

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Rainy

Rainy is a beautiful calico Snowshoe mix kitty who is 4 years old. She is the perfect companion for someone who has no other pets, as she is scared of other cats and dogs. She is also frightened of children.

Rainy needs a special home to help her feel comfortable and has been at the shelter since December.

Rainy is spayed, microchipped, tested for FIV, and vaccinated. She is at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many other dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes. Go to the Tahoe animal shelter's Facebook page to see photos and descriptions of all pets at the shelter.

Call 530.573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet.

For spay-neuter assistance for South Tahoe residents, go **online**.

– Karen Kuentz

Kings Beach parade brings out 28 entrants

The annual Kings Beach Snowfest Parade on March 11 featured 28 creative and entertaining entries from community nonprofits, governmental agencies, service groups and local businesses.

This year's parade was attended by more than 1,000 spectators. It featured live music, fire trucks, candy, and more.

The 2017 parade winners are:

- Best Tahoe spirit award: Karen's Playskool
- Best children's entry: Boys & Girls Club of North Lake Tahoe
- Most entertaining entry: Burner Bike Brigade
- Best new entry: Brian Gonsalves, attorney
- Best overall entry: The Grid Bar & Grill
- Honorable mentions: Rotary Club of Tahoe City and the Incline High School Jazz Band.

Dogs shine at I-Did-A-Run in Truckee

Dogs of all breeds and sizes competed in the 13th annual I-Did-A-Run on March 12 at Tahoe Donner Downhill Ski Area.

This on-snow dog pull race raised \$1,836 for the Humane Society of Truckee-Tahoe via raffle tickets, and \$2,000 from a

private contribution.

Forty-five dogs raced against the clock pulling weighted covered wagon sleds over a snow-covered course.

Division 1 winner (0-25 pounds): Maci V., a miniature pincer mix, owned by Tullin Valdez of Truckee

Division 2 winner (26-50 pounds): Raina, a cocker spaniel owned by Dean Eppley of Folsom and a Tahoe Donner member.

Division 3 winner (51-75 pounds): Rowdy, a mixed Rhodesian Ridgeback owned by Bryce Rhodes of Reno. Rowdy scored a time of 2.99 seconds and was also crowned overall champion.

Division 4 winner (76+ pounds): Obi, a chocolate Lab owned by Lloyd Golden of Truckee.

Family gardening provides more than a bountiful harvest

By Melinda Myers

Gardeners know digging, planting, harvesting and even viewing a garden is good for the mind, body and spirit. It improves strength and flexibility, lowers blood pressure and elevates our mood. And this is true for all members of the family from the very young to the more seasoned.

Plan on sharing these benefits with yours or a friend's children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews this growing season. Children, and even adults, who grow their own vegetables are more likely to eat them. But gardening does even more to help our children. Research shows children

exposed to the outdoors and gardening are more focused, have less issues with attention deficit and score better on tests. Girls exposed to gardens and green spaces are more confident and better able to handle peer pressure.



Children exposed to the outdoors and gardening are more focused, have less issues with attention deficit and score higher on tests. Photo/Provided

Here are a few ways to make gardening with family more fun and memorable.

Involve the whole family when planning the garden. Talk about the flowers everyone wants to grow and vegetables you all like to eat. Then break out the paper, old catalogs, scissors, crayons, pencils and rulers. Young children can cut out pictures of their favorite vegetables and flowers and glue them on the paper. Older children can draw the garden to scale on graph paper and plot their choices in the garden.

Make your own plant markers. Once you decide on the plants you want to grow spend a rainy afternoon creating plant labels for the garden. Paint the name or a picture of the flower or vegetable on a flat rock, slat from a discarded mini blind, paint sticks or other recycled items.

Consider giving everyone his or her own garden space. Let them pick their own plants and be responsible for its maintenance.

Design individual plots or divide larger beds into smaller sections. Or give each family member his or her own container. This is a great option when planting space and time are limited. And just about anything can be planted. An old 5-gallon bucket or washtub with holes drilled into the bottom, recycled nursery pots or a colorful raised planter make great gardens.

Direct fast moving, small feet down the path and away from plants. Fun edging materials, mulched pathways or slightly raised beds help delineate pathways from gardens. This helps to keep children from trampling the plants.

Grow some **quick-maturing plants** like radishes and lettuce that are ready to harvest in 30 to 45 days along with slower growers like watermelon and tomatoes. You will keep everyone interested if there is something growing, blooming and good to eat throughout the season.

Reduce the risk of mistakes. Kids, like so many gardeners, suffer from “more is better” syndrome. Avoid damage from overfertilization by using a low nitrogen organic fertilizer. It’s safe and won’t burn your plants even if the weather becomes hot and dry.

And enlist my favorite “pluck, drop and stomp” **pest management** strategy. Teach children the difference between the good and bad insects and then have them burn off some excess energy as they implement the process.

End the season with a **harvest party**. Use your homegrown produce to prepare a picnic or fancy dinner for family and friends. And be sure to use some of those beautiful flowers you grew to decorate the table.

Gardening expert Melinda Myers is the author of more than 20 gardening books, including “Small Space Gardening” and the

"Midwest Gardener's Handbook." Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for Birds & Blooms magazine and spokesperson for Milorganite.

Tahoe entrepreneur headlines SNC speaker series

Jen Gurecki, CEO and founder of the ski and snowboard company Coalition Snow and the nonprofit social enterprise Zawadisha, will give a talk at Sierra Nevada College in Incline Village on March 22.

Gurecki focuses on bottom-up social change by building resilient communities and cultivating female leadership. Zawadisha provides small loans to rural Kenyan women to help finance their livelihoods, access renewable energy and water products such as solar lamps, rain water tanks, and clean cook stoves, and provide financial literacy, micro-enterprise, and leadership training to their communities as peer educators.

Coalition Snow is the world's first all-women's ski and snowboard company, proud maker of "women's gear that doesn't suck."

Gurecki also served as the executive director of the UC Berkeley Adventure Risk Challenge literacy and leadership program, integrating outdoor and academic education for underserved youth.

The free talk starts at 11:45am.

Idyllic SLT bed and breakfast changes hands

By Kathryn Reed

Cooking for two instead of 20 – that’s what Jerry Birdwell is looking forward to. Learning to cook for 20 is something Rachel Carlson is going to have to figure out soon.

Carlson and her husband, Greg, as of March 15 are the owners of the Black Bear Inn in South Lake Tahoe. It will reopen April 14.

It was on March 5, 1999, that Birdwell and Kevin Chandler opened the inn. The couple moved from Texas with no prior bed and breakfast experience. One was a lawyer, the other in the computer industry. What they created was an iconic lodging establishment that this reporter believes served the best breakfast anywhere on the South Shore. The only problem, as it were, was you had to be a guest of the inn in order to dine there.

Just like the original owners, the new ones also come without lodging or kitchen experience.

“I don’t think anyone can cook breakfast as well as Jerry did,” Carlson said. She said they are researching options for breakfast. Her specialty is baking.



The Black Bear Inn in South Lake Tahoe has new owners.
Photo/LTN

Carlson's background is marketing. Friday will be her last day at Heavenly Mountain Resort. Greg Carlson will continue to work for Kirkwood Mountain Resort in the human resources department.

For now, the changes they plan to make include new linens – all white. The early evening wine and cheese will no longer be offered. The website and logo will be updated soon.

Most of the furnishings are still there – which include antiques and rustic items that in some ways give the Black Bear an old Tahoe feel in an upscale way. The inn has five rooms in the main lodge-type building, with three cabins in the back – one being a duplex.

“One of the things we know that is special about the place is the charm and character. We really want to make sure we keep the heart and soul of the place,” Carlson told *Lake Tahoe News*.

But they also want to do more contemporary things like pop up and wine dinners. The plan is to bring chefs in from Reno, Sacramento and the Bay Area, and winemakers from Sonoma and Napa to offer guests and Tahoe residents a culinary treat.

During the Birdwell-Chandler regime, "The Bachelor" was twice filmed at Black Bear Inn. Photo shoots were common. Dinners were a brief offering for guests and locals.

Being community oriented is the Carlsons' goal. They want the Black Bear Inn to not just be for people who are spending the night.

For Chandler and Birdwell, they will now be spending much of their time at their ranch in Sutter Creek that they bought a few years ago. They also plan to buy a cabin in town, so they aren't really leaving Tahoe for good.

For the Carlsons, the Black Bear Inn is now their home and their job.

In many ways the two couples share similar goals for the inn. Birdwell was the co-founder of the Ski Run Business Improvement district that was able to get the sidewalk, lamp posts, curb and gutters in on the street.

The Carlsons want to expand on the vibe to make Ski Run a true destination for locals and tourists.

"I will say that knowing the people on Ski Run who are living and working and planning for the future of the street, and having heard what is in the pipeline, I'm very excited for the future of Ski Run. Big things are ahead," Chandler told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The guys hosted multiple political fundraisers and weddings for friends.

Expanding the inn as a wedding venue is a goal of the new owners.

In the end, it's all about the guests. Both couples know that.

"We have guests who got engaged at the inn, and others who chose BBI as their wedding venue. We helped them create life memories, and that is very rewarding," Chandler said. Some of the guests have become friends.

Carlson is already looking forward to meeting the people who are booked for this spring.

"Something we are really excited about is connecting with people from all over the world and sharing our knowledge of the area," Carlson said.

Lenny Kravitz tour to stop at Stateline

The eighth artist has been added to Harveys Outdoor Concert Series – Lenny Kravitz.

He will be on the South Shore July 14 at 8pm.

Tickets go on sale to the general public on March 24. They start at \$54.59, plus taxes and fees.

More shows will be forthcoming.

Other performers coming this summer to the Stateline venue include: Paul Simon, Rebelution, Sammy Hagar, Train, Third Eye Blind, Jack Johnson and Slightly Stoopid.

Conference to focus on wildfire evacuation planning

By Ed Smith

On March 27 at the Atlantis Casino in Reno, the Nevada Network of Fire Adapted Communities, aka The Network, will host its third annual conference. The Network is an organization dedicated to helping Nevada communities reduce their wildfire threat. They have selected “safe and effective evacuation” as this year’s conference theme. This conference targets residents of Nevada’s wildfire-prone communities, fire service representatives and other stakeholders in Nevada’s wildland-urban interface fire issue.



Ed Smith

The best advice evacuation expert and North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District Assistant Fire Marshal Mark Regan has for a homeowner regarding evacuation during wildfire is this: “Be prepared and do not hesitate.”

Regan said many homeowners linger at their homes after being told to evacuate. People who linger can jeopardize their lives and make things more difficult for emergency responders.

To increase your ability to evacuate immediately when asked,

prepare yourself and your family well before a wildfire occurs, and anticipate your needs when you do have to evacuate. Wildfire: Prepare – Anticipate – Evacuate!

Proper advanced evacuation preparation includes:

- Meet with household members and develop a family emergency plan.
- Assemble a family to-go bag, pet to-go bag and disaster supply kit.
- Register with your local emergency notification system if this service is available in your area.
- Attend an evacuation drill and practice two of the escape routes out of the community.
- Designate a safe meeting place and contact person for you and your family members.
- Arrange for transportation out of the area if you do not drive.
- Inventory home contents, videotape/photograph property and place in the to-go bag or use a phone app such as My Home Scr.APP.book.
- Familiarize yourself about animal/livestock evacuation recommendations.
- Prepare “Evacuated” and “Water Source” signage.
- Review additional evacuation advice **online**.

Some of the topics to be addressed at the conference include:

- Description of what evacuation conditions could be like (e.g., dark, smoky, windy, no power, poor water pressure, etc.).

- A homeowner's experience and advice as a result of the recent Little Valley Fire.
- Proper preparation and evacuation of your family.
- Community-level evacuation.
- Conducting a community evacuation drill.
- Safe evacuation of pets and livestock.
- Post-fire issues.

The concluding activity of the conference will be a discussion on the future of The Network and its administration by the Nevada Division of Forestry.

There is no cost to attend the conference, and you do not have to be a member of The Network to attend. For more information about The Network or to register for the conference, go **online**.

Ed Smith is a natural resource specialist with University of Nevada Cooperative Extension. For information about gardening and landscaping, contact a master gardener at 775.336.0265 or mastergardeners@unce.unr.edu.

Mountaineer to give presentation in Tahoe City

On April 13, Alpenglow Sports partners with outdoor publisher Mountaineers Books to host mountaineer Leif Whittaker in Tahoe City.

Whittaker brings a fresh perspective on his famous father, Lou

Whittaker, a mountaineering legend who forged his legacy as the first American to summit the world's tallest peak, Mount Everest.

In 1963, the world followed the first American Mount Everest Expedition, and watched as "Big Jim" Whittaker became the first American to stand on top of the world. He returned home a hero.

Leif Whittaker's "My Old Man and the Mountain" is the story of what it was like to "grow up Whittaker"—the youngest son of Jim Whittaker and Dianne Roberts. He shares glimpses of his upbringing and how the pressure to climb started early on. Readers learn of his first adventures with family in the Olympic Mountains and on Mount Rainier; his close yet at times competitive relationship with his brother Joss; his battle with a serious back injury; and his efforts to stand apart from his father's legacy.

With wry honesty he depicts being a recent college grad, still living in his parents' home and trying to find a purpose in life—digging ditches, building houses, selling T-shirts to tourists—until a chance encounter leads to the opportunity to climb Everest, just like his father did.

Whittaker's multimedia presentation will be at Tahoe Art Haus Cinema, followed by questions and a book signing. The event starts at 7pm and doors open at 6:30pm. Buy \$10 tickets **online**. Tickets will be available at the door on the night of event for \$12.

Road Beat: Chevrolet Volt, shockingly good

By Larry Weitzman

Recently the Road Beat had a chance to drive a new second generation Chevy Volt. It was my first time and let me say it is impressive.

This second generation gets a new refined and quite attractive body, sleek and stylish. It is a compact car riding on a 106-inch wheel base with a length of 180 inches. Width is 71 inches which is wide (and stable) for a compact car.

Here is where it gets interesting. In drives of 50 miles or less, it can run pure electric, no gas required and it has plenty of snap. After 50 miles, the Volts new higher capacity L-I battery pack (18.4 kWh) gets help from the new 1.5L 101 hp gas engine which is no longer used strictly as a generator to provide electricity to the battery which provides power now to two electric motors, but instead is connected directly to the front wheels through a series of sun, planetary and ring gears. Because the electric motors also use the same gear sets via a series of three clutch packs, the engine can add power to the larger (117 hp) electric motor while the smaller electric motor (64 hp) acts as a generator charging the L-I battery at the same time. In pure electric, the system, either the bigger of the two electric motors operate or if more power is demanded, both electric motors can power the Volt.



The Volt practically makes a gas station obsolete. Photo
Larry Weitzman

In any event, the Volt is a peppy car with claims of 0-30 mph of 2.6 seconds (that's very quick) and a 0-60 mph time of 8.4 seconds. Hopefully, I will be able to fully test a Volt and get actual data to confirm or even beat those times. Ditto for fuel economy which over a short drive using both the electric motor and gas engine in aggressive driving averaged 66.7 mpg. Some mopeds don't get that kind of fuel economy.

The passenger cabin volume is 90 cubic feet, about average for a compact car, but the trunk is small at 10.6 cubic feet. But it is very nicely appointed with top quality materials. Over the last decade, General Motors has made a concerted and successful effort to upgrade the interior quality of all their new models that started with the Holden, Pontiac Grand Prix in 2004. And Volt has a comfortable, stylish quality interior.

Driving the Volt was a fun experience. Throttle response as promised by Chevy was very responsive and instantaneous. It

was also linear and easy to modulate, just like a rheostat controlling an electric motor like when you played with your electric train. Wait a second, this is an electric motor controlled by a "rheostat." But there is more and that is the incredibly smooth integration of the gas engine which can be brought on line if you select that driving mode. It is so smooth and quiet you simply can't tell during its operation. But in "normal" driving you will never ask for it and simply drive electric for the 50 miles or so that the battery can power the vehicle. And driving pure electric is kind of fun.

But there is more to this than simply going on the gas engine "range extender." Because of the design of the system and that the electric motors can simultaneously act as generators, when you need extra power the battery always seems to be there, so there is no drop in performance. In this respect, Volt acts like a regular hybrid, the battery/electric motor and engine work together when requested by the throttle/rheostat.

Volt gives you some serious fuel economy without have to worry about pushing after a pure electric car runs out of electrons or you need a charging station and a long lunch/dinner or motel room. It's never a problem because you have the light weight range extender gas engine which on its own returns an EPA 42 mpg. In my short drive, however, using the Volt like a hybrid and asking for the gas engine during some pedal to the metal runs, the Volt averaged that 66.7 mpg. If you were to drive the Volt pure electric and only drove 50 miles a day, you might never use the gas engine. But it's not a pure EV, however, so there is no range anxiety issue or looking for a charging station, just drive it like a regular automobile. You have total utility and an almost electric car to boot. Your electric company will always be with you with an endless, invisible extension cord. Volt may be the future.

Pricing for the new Volt starts at about \$35 large with a long standard equipment list. Add some options and/or fancier trim

and you might pay \$5-10K more. But if all cars were like the Volt, the price would be much higher, perhaps by \$10,000-\$15,000 more to return a proper corporate ROI (return on investment). I don't know the future, but here is the right now deal. At \$35K, the Volt is not much more expensive, if at all, than other conventional hybrids. Chevy has produced over 100,000 Volts and reliability has been excellent. If you want incredible fuel economy coupled with good performance (actually better than most hybrids) and your average daily use is under 100 miles, this is your ride. And then there is the possibility of charging stations at your destination before your trip home. Gas stations will become a thing of the past and that you pass.

Larry Weitzman has been into cars since he was 5 years old. At 8 he could recite from memory the hp of every car made in the U.S. He has put in thousands of laps on racetracks all over the Western United States.