

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Spike



Trinity

Spike and Trinity are 7-year-old siblings who are looking for a new home together. Both have declawed front paws, and they have lived with dogs. They are both friendly cats with beautiful fur. Their adoption fee has been paid by a kind donor.

Spike and Trinity are spayed/neutered, microchipped, tested for FIV, and vaccinated. They are 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

Study: Chocolate can boost your workout

By Gretchen Reynolds, New York Times

Adding a little dark chocolate to a training diet may effortlessly improve endurance performance, according to a new study of sports nutrition. The findings provide ammunition both for athletes looking for an edge and those hoping for an excuse to indulge.

For some time, dark chocolate has been touted as a relatively healthy treat, with studies showing that small amounts may have benefits for the heart and brain. Most of this research has focused on the role of a substance called epicatechin, a plant nutrient found in cocoa. Dark chocolate is generally rich in epicatechin, though levels vary, depending on how the sweet was produced.

Levels of epicatechin tend to be much lower in milk chocolate, which contains little cocoa, and white chocolate contains little or none of the nutrient.

Read the whole story

Not happy with the candidates? Try a new country

By Julie Lasky, New York Times

On Feb. 15, Rob Calabrese, a Canadian radio disc jockey, launched a website inviting Americans to take refuge on a Nova Scotia island. The site, Cape Breton if Donald Trump Wins, has received 977,000 visits and so many inquiries about emigrating that it now offers a link to the Canadian government's application. (President Obama even mentioned it during his state dinner with Justin Trudeau, the Canadian prime minister.) The site was, of course, a response to a familiar refrain, the threat to move abroad if politics doesn't go your way. In the wake of primary victories by Hillary Clinton and Trump on Super Tuesday, people took to Twitter to vow to move to Canada, and the use of the search phrase "move to Canada" surged on Google.

The Association of Americans Resident Overseas estimates that eight million nonmilitary Americans currently live abroad, in more than 160 countries. While there are no reliable statistics about motives, few of the expatriates are believed to have left out of disgust with their politicians. Much more likely, they made a job-related move. Or retired to a warmer climate and friendlier economy. Or simply took a vacation and never came home.

Nan McElroy, for instance, had been working as a film and video editor in Atlanta when she visited Italy for the first time at the age of 40. She fell in love with the country, and ultimately moved to Venice 11 years ago. Now 60, she works as a sommelier and oarswoman, teaching people to row

boats standing up in the Venetian style. “Even when it’s simple, it’s really complicated,” she said about emigrating. “You have to really want to do it.”

Read the whole story

Artists sought to create Calif. duck stamp

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife will accept submissions for the 2016-17 California Duck Stamp Art Contest from May 13-June 13.

The contest is open to U.S. residents who are 18 or older as of March 14, 2016. Entrants need not reside in California.

The winning artwork will be reproduced on the 2016-2017 California Duck Stamp. The top submissions will also be showcased at the Pacific Flyway Decoy Association’s art show in July.

The artwork must depict the lesser snow goose.

The design must be the contestant’s original hand-drawn creation. All entries must be accompanied by a completed participation agreement and entry form. These forms and the official rules are available **online**.

Entries will be judged at a public event to be held in June. The judges’ panel, which will consist of experts in the fields of ornithology, conservation, and art and printing, will choose first, second and third-place winners, and an honorable mention.

Since 1971, CDFW's annual contest has attracted top wildlife artists from around the country. All proceeds generated from stamp sales go directly to waterfowl conservation projects throughout California. In past years, hunters were required to purchase and affix the stamp to their hunting license. Now California has moved to an automated licensing system and hunters are no longer required to carry the physical stamps in the field (proof of purchase prints directly onto the license). However, CDFW will still produce the stamps, which can be requested online at www.wildlife.ca.gov/licensing/collector-stamps.

1 plan left for stalwart SLT worker – retirement



Judy Finn has been the go-to person for city planning issues for 16 years. Photo/Provided

By Susan Wood

While it isn't a one-woman unit, those who do business with South Lake Tahoe's planning department have been relying on the same person for the past 16 years – Judy Finn.

The associate planner is retiring this month.

"I have to tell you, this is the worst news to come out of the city for a long time," attorney Lew Feldman said. "Judy's awesome, and she'll be sorely missed. I couldn't be more happy for her. She's so deserving."

Feldman is the king of representation for high-dollar, town-altering projects that have needed Finn's gentle hand and rational guidance to get off the ground. Think of projects like the Marriott-anchored Heavenly Village.

The declaration from *Lake Tahoe News* of her looming retirement sent shivers down the spine of the Tahoe-area collective that relies on her to help them turn their ideas into brick-and-mortar reality.

Finn started as a temporary permit clerk in 1990. She left in 1991 because there was no full-time job. It was in 2000 that she started her current tenure. In 2001, she was promoted to senior permit technician and in 2006 she became an assistant planner. In 2009, she earned a certificate in land use and environmental planning program from UC Davis extension. She's been in her current post for four years.



State Sen. Ted Gaines with Judy Finn the night she was awarded the 2012 Blue Ribbon Award for public service from Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce. Photo/Provided

“Judy has a warmth and kindness that separate her from many

who interact with the public in that capacity. It's not an easy position. She always goes above and beyond," Feldman told *Lake Tahoe News*.

And then, the professional care goes beyond the work.

"We've absolutely been interested in one another's well being outside the role of work," Feldman said as if losing a friendly confidante at the counter.

Some implied the city planning department should brace itself because projects may be hitting the counter in the hopes Finn would work on them before she leaves. Another suggested placing Finn on speed-dial during retirement to get that institutional knowledge at crunch time.

Mick Clarke of Signs of Tahoe, who seemed in complete shock after hearing the news, said he was genuinely worried. Clarke's thriving sign business has seen a lot of action at the city in its 36 years of existence.

"Of all the planning staff I've ever worked with, Judy is light years ahead of anyone. She understands. She really cares about local business people. I tell all my customers to make sure they talk to Judy," Clarke told *Lake Tahoe News*.

City Councilman Tom Davis, who has known Finn for decades, sends difficult applicants to the planner. He recalled how TJ Maxx experienced challenges with sprinklers and water connection fees, but Finn worked through the process with grace.

The longtime politician pointed out in an age where government can get in the way Finn demonstrates a "can-do" attitude.

"I knew if I sent them to her, (problems) would get resolved. She'll be missed," Davis said, while joking he's "not accepting her resignation."

Nick Exline of Midkiff and Associates also shared an example

of Finn's empathetic work ethic.

Getting the Landing Resort hotel off the ground was "complicated," needing a creative solution to keep 40 construction workers on the job while the city worked out how the high water table would affect the excavation depth relative to the final best management practices design.



Hilary Roverud, left, knows it will be hard to replace Judy Finn.
Photo/Provided

"Judy was very aware of issues, and she allowed us to keep working – all because she understood the difficulties of the site," Exline said of the crew. "It's a genuine customer service approach."

The listening skills didn't end there. Finn kept up on the latest happenings of Exline's children and shared her own experiences about her grandchildren – one of the personal interests that will receive added attention in retirement.

The other area of attention will be her tomato starts in the yard. Finn's boss, Hilary Roverud, said she will miss the fresh produce, but it will be Finn's work ethic and gentle

demeanor that will be hard to replace. The development services director, who refers to Finn as “a friend to everyone,” singled out Finn as having an “uncanny ability to handle situations with unhappy people and make them feel that their issues are important.”

Roverud mentioned how she’s appreciated the support from Finn “so many times.”

“These will be hard shoes to fill – to have someone with that kind of experience who knows the town really well. I don’t think you plop someone in the chair, and they become Judy Finn. It’s a tough job. Part of the job is regulation. It’s the regulation part that you have to tell people the law doesn’t allow you to do that. She has a talent for being able to work with people to calm them down. Her calming ability is very valuable,” Roverud said. “She’s good at finding solutions within the law.”

Roverud noted there were several instances in which Finn received compliments from customers and citizens.

Finn plans to stay in her hometown of 45 years.

“I definitely have mixed emotions. I enjoy my job. This is a very gracious community and often times I feel like I make a difference, and I still have contact with these people,” said Finn, while preparing to volunteer for St. Theresa’s annual St. Patrick’s Day dinner. Her service to the church will be another post-retirement priority, along with cooking, sewing, reading and gardening. Finn grows those “tricky” tomatoes as well as herbs and zucchini.

She’ll miss her work and colleagues.

What advice does she have for the person filling her shoes?

“My advice is just try not to be bureaucratic and on a power trip. Think of both sides. Think of what the applicants and

business owners want. It's such a short building season here, and people depend on these jobs. Of course at the end of the day, you still need to stand in front of the council and justify your actions. When people come into a government office and ask: 'How can I do this,' they're nervous. You can't always say yes, but you try to find a way to make it happen," Finn said. "It's really rewarding when they come back and say thank you. You don't expect it."

(Reporter's note: Thanks Judy for making sense of convoluted planning complexities over the years. – Susan Wood)

Burning Man photographer to give talk

Eleanor Preger will talk about her photography during the closing reception for her exhibition From the Lens of Eleanor Preger on April 5.

The photography exhibition, which is on display until April 8, includes images from Burning Man 2011-15, including new images that have not been shown before in public.

Preger visits Burning Man each year and rises at 4:30 every morning to photograph the community and art there. Her images capture far more than simple snapshots or documentation, as she attempts to capture the messages and intention behind the artists she photographs.

All the work being shown in the current exhibition will eventually return to the Burning Man Foundation headquarters in San Francisco. This year will be Preger's sixth trip to the Playa.

Preger's talk will take place from 6-7:30pm in the Ron and Maureen Ashley Community Gallery at the Holman Arts & Media Center at Sierra Nevada College in Incline Village Tahoe.

Valhalla season tickets to go on sale

To mark the 20th year of the Boathouse Theatre at the Tallac site, there will be an anniversary fundraiser, two Valhalla produced dramatic theater productions, an eclectic line up of musical artists, comedy improv and some vaudeville.

The staff and board is very busy preparing for the summer and we are very excited to see you all again. We hope you will share your enthusiasm for Valhalla with your friends, family and colleagues!

Season tickets go on sale April 1.

Former cop to talk about human trafficking

Author John Vanek, retired lieutenant with the San Jose Police Human Trafficking Task Force, will discuss his book "The

Essential Abolitionist: What You Need to Know about Human Trafficking & Modern Slavery” on April 26 in South Lake Tahoe.

He will address the most commonly asked questions and topics surrounding human trafficking and the challenges involved in fighting this crime and assisting its victims. In addition, he will examine the myths and misconceptions related to modern slavery.

This event is free and open to all.

The talk is hosted by Friends of Library. The talk will be at the South Lake Tahoe Library on Rufus Allen Boulevard on April 26 at 6pm.

Companies offering pet bereavement

By Elyse Wanshel, Huffington Post

To many, a pet isn't “just a dog” or “just a cat.” People share deep bonds with their animals, and when one dies, the experience can be devastating.

Fortunately, a few companies are beginning to take this loss more seriously.

CBS Miami reports that some companies are now offering “pet bereavement days,” or paid time off, so that employees can process the death of their pet, regroup and begin to heal.

Read the whole story

Meditation provides multiple benefits

By Amy Smith

The links between your mind and body are abundant. One significant connection is how the mind can affect your physical state of health.



Amy Smith

There are many healthful benefits of positive thinking, imagery and meditation. More than 1,000 clinical trials indicate meditation can help treat anxiety, chronic pain, high blood pressure, and insomnia. Studies also show meditation can improve attention and help with stress management.

Meditation and brain activity

Richard Davidson, founder of the Center for Healthy Minds at the University of Wisconsin, examined the brain activity of Tibetan monks who meditated daily on compassion. Through magnetic resonant imaging (MRI), he determined that these monks had increased neuron activity in the left prefrontal cortex, the area of the brain associated with happiness.

Davidson then compared non-meditating individuals who initiated a compassion meditation practice. Two weeks after

starting a thirty minute daily practice, participants developed more neuron activity in the left prefrontal cortex. Davidson concluded this neuron activity, activated by meditation, strengthens neurological circuits to the left prefrontal cortex. This reduces fear and anger triggers and boosts contentment and resilience.

Meditation types

Meditation, or the act of quieting your conscious awareness, is difficult. To quiet the mind, meditative practices each have a unique approach.

In the practice of Breath Meditation, focus on consciously observing inhalation and exhalation and the rise and fall of the chest. Or follow the sequence pattern of four-seven-eight: Inhale through your nose for the mental count of four seconds, hold your breath for the count of seven seconds, and exhale through your mouth for the count of eight seconds. A longer exhalation than your inhalation lowers your blood pressure and pulse rate.

Mindfulness Meditation is based on having an increased awareness of the present. The goal is to focus on experiencing the present without reacting to it. Through this practice of meditation, you can develop a more balanced response to the different emotions you experience daily.

Transcendental Meditation is when a person focuses on a mantra, perhaps a sound or a phrase. Repeat this mantra over and over either aloud or silently in your head. This act of repetition keeps distracting or negative thoughts from your conscious awareness. The goal of transcendental meditation is to achieve a state of relaxed awareness and improve alertness.

Another type of meditation, Visualization, focuses on a specific place or object associated with a personal sense of well-being.

Pick a meditative practice and try using nature sounds or instrumental background music to quiet the conscious from other distractions.

Meditation applications

If you are new to meditation, download a mobile application onto your phone or tablet to help guide you through the process. Some of my favorites are “Simply Being” by Meditation Oasis, “Calm: Meditation” A Mindfulness Practice, and “Relax Melodies: Zen Melodies for Sleep.”

Meditation is just one integrative medicine approach. Learn about other examples of effective integrative medicine on April 6 at my What is Integrative Medicine? lecture.

Amy Smith is a family nurse practitioner at Stateline Family Practice.