

Barton Auxiliary doles out scholarships

Fourteen students from Lake Tahoe and Carson Valley received \$19,500 in scholarships from Barton Memorial Hospital Auxiliary for their academic achievement and plans to pursue a career in medicine or science.

Scholarships were awarded to students from Douglas, Whittell, Mt. Tallac, and South Tahoe high schools, and Lake Tahoe Community College.

Three students received \$2,000 from the Dan Kerr Memorial Scholarship, a new scholarship in honor of the late Dan Kerr, a past Auxiliary present. Recipients included Alec Jobbins from South Tahoe High School, Kelsey Kjer from Whittell High School, and Isaiah Sisk from Douglas High School.

In addition, eight students each received \$1,500 from the Barton Memorial Hospital Scholarship. Recipients included Bailey Gansberg, Makayla Shaver, and Alexxaz Torres from Douglas; Kristen Harnett, Kylee Lyons, and Marin Underhill from STHA; Mary Sanchez from WHS, and Juan Vasquez from LTCC.

The Barton Hospital Auxiliary also awarded opportunity scholarships of \$500 to students from Mt. Tallac High School who are continuing their education at a community college, continuing accredited education program, or trade school. This year's recipients are Savana Bustos, Joselyn Rodriguez, and Carolana Welechenko.

Dugard to give interview on national TV

Jaycee Lee Dugard, who was kidnapped from a bus stop in Meyers when she was 11 and then was held captive for 18 years before being released in 2009, will be on a special edition of "20/20" with Diane Sawyer.

The show will air July 8.

This coincides with the release of Dugard's second book, "Freedom: My Book of Firsts" – it comes out July 12.

Sawyer interviewed Dugard in 2011 as well.

Cyclists on ride to benefit cancer research

As part of the longest annual charity bicycle ride in the world, the Texas 4000 team will be rolling through South Lake Tahoe on July 1-2, 28 days after departing from Austin on their way to Anchorage.

The 67 undergraduate and graduate students from the University of Texas at Austin will pedal more than 4,000 miles in the fight against cancer. After 18-months of leadership development training, volunteering, fundraising, and cycling, riders are put to the test throughout their summer ride to Alaska.

Along their journey, they will visit with cancer survivors, patients, caregivers, and communities to make educational presentations about cancer prevention and early detection.

More than 600 students have made the trek from Austin to Alaska, collectively raising more than \$7 million in the fight against cancer since the ride began in 2003.

To learn more about the ride, go **online**.

Why consumer spending matters to the economy

By Rick Gross

There are a variety of factors that determine the strength of the U.S. economy, including government-spending levels, imports versus exports and currency values. Yet, the biggest factor in determining the health of the economy is based on consumer spending, which is the case in most developed countries.

According to statistics from the Federal Reserve (the Fed), expenditures from American consumers account for more than two-thirds of the nation's gross domestic product (GDP), the measure used to determine growth in the economy. While the role of the consumer has not always played such a dominant role in driving the economy, it has generally been responsible for 60 percent or more of economic activity dating back to the post-World War II era.



It is notable that consumers have played a more prominent role in recent decades. According to U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, a half century ago, in 1966, consumer spending accounted for 59 percent of total GDP. By 1991, the percentage had risen to 64 percent. Today, consumer spending represents 68.1 percent of GDP, and has been in a similar range since 2008.

What is the role of consumers?

Economists and market analysts often keep a close eye on trends related to consumer activity. If consumer spending is strong, it can be an indication that most Americans have a high level of confidence in the direction of the economy. The total amount of consumer spending isn't the only measure people keep an eye on. The types of expenditures can help determine how high consumer confidence may be at any given time. For example, if sales of luxury goods (expensive cars, jewelry) are lagging and people are putting more money into necessities like food, shelter and clothing, it may not reflect a strong vote of confidence about consumer expectations.

The data on spending plays an important role in how businesses and government agencies plan for the future. If consumers show a high level of confidence, businesses are more likely to boost spending as well to try to capitalize on the opportunity for increased sales. By contrast, if consumers are cautious about spending, businesses may invest less and government policymakers have, at times, chosen to provide stimulus through tax cuts or increased spending to help give the economy a boost.

Consumer spending trends also have a big impact on monetary policy, which is directed by the Fed. If consumer spending is lagging, the Fed can decide to reduce interest rates and take other steps to help jump-start household and business

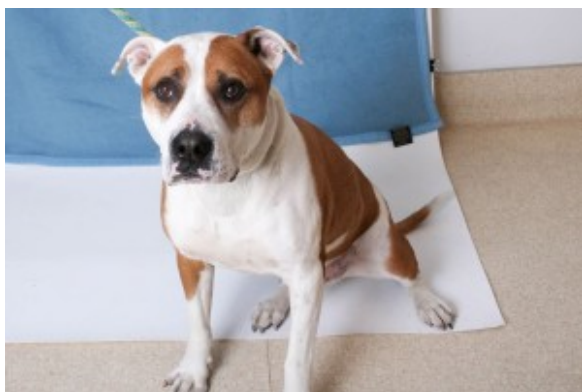
spending. If consumers are spending too much too quickly, it might signal that inflation could become a threat. The Fed may take steps, such as raising interest rates, to try and control economic growth.

What can we expect?

It's difficult to predict what the future will hold for the markets and economy. One thing is for sure – economists and financial analysts will likely continue watching trends in consumer spending to gauge where the economy is headed.

Rick Gross is a financial advisor and private wealth advisor with Ameriprise Financial Services Inc. in South Lake Tahoe.

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Zeke

Zeke is a 7-year-old pit bull who likes other dogs and cats. He is house trained, and walks nicely on the leash. He likes to dig holes to bury his toys and he really loves to play fetch.

Half of his adoption fee has been paid, and he qualifies for our seniors for seniors discount.

Zeke is a big, friendly boy who is very sweet.

Zeke is neutered, microchipped, tested for heart worm, and vaccinated. He 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

Tahoe Douglas fire chief to make last call

By Susan Wood

STATELINE – The longtime firefighter/paramedic remembers the day as if you had asked him where he was during 9/11.

It was June 24, 2007.

After 31 years, Tahoe Douglas Fire Chief Ben Sharit will retire at the end of the month, capping off countless memories of his time spent rescuing people and property. One of those times is the Angora Fire nine years ago.

Sharit was returning to the basin from vacation, crested Brockway Summit and noticed the strong winds.

"This was a big concern," he said.

As a battalion chief at the time, he knew his forestlands were dry, and the combination seemed dangerous.

"I sent the whole department," the 54-year-old told *Lake Tahoe News*. That's 15 firefighters on a given shift. Within 45 minutes, the agency was backfilled from other agency firefighters in three out of four stations.

"I'll never forget it," he added solemnly.



Tahoe Douglas Fire Chief Ben Sharit retires on June 30.
Photo/Susan Wood

It wouldn't be the first time Sharit had come to the rescue, in particular on behalf of the Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District.

Two years later, the Nevada fire agency was taxed yet again

with more of a long-haul challenge by enduring and surviving the recession. Tahoe Douglas Fire's budget was cut by \$1.6 million. He found a way to whittle expenses through the normal attrition of staff leaving – without laying off firefighters. The Zephyr Cove station that was reduced to an ambulance is now fire-staffed through grant funding that Sharit secured.

It's times like these that show why Sharit has gained widespread respect among his underlings, peers and community members like those he knows in the Tahoe Rotary Club.

Since "Ben knows everybody," according to fellow Rotarian Erik Watada, there's even a "Ben" burger at Watada's Neighborhood Burgers on Kingsbury Grade.

Sharit's even-keel demeanor has served him well in his career.

After "being around a lot of firefighters" as a child, his best friend who worked for CalFire introduced him to the adrenaline-induced world in his younger years. Sharit started out as a paramedic, logging five years in busy Oakland, where he admits to seeing it all. The stories are so abundant it was hard to single one out. He studied fire science in the East Bay.

Once he discovered the natural beauty of Lake Tahoe, Sharit knew he was destined to come and stay here.

"I wanted to live in the mountains and get out of the busy city," he said. He developed an inner peace that made him feel at home with staying calm in stressful situations.

Enduring the multi-year drought could put grey hairs on any firefighter's head in the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range.

He's responded to his fair share of structure fires, vehicle extrications and lived through tragic losses on the job. He's also delivered a number of babies in cars, homes and

restrooms. And the thought of operating the district's bomb squad robot put a gleam in his eye.

"You can't get riled up," he said, while chatting at his Round Hill station desk. Although he has just a few days left to work, his desk is still covered with papers. Awards and other recognition-type décor line his shelves, Tahoe photographs adorn the walls and a marker board posted in his office indicates things to do. Items such as "engineer test" and "audit" have been checked off, leaving the unchecked "retire" on the bottom of the list.

At home, the chief holds a long list of "honey dos," quests to "see the world" and visits in waiting to spend time with his three children and four grandchildren.

"It's been a great career, a great ride. I tell my guys it's not a job. It's a lifestyle, and you're on duty all the time," he said.

This lifestyle includes acting as a family in active summers and long winters.

And to top it off, the job comes with a long list of criteria of characteristics – intelligence, physical fitness, dedication, commitment and the need to help others. Oh, and incidentally, a candidate can't be afraid of heights or be claustrophobic.

The fire chief's biggest concern as he leaves is of course altruistic – "the safety and welfare of the firefighters and the people they serve." If that's not the sign of a good steward, it's hard to imagine what is because Sharit is dead serious when he insists what means the most to him.

And what will he miss most?

"The people – that'll be tough (to leave). You give so much after a long period. But now it's time to see my (grandkids')

baseball games,” he said, albeit admitting to projecting a possible temptation to respond to public safety calls while in retirement.

Nonetheless, Sharit plans to back up and relax from feeling like he needs to solve a problem in two minutes. And he’ll enjoy sleeping normally again.

“You always sleep with one eye open,” he said of being a firefighter.

Before he became chief, he quipped with friends and family members that he would call them during the night to see if they could be cognizant waking up from a hard sleep. He wanted them to know what the job was like. First and foremost, Sharit likes to share with the people around him. Those who work with him inside and out of the district appreciate the candor.

“You always know what to expect with him,” Tahoe Douglas fire Capt. Kevin Green said, while pulling the engine into the Round Hill fire station.

Douglas County Sheriff Ron Pierini goes back decades with Sharit, and the two chiefs have crossed paths often to positive results.

“I found him to be an outstanding employee. He’s a very ethical person – someone I can trust,” Pierini said. “I’m going to miss him. I’m sorry he’s leaving, but people move on, and I understand that.”

The community is invited to Sharit’s retirement party, slated at Harveys from 4-6pm on his last day – June 30.

The following day, Assistant Fire Chief Scott Baker will take over.

Handwriting still essential in keyboard age

By Perri Klass, New York Times

Do children in a keyboard world need to learn old-fashioned handwriting?

There is a tendency to dismiss handwriting as a nonessential skill, even though researchers have warned that learning to write may be the key to, well, learning to write.

And beyond the emotional connection adults may feel to the way we learned to write, there is a growing body of research on what the normally developing brain learns by forming letters on the page, in printed or manuscript format as well as in cursive.

In an article this year in the Journal of Learning Disabilities, researchers looked at how oral and written language related to attention and what are called “executive function” skills (like planning) in children in grades four through nine, both with and without learning disabilities.

Read the whole story

Multiple fireworks shows on

North Shore

The North Shore has more than two dozen events planned to celebrate July 4.

Tahoe City's 71st annual Funky Beach Bash and Fireworks party is on Independence Day. It's an all-day family affair on Commons Beach and throughout Tahoe City, culminating with the fireworks show at 9:30pm.

Kings Beach's 37th annual July 3 Fireworks and Beach Party is from 4-10pm. Activities include a beer, wine and mixed drink garden, sandcastle building contest and watermelon eating contest. The fireworks are at 9:30pm. Admission is free, with preferred fireworks seating available on a first-come first-serve basis for \$15.

This will be the 10th anniversary of the Red, White and Tahoe Blue celebration in Incline Village. More than 20 events will take place July 1-4, including a parade, ice cream eating contest, and live music. Fireworks start at 9:30pm.

Squaw's village to turn into art-wine-music fest

Squaw Valley will host the annual two-day Art, Wine and Music Festival in July.

The event celebrating artists, craftsmen, performers and musicians is July 9-10, 11am-5pm. It features wine tasting from California wineries, three stages with live music, and restaurants, shops, and walkways lined with fine art booths

and exhibits.

All proceeds from the event benefit Achieve Tahoe whose mission is to provide affordable inclusive physical and recreational activities that build health and confidence. Last year's festival raised more than \$15,000 for Achieve Tahoe.

Wine tasting will take place Saturday and Sunday from 2-5pm.

For more details, go **online**.

Star Guide: Challenger Learning Center of Northern Nevada

By Tony Berendsen

When I was growing up astronauts were my heroes. I'm one of the younglings of the 1960's era that woke up early before school to listen to Walter Cronkite announce the launch of Mercury, Gemini, and Apollo missions. Then filled with the sense of adventure and discovery, I hurried off to more down to earth things, like reading writing, and arithmetic.

Today our manned space program is still alive. Astronauts ride enormous rocket ships to live and work on the International Space Station. NASA is building the SLS (Space Launch System) to send the Orion space craft aloft to new destinations beyond the moon, and commercial companies like SpaceX and Orbital Science are coming close to offering service to low Earth orbit and maybe beyond.

The real life spaceflight adventures I watched as a youth were inspiring, but they were very dangerous. We lost three astronauts on the pad at Cape Canaveral, and two Space Shuttle crews. But still the passion and interest in space continued to inspire. And, from the depth of mortal tragedy of one of the Space Shuttle missions named Challenger, a new ground based space mission began in Reno in October 2014: CLCNN (The Challenger Learning Center of Northern Nevada).



Reno's Challenger Learning Center opened in 2014.
Photo/Challenger Learning Center

Exciting news, the CLCNN is moving to the National Automobile Museum on Lake Street in Reno.

I asked Melodi Rodrigue, president of the CLCNN, how the idea of a Northern Nevada Challenger Learning Center began: "Paul McFarlane, current flight director of the CLCNN, had taken a couple of his high school classes from Hug High to the Challenger Learning Center in Sacramento and the students loved it. On one of the visits, some of the students asked why there wasn't a Challenger Center in Reno. Paul said, 'That's a good question!' and off we went. The CLCNN was formed about eight years ago as a nonprofit and has worked ever since to bring the CLC experience to our community".

If you visit the CLCNN at the Automobile Museum, be prepared

for an imaginative team building experience incorporating experiential learning into an exciting space mission. "The current mission takes place in 2076, 100 years after the first Viking lander on Mars; a time when manned missions to Mars are routine. The Mars Control Team is charged with the selection of entry and departure trajectories before landing the Mars Transport Vehicle on Mars with a replacement crew. The crew of the Mars Transport Vehicle is tasked with launching probes targeted at the Martian moons," said Teddy Rodrigue, intern flight director, about the current mission students take part in at the CLCNN.

McFarlane reflected on the impact of the CLC experience, "It's always exciting to meet alumni from Challenger Center missions who are now teachers, doctors and scientists who credit Challenger Center for launching them on their career paths. I've personally had the honor of speaking with young women who served on our Mars missions locally and around the country who are now studying aerospace engineering in college, while others are actually working for NASA in science positions and at Mission Control."

CLCNN is a nonprofit, and even though it is affiliated with NASA and use NASA approved programing, it is not financially supported by NASA. Challenger centers depend on their communities and school districts for financial support. Business and private donations really make a big difference in funding operational costs. If you would like to make a donation go **online**, scroll to the bottom of the page and click on "Support the Mission".

Tony Berendsen runs Tahoe Star Tours. He may be reached at 775.232.0844 or tony@tahoestartours.com.