	13,283
3rd Seminole War		

1855-1858
26

Civil War

1861-1865
623,026

Indian Wars
1865-1898
919

Spanish-American War
1898
2,446

Philippine War
1898-1902
4,196

Boxer Rebellion
1900-1901
37

Mexican Revolution
1914-1919
35

Haiti Occupation
1915-1934
146

World War 1

1917-1918
116,708

World War 2

1941-1945
407,316

Korean War
1950-1953
36,914

Vietnam
War
1964-1973
58,169

El Salvador
1980-1992
20

Beirut
1982-1984
266

Persian Gulf “Support”
1987-1988
39

Invasion of Grenada
1983
19

Invasion of Panama
1989
40

Persian Gulf War
1991
269

Somalia
1992-1993
43

Bosnia

1995

12

Afghanistan

2002-2011

1,571

Iraq

2003-2011

4,442.

Pine Nuts lure mountain bikers with dry, challenging terrain

By Joel Fleishman

PINE NUTS – “Damn, that was a good ride. Only thing missin’ were dancing girls around every corner.”

“Yeah, naked ones,” a fellow dirt biker chimes in.

Soon, the snap, crackle and pop of Budweiser cans opening complement the macho banter, along with some very impressive expectoration. Gunshots echo from a firing range somewhere distant in the sagebrush. No question, this is Nevada.

Pine Nuts offer mountain biking while trails in Tahoe are soggy. Photo/Jeff Moser/BikeCarson.com

To be exact, we're at "The Tree," the access point to the labyrinth of off-road trails leading into the Pine Nut Mountains at the southeast corner of the Carson Valley. I have come here not to ride a motorcycle nor to shoot a gun, but to venture out on a mountain bike.

I had heard of the "Pine Nuts" before, but with world-class mountain biking just out of my Lake Tahoe backyard (the Flume, Mr. Toad's, Corral) I hadn't bothered with the 30-mile drive. And no one had ever said, "Man, you just gotta ride the Pine Nuts." But with our local trails still saddled with snow and mud, it was time to give it a try.

At "The Tree," an unmistakable, solitary pinion off Pine Nut Road, I'm not sure how to proceed into this maze of unfamiliar trails. Luck intervenes as I see another cyclist and flag him down.

"This is my first time out here … can you tell me where to go?" I plead.

"How 'bout I show you? Come on, let's go," urges fit-looking

Mark, whom I would find out trains triathletes. I get the feeling I'll have to bring out my A-game to hang with him.

Immediately, we are hammering on a dirt road that soon morphs into roller-coaster single track heading east into the hills. We crest the short, steep climbs only to dive back down, keeping the low gear handy for the next ascent. On one furious attempt up, my right foot loses contact with the pedal, which comes around and slams my shin.

"That's going to leave a mark," I mutter to myself. The impact also draws some blood, which seems to christen me to the Pine Nuts. A little bit of blood on a ride is fine; a lot, on the other hand, is another story.

We swoop around banked turns on firmly packed dirt with just enough rocks to make it interesting. But this in no way is technical mountain biking – my hardtail (a bike with only front suspension) handles it just fine.

Worries over a rampant motorcycle presence are unfounded on this day. The few dirt bikers we do see are courteous, albeit noisy. We all just want to get along and enjoy this place.

Joel Fleishman

After about an hour in, I realize from the view that we've gone up more than down. The Carson Valley below is abnormally green due to the big winter and wet spring. To the west, the Sierra Nevada mountain range explodes an almost perpendicular 5,000 feet from the valley floor. Job's and Job's Sister, both 10,000-foot peaks, are still covered with a massive, winter-like blanket of snow.

When you ride in the Sierra, sometimes it’s hard to the see the Sierra. Sure, riding through a dense alpine forest in a bowl known as the Lake Tahoe Basin offers plenty of eye candy. But out here in the Pine Nuts, a valley away on the next mountain range, you can better appreciate the immensity of that 400-mile-long wall of Sierra granite.

Looping back west and mostly down, view-gawking competes with concentrating on the trail. The predominant single-leaf pinions, from which the Pine Nuts gets its name, are too squat to obscure the panoramic scene. Neither better nor worse, it’s a different experience than riding under the canopies of the 200-foot pines up at the lake.

Back at “The Tree,” I thank Mark for his patience, and we go our separate ways. With a few hours of warm daylight left, I look for a mellow way to soak up some high-desert solitude. I cross Pine Nut Road and hit the Teacher’s Trail, so named because it’s a good place for beginners. A couple of local bicyclists are on the trail and I mention how much I’m enjoying my first trip out to the Pine Nuts.

“This is our little secret. Don’t tell anyone,” says one of them.

I grin and think, “Yeah, right.”

Farmers’ market season set to begin in Lake Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

Mother Nature is playing havoc with produce growers.

Despite the unseasonably cool weather and continuous rain, farmers' market season is here.

The two South Shore markets start operation the first week of June. The Ski Run Boulevard market between Birch and Larch streets will run every Friday starting June 3 from 9am-2pm. The El Dorado County Certified Farmers Market Association will be back at the American Legion Hall parking lot on Highway 50 on Tuesdays starting June 7, from 8am-1pm.

Javier Toscano will be at the Tuesday farmers' market in South Lake Tahoe starting in June. Photo/LTN file

"I think people are removed from nature," said Alex Mellon, who coordinates the Ski Run market. He said people ask why tomatoes aren't at the market in June when they are in the grocery store. A definite disconnect exists between some people understanding where their food comes from.

The same goes with some people expecting produce to look perfect like it does in a grocery store. Naturally, it just doesn't happen that way. Despite some imperfections to fruit and veggies at area farmers' markets, it's still good quality.

Another thing is most of the produce was picked the morning it

is sold at a market – making it the freshest possible unless one were to grow it themselves.

Both South Shore markets rely heavily on El Dorado County farmers to supply the fruits and vegetables that are sold each week. Some farmers, though, come from the Central Valley. This is a good thing because it has been warmer there.

“Cherries are slow, but we have a grower from Stockton. Those look really good,” said Jim Coalwell, who runs the Tuesday market in South Lake Tahoe. “Our local ones are borderline because we need warm weather for the sweetness.”

Expect lettuces, cherries, peaches, nectarines, red onions and garlic to be some of the items available at the first markets.

El Dorado County’s initial peach harvest looks iffy because of the moisture that keeps coming.

“It’s going to be a sketchy peach season for sure. It will be good later on,” said Coalwell, who runs the Red Shack in Placerville with wife Lois.

Curly leaf is hurting the trees.

“The leaves curl up and dry up and fall off. If new leaves have not started, there is no protection for little fruit to develop,” Coalwell explained.

He’s lined up a grower from Fresno to bring peaches the first part of the season, with the hope El Dorado County’s trees will recover for later in the summer.

The Ski Run market is run in conjunction with Sacred Path Farms in Coloma. The idea last year when the market first opened in August was to operate in the late afternoon or evening, but some businesses on Ski Run made sure that did not happen. This is why it has the hours it does.

Both South Shore markets will have art booths and food vendors

beyond produce.

New to the Tuesday market will be Sugar Lily Bakery from El Dorado.

Coalwell has his fingers crossed the South Shore will be able to keep supporting the market.

“The market is still doing good, but not like it was a few years a go. I don’t think a lot of those people are there any more,” Coalwell said.

He’s right. Plus, unemployment in South Lake Tahoe is close to 17 percent, so the number of those being able to afford any farmers’ market is dwindling.

As with all farmers’ markets, what is available is based on what the farmers have grown and what season it is. Don’t expect corn and tomatoes for a bit.

Other farmers’ markets:

• Foothill Farmer’s Market, which is scheduled lakeside at Tahoe City’s Commons Beach, started May 26. It is every Thursday from 8am-noon until Oct. 13.

• The market opens in Kings Beach on June 14.

• Farm fresh fruits, vegetables, arts and entertainment are available every Saturday June 11-Sept. 17 at the 3rd and Curry Street Farmers Market in Carson City. The market runs from 8:30am to 1:30pm.

• Mills Park in Carson City hosts a farmers market every Wednesday at the pavilion from 3-7pm.

• Wednesday from June 1-Sept. 14 8am-1pm at Lampe Park, 1325 Waterloo Lane, Gardnerville.

Lake Valley fire hires chief from within the department

By Kathryn Reed

Gareth Harris has been selected at the next fire chief of Lake Valley Fire Protection District.

He takes the helm from Jeff Michael who will retire June 24.

Gareth Harris

When Harris was hired in 2005 from the Half Moon Bay Fire District as battalion chief and fire marshal for Lake Valley he was the first hire at that level outside of the department.

“There is such a family culture here that once I proved I was worthy of being one of the family members, I was readily accepted,” Harris told *Lake Tahoe News*. “My goal as the new leader is to continue that culture, that tradition.”

Harris, 49, has no plans of making sweeping changes. He expects to evaluate things and continue moving forward in the direction the department has been going.

As battalion chief he is incident commander at most scenes – whether it’s a structure fire, rope rescue or hazardous materials incident. As fire chief, he will be responsible for

the entire department.

In the coming weeks more changes are expected at Lake Valley.

“Nothing is cast in stone yet, but the idea is we have very qualified individuals in our department that we will be promoting,” Harris said.

DCSD wants dormant middle school to have second life

By Susan Wood

ZEPHYR COVE – An international youth hostel, university retreat, performing arts facility, senior center outpost, culinary arts program, seasonal housing or multi-purpose sports complex – all represent a possible next stage in development for the “moth-balled” Kingsbury Middle School closed a few years ago because of declining enrollment.

That was the essence of the first community input session set at Whittell High School on Thursday night and facilitated by Douglas County School District Superintendent Lisa Noonan, who was collecting ideas on who to woo for possible suitors to buy the 36,000-square-foot school that sits on 10 acres of pristine lake ridge property above Lake Village.

Kingsbury Middle School's future may be decided soon. Photo/Susan Wood

Noonan will host the second meeting at 6pm on June 1 at Douglas High School's Media Center at 1670 Highway 88 in Minden.

"My hope is by the end of the summer to get our ducks in a row," Noonan said. "This is literally just step 1."

The school – which provided a noisy source of controversy when the school district closed it and gave away two grades to Zephyr Cove Elementary and the high school – comes with its advantages and disadvantages for the possible buyer. The latter – it needs work, including a new roof that could run $460,000 according to early estimates. The former – it has a cafeteria, full-sized gym, locker room and its BMPs – the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's mandatory erosion control measures. The land use coverage may also be worth a lot, which opens the door for a buyer razing the building and capitalizing on eliminating the coverage.

"The land is probably what is more valuable – even in this market and economic downturn," school district Chief Financial Officer Holly Luna wrote *Lake Tahoe News* before the meeting.

Parent Andy Dauscher asked about getting a tally on all necessary repairs and a solid figure on maintenance costs. It costs the school district money to plow the road, keep a phone line open and run limited utilities.

When the district posed the question of closing the school, the estimates were as high as $1 million a year the school

district would be saving. Noonan couldn't confirm the figure, but instead focused on what "it's costing" while deteriorating.

"It's a big deal when you sell a school in a small community," she said. "My hope is by listening to the community that we'll know this is what they want for the community."

Thursday's input session brought out only a handful of people to bounce around ideas to which Noonan jotted down notes. This was a stark contrast from the hundreds who gathered before the school closed. She addressed the 15 attendees of the booster club who met before the session and shared their suggestions as well. Much of their input focused on recreation. There's a huge need for large spaces and a place where teams can congregate and practice.

At the session, parent Greg Felton noted how many teams are forced to travel to the Carson Valley for practices, taking time away from homework and other activities – not to mention the safety hazard with the treacherous winter driving conditions over a mountain pass.

Felton pressed Noonan on whether selling the school may be the wisest choice for now and insisted on knowing whether the school board is absolutely set on the direction to sell the school.

"It seems like the wrong time," he said, referring back to the superintendent's comments on how bad the current economy is.

Noonan responded that she believes the school sale was part of the known equation when the board agreed to close it in 2008. She agreed to confirm the direction and look into other unknowns as in the zoning, whether any donor-type deed restriction exists and getting appraisals into place. No appraisal is on the table. And Noonan told *Lake Tahoe News* no serious parties have expressed interest in buying the property.

Western Nevada Community College was approached when Carol Lark was at the helm, but it has left the picture with its own budget problems to contend with. It may close two of its facilities.

Still, Nevada's budget woes have not spoiled Noonan on the idea of pursuing interest from other colleges.

"I think the university option is a viable one," she said. If not directly run by the higher education entity, perhaps an alumni group would like to form a Stanford Sierra Camp-type setting on the Nevada side of Lake Tahoe, she mentioned.

Other ideas abound – including a land, facility or title swap with Douglas County.

Before the sale may occur in a depressed real estate market, Noonan noted that the school could be used under some type of lease agreement, but the long-term goal is to sell.

"Our current 10-year projection doesn't show a bounce back (of school enrollment)," she said.

First things first – Noonan wants input. She may be reached at enoonan@dcsd.k12.nv.us or (775) 782.5135.