

Youth and seniors to be highlighted at Community Needs Forum

The Women's Fund El Dorado is hosting its annual Community Needs Forum on Jan. 24 from 6–8pm at the Cold Springs Country Club, 6500 Clubhouse Drive in Placerville.

The topics to be covered include youth development, health and mental health issues and senior support services.

This year's presenters will be:

Jeremy Meyers, the deputy superintendent of Educational Services and Instructional Technology out of the El Dorado County Office of Education;

Patricia Charles-Heathers, the Health and Human Services Agency program manager II from El Dorado County Mental Health;

Karen Shelnutt, the nurse case manager for Family Connections and Faith Community Nurse for Federated Church.

The event is open to all members of the community. A light dinner will be served.

For more information or reservations, call (530) 622.5621.

40,000 expected to attend 3-day SnowGlobe Music Festival in South Lake Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

While SnowGlobe should still be a bass-driven event, the music lineup for the three-day South Lake Tahoe festival has been altered to help appease the neighbors who last year made as much of a ruckus as the musicians.

Plus, when the first act takes the stage at 3pm Dec. 29, the direction of the sound won't be the same as in 2011. The stage and speakers will be set up in such a way to lessen the reverberation into neighborhoods.



The Dec. 29-31 SnowGlobe Music Festival in South Lake Tahoe is expected to bring thousands of people to town.

Photo/LTN 2011

Still, it's a lot of techno acts that fill the main stage and two tent performance areas.

Headliners include deadmau5, Wiz Khalifa, Chromeo Live, Beats Antique, Big Gigantic, Laidback Luke and MiMOSA.

But it's not just music and a smattering of vendors who will fill the community ball field adjacent to Lake Tahoe Community College.

"We've added so much, from décor to heating to action sports elements," Chad Donnelly, SnowGlobe creator and general manager, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "There are so many new touches the fans will get to experience firsthand."

The local non-food vendors include Tahoe Made Attire, Enlightened Jewelry, Luna Lobo Creations and UKY The Spot. Nonprofits that will be there are the Boys and Girls Club of Lake Tahoe and Sierra Avalanche Center.

LTCC involvement

Lake Tahoe Community College will have two booths on the field to be able reach out to music fans about what the institution is all about. LTCC is hoping this won't be the only time some of the concertgoers are on campus.

"We are partnering with SnowGlobe this year to gain benefit from their marketing campaign worldwide. Basically, instead of renting the facilities we get marketing, booths, and some other perks for the use of our facilities," LTCC President Kindred Murillo told *Lake Tahoe News*. "We are very optimistic that this will be a benefit for our community by having a structured event for young people on New Year's, and by the marketing to the SnowGlobe target audience 18-34 age group, which is where we want to reach out in developing our destination market."

Organizers have to pay for snow removal costs, which with the forecast could be an issue this year. But snow on the ground could be a good thing because it will help absorb the sound. Plus, it means the field should not be trashed as much as it was a year ago.

City's concerns

South Lake Tahoe makes money off the event primarily through more people being in town – as in hotel and sales taxes.

Will SnowGlobe return in 2013? That remains to be seen. City officials say they won't start talking about that until they see how this year's event goes. Promoters have said they would like a multiyear contract and would entertain the possibility of moving the date. But dates would have to be coordinated with the college to ensure school is not in session.

"The police plan is essentially unchanged from last year as it went very well," Police Chief Brian Uhler told *Lake Tahoe News*. "We will have amnesty bins and we will have undercover presence."

Both of those were in place in 2011, too. The amnesty bins are where people can deposit (no refund) any drugs without question. The theory is officers would rather dispose of unused drugs than have people using during the concert.

In addition to local law enforcement, event organizers also provide security staff.

They have also increased the list of items not allowed at the festival; specifically glass containers. A complete list of items is online.

"SnowGlobe event promoters have been very supportive of community concerns from last year's event and are taking extensive measures regarding a sound management plan, increase in the number of shuttle stops, waste management, and local business integration," Tracy Franklin, spokeswoman for the city, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Bus service

At the Dec. 14 Tahoe Transportation District meeting, the board agreed to enter an agreement with SnowGlobe organizers to increase bus service.

The music festival will pay for more buses to be on Route 53 Dec. 29-31.

TTD staff anticipates between 60 and 80 hours of additional service will be required to accommodate the festival demand.

Like last year, the festival will also provide chartered bus service for people to get to the Lake Tahoe Community College campus.

According to TTD, the plan is to add one to three Route 53 buses before and during the festival times, with an additional seven buses operating for 90 minutes when the festival ends each night.

Donnelly expects more people to attend this year – with about 40,000 people throughout the three-day festival. This compares to the approximately 10,000 who attended each day in 2011.

He expects to sell out on Friday or Saturday.

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Things to know:

- Dec. 29-30 3-10pm
- Dec. 31 3pm to Jan. 1 12:30am
- Fireworks will be shot off New Year's Eve
- Jan. 3 field will be cleared
- South Lake Tahoe has a webpage dedicated to SnowGlobe
- Dedicated SnowGlobe phone line – (530) 542.7429.

Here is a video from 2011:

Squaw to show big-mountain snowboarding movies

Squaw Valley will be showing two showings of Jeremy Jones' big mountain snowboarding movie "Deeper" on Dec. 27 and "Further" on Dec. 29 to support Protect Our Winters and Girls on the Run.

All shows will be attended by athletes Jeremy Jones, Jonny Moseley, Ralph Backstrom, Iris Lazzareschi and JT Holmes. All will be signing posters before the start of each show.

Tickets for both showings are \$15 for adults and \$7 for kids 12 and under. One hundred percent of the ticket proceeds from both nights will go to Protect Our Winters and Girls on the Run.

Doors will open at 3pm for the first showings on Dec. 27 and Dec. 29, with the shows starting at 4:30pm. Doors will open at 7pm for the second showings for both dates, with the shows starting at 8pm.

"Deeper" follows Jeremy Jones and other top freeriders as they travel to the world's snowboarding meccas and venture past the boundaries of helicopters, snowmobiles, and lifts to explore untouched realms.

"Further," the second installment in the Jeremy Jones' snowboard movie trilogy, explores some of the world's most remote mountain terrain while continuing Jones' mission to camp deep in the backcountry and on the summits of unridden lines to access nearly vertical spines and wide-open powder fields.

TOCCATA special performances raise money for outreach programs

TOCCATA – Tahoe Symphony Orchestra and Chorus will have three special “soiree musicale” fundraisers featuring Elizabeth Pitcairn, violinist, as well as vocalists Joy Strotz, Liudmila Mullin, and Irina Kasimova performing Russian arias and Broadway tunes.

The soirees will take place in elegant private homes. Proceeds will go to help defer costs for TOCCATA’s 8th winter season kickoff series as well as the outreach program Discovering Classical Music in the Public Schools.

The soirees will be Jan. 12 at 2pm in Incline Village, Jan. 13 at 2pm in Truckee, and Jan. 18 at 6pm in South Lake Tahoe. Admission is \$100 per person and includes wine, cheese and dessert.

For information or reservations, call (787) 602.2121.

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe

Chaco is one of two young purebred Labradors at the shelter right now. He is a great chocolate Lab who is about 10 months old. He is a little shy at first, but with a bit of attention

and training his confidence will grow quickly.



He likes other dogs and didn't chase the cats that he met at the shelter. Chaco was found as a stray, and will make a great pet for just about any family.

Chaco is neutered, microchipped, 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 online to see photos and description 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

Santa Claus – it's not just a seasonal nickname

By Linda Conaboy

Maybe you're among the millions who no longer believe in Santa Claus. But think about those vivid memories of all those years your parents persuaded you to be nice instead of naughty, ensuring a visit from the man in red at Christmastime – and you, being good little girls and boys, did your very best to comply.

When did you finally lose faith in Santa Claus, officially becoming one of the knowing, big kids?

Well, listen up non-believers. There is a Santa Claus. Really. He's the real deal. He's alive and well and he lives at the North Shore of Lake Tahoe. His hair is genuine and so is his ample girth, although he says he's been trying to lose a few pounds to show kids that obesity isn't such a good lifestyle.



Santa gets an earful from all ages at Heavenly Village in South Lake Tahoe.

Photo/Nina

Miller—focusphotoTahoe

Who is this person who calls himself Santa? He's the very Irish Mr. Thomas Patrick O'Connor, now 65, who became Santa Claus on the eve of St. Patrick's Day in 2005 when he legally changed his name to Mr. Claus. Why? Because he decided he could do the greatest good for the greatest number of children with an official name change.

Santa said he rarely entertains children at Christmastime anymore, but ideally spends most of the year advocating for millions of kids.

"Often, I try to convince legislators to support legislation that will benefit children," he said.

In real life, Santa is a Christian monk who believes that the

greatest gift one can give is love.

"I aim to help restore America's heart and soul, primarily by reminding legislators, parents, caregivers and educators that a country's morality can be measured by how it treats its most vulnerable, especially children," Santa said.

With this in mind, he no longer spends much time dressed in his red suit. However, he says, when he began his Santa role, he served more than 30 nonprofits in that capacity; however, as time went on, he said his philosophy altered.

"I'd like to change children's perception of Santa Claus," he said. "For example, I believe that Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Christ, not the crass, commercial, secular spectacle it has become in many places. I believe that the greatest gift one can give is love, not presents."

Santa said he rarely gets paid for his now rare Santa gigs, but when he does occasionally receive remuneration, the funds support his child advocacy and ministry work.

"I don't think children or anyone else should have to pay to see or spend time with Santa – any Santa," he told *Lake Tahoe News*. "When I appear, I never charge children or parents; however, they are welcome to pay a photographer to take their photo or use their own camera or cell phone for free."

For his appearance at Heavenly Village in the giant snowglobe through Dec. 31, he will be paid by the village as will the photographer.

His beard, he said, is authentic, growing at least an inch each month.

"I trim it about every three months. If I had let it grow, without cutting it, since 2005, it would be longer than I am tall," Santa, who stands 5-feet-10, said.

Because he serves as a child and peace activist most of the

year, he said his apparel of choice now is blue jeans and a red shirt along with his snowy white beard. Red, white and blue, he said – very American.

In keeping with his activism, this year he ran for president of the United States. His platform was to restore American's heart and soul.

"My candidacy was recognized by the Federal Election Commission and 15 states," Santa said.

In addition, he writes eBooks, his latest being "The Santa Diet", a complete regimen for physical, emotional and spiritual health.

Surprisingly, before he became Santa Claus, when he was still just plain Tom O'Connor, Santa served as a law enforcement and public safety administer in New York City. Specifically, he was the special assistant to the deputy police commissioner in New York City as well as the chief of safety and security for the U.S. Virgin Islands Port Authority.

His best Santa story, he said, is that of a young girl who visited him with her mother in a church setting, about Christmastime.

"When she wondered why I hadn't asked her what she wanted for Christmas, I told her I was more interested in what she planned to give someone else. She replied that she didn't have any money to buy anything," Santa said. "So, I assured her that the greatest gift she could give was love. She thought about that for a moment and asked me if I could help her mother stop smoking so they could enjoy a long life together. I smiled and called her mother over and related her daughter's wish, asking the mother if she would at least try.

"She nodded, and they left. The following year, they both visited again and were pleased to let me know that the mother had stopped smoking altogether. She loved her mother enough

that she didn't want to lose her; and her mother loved her enough to overcome a destructive habit and create a better environment for both of them. So, there was an example of the gift of love they shared with each other. Simple, but profound."

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Note: Santa will be in the Heavenly Village every day through Dec. 31 from 2-7pm.

'Reply all' can be infuriating and embarrassing

By Mike Rosenwald, Bloomberg Businessweek

In 2008, Gustavo Reveles, a Navy veteran deep into his two-decade career at the U.S. Border Patrol, got an email from a colleague. He shot off a reply that happened to contain the words "kiss" and "ass"- in that order. He was soon fired for sending an "offensive and against agency policy" email.

When Reveles filed a lawsuit against Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano this year, citing discrimination, his attorney laid out an unusual part of his defense, and one that corporate workers everywhere will sympathize with: "Plaintiff inadvertently hit the 'reply all' icon."

Stories like Reveles' are commonplace – office dwellers obviously blasting out crude or embarrassing messages to

colleagues across entire email systems. Perhaps no single office staple has stoked such employee fear, posed such a danger to intellectual property, and created such potential for workplace humiliation.

At least 15 percent of a typical office worker's day is spent on email, and 5 percent of emails received are replies to all, according to data from VoloMetrix, a Seattle startup that tracks, minute by minute, how its clients' employees use technology at work.

While that might sound like a small number, spread those stats over a 10,000-employee company and "you rapidly get to a pretty big number in terms of dollar cost – in the tens of millions of dollars" per year, says VoloMetrix founder Ryan Fuller. For worker productivity, he says, "it's death by a thousand cuts."

When Gene Sellers, the head of a sales division at Wells Fargo, couldn't get the reply-all button removed for his 20 employees, he imposed a "gentlemen's agreement" on his team to abstain from using it.

"'Reply all' is a swear word around here," says Nathan Bray, a senior vice president who works on Sellers' team. "My friends (at other companies always say), 'We hate getting all those "thanks" and "appreciateds" emails,' " not to mention the constant responses to companywide emails concerning cafeteria menu changes or spare concert tickets.

According to Carson Tate, a workplace consultant and founder of Working Simply, a North Carolina firm that advised Sellers' team, "They were really frustrated and really ticked. Their job in the field is to sort through clients and prospects – not who is going to the Madonna concert Thursday." Now the only time anyone hits 'reply all' is to celebrate something "really important."

At long last, says Sellers, "We've cut down on the sheer

number of emails hitting our in-boxes.”

Makers of email programs have heeded the calls of distress. Microsoft introduced a plug-in option on its Outlook program called NoReplyAll, which allows senders to prevent recipients from Replying All to their messages. Programs such as Reply to All Monitor, developed by Sperry Software, attack users with alerts anytime they click the reply-all button: “Are you sure you want to reply to everyone?”

Sperry Software owner Mike Sperry got the idea when a colleague at a previous job embarrassed himself with a companywide email. He’s found that the vast majority of his customers are law firms and banks that fear something less personal: sensitive client information ending up in the wrong hands.

“It’s a cheap form of insurance,” says Sperry, who says that he’s sold “hundreds of thousands of the program,” which costs \$14.95.

A company that’s come close to abolishing “reply all” is the global information and measurement firm Nielsen. On its screens, the button is visible but inactive, covered with a fuzzy gray. It can be reactivated with an override function on the keyboard. Chief Information Officer Andrew Cawood explained in a memo to 35,000 employees the reason behind Nielsen’s decision: eliminating “bureaucracy and inefficiency.”

For his part, Wells Fargo’s Bray finds it hard to imagine working in a place that tolerates waves of pointless email. When he tells friends and family about his reply-all-free workplace, he says, “They all have the same reaction, which is: ‘I hate those emails,’ ” he says. “But nobody does anything about it. We’ve done something about it. I have to say, it’s really been nice.”

TRPA adds publisher to list of job duties with launch of paper

Tahoe Regional Planning Agency along with federal, state and local partners have launched an environmental newspaper entitled Tahoe In Depth, with the inaugural issue being mailed this week to every property owner in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

This free publication is designed to keep Lake Tahoe homeowners, residents and visitors abreast of the variety of activities taking place to protect and restore the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Funding and contributing partners include the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Nevada Division of State Lands and TRPA. Agencies contributing content to the publication include U.S. EPA, Bureau of Reclamation, Tahoe Resource Conservation District, Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board, California Tahoe Conservancy and UC Cooperative Extension.

Free copies are available at Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority and Explore Tahoe in South Lake Tahoe, Tahoe City PUD and Tahoe City Visitors Information Center in Tahoe City, Tahoe Environmental Research Center and Incline Village/Crystal Bay Visitors Bureau in Incline Village. A PDF of the publication may be downloaded.

Tahoe tow driver offers some advice for winter travel

By Bill Donahue, Via

Black ice, fog, snowbanks, sleet—dangers are ever present on winter roads. So slow down, use extra caution, and keep your car in tip-top shape. AAA tow truck driver John Baker, owner of Emerald Bay Towing in South Lake Tahoe has been rescuing members in the state's snowiest highlands since he was 16 years old. He shares more winter wisdom.

Q I'm headed out on a winter road trip. What are my first steps?

A Check the weather conditions. If there's a pending storm, wait. Know your route and let someone else know it too.

Q A flashlight, a charged phone, extra clothing and blankets, water and food—anything else I need in my emergency road kit?

A An ice scraper with a brush.

Q Why is that so important?

A You have to clear all the snow off the car's top and hood, not just the windows. People drive with four feet of snow on top. The heater will turn that into an ice ball. When you hit the brakes, it'll fall forward, completely blind you, and tear the arms off your wipers.

Q Any recommendations on tires and chains for bad weather?

A People think tires labeled mud and snow are fine. But the question is, is it a traction tire? Get the right chains for

your car. Don't get the big beefy ones you see on trucks for a small car. Check with your manufacturer. And remember, the speed limit for driving with chains is 25 mph.

Q Besides staying in the car, what else should I do while waiting for a tow to arrive?

A If the car is running, don't run the heater full blast. The battery can't keep up. Be patient. People panic—a minute can feel like two or three hours.

Q What was your most intense rescue?

A A friend called to tell me that my wife got buried in an avalanche while driving. She went from 35 mph to zero within 10 feet; the snow busted out her passenger window and cocooned her in darkness. It took 10 of us to dig her out. She was fine. Luckily, she had made a point of driving with a pack of cars, so people could call for help right away.

Q Advice for ski vacationers?

A Always put your key in a zippered pocket or keep it in a locker while you're skiing. There's a lot of snow up there – drop your key and it's lost forever.

SHES secretary takes her name off attendance roll

By Kathryn Reed

Oftentimes the first person anyone sees on a school campus is the person who knows the most, has all the answers and can be guaranteed to have a smile no matter the chaos going on all

around her.

That is the case with Cindy Farmer.

As secretary at Sierra House Elementary School, she is the keeper of all the information. She knows students by name. She has helped create a home away from home.

But when students return in January from the winter break they will have to learn a new name. Farmer is one of 17 classified employees in Lake Tahoe Unified School District who will retire as of Dec. 31. Friday is their last day of school.



Cindy Farmer

"When I first started I woke up every morning and couldn't wait to get to work. And I still love coming every day," Farmer said. "I will miss it. It will be very emotional for me when I leave."

But at 62 she knows it is time to call it quits, spend more time with her biological family, and enjoy all the reasons she and her husband, Jim, call Lake Tahoe home.

Farmer will have more time to tend to her immaculate yard and garden, as well as hike some more.

During her time at the South Lake Tahoe school she has worked for four principals – three men and one woman.

"You have to get a feel for their personality. One was very organized, one messy, one brand new. They were all different," Farmer said of her bosses. "You have a different relationship

with each one. Some you can tease with more, some are more serious. They have all been so good to me.”

Ryan Galles is one she laughs with nearly every day.

“She makes the job look easy and it is not an easy job,” Principal Galles told *Lake Tahoe News*. “She never puts anybody off when they have something that needs taking care of.”

With her last day being Dec. 21, he joked that it would be the end of his world.

“She started out as a colleague and we ended up as incredible friends,” Galles said of Farmer, even though he is close to her kids’ ages. “We’ve had a really strong relationship. It’s so important for a secretary and principal to work closely.”

Farmer started at the school in 1984 – eight years after it opened – as a volunteer in the classroom. She did that for 13 years before becoming the school secretary.

She thought she would miss being in the classroom with kids, but then realized as school secretary she gets to see the entire student body.

Paige Cefalu met Farmer about 20 years ago. Cefalu taught at the school and Farmer was her aid.

“I made her promise me she would not leave before my kids left,” Cefalu said. By that time Farmer was working in the front office.

“I subbed for her for one week. It was the hardest job ... between being secretary, the nurse, dealing with teachers, the principal, phone calls,” Cefalu said. “She definitely does not get paid enough and she does it with a smile on her face.”

Collectively, the retiring employees have given LTUSD 411 years of service. **Retirees are:**

- Ken Gerrard, LTESMS, senior custodian, 15 years
- Birgit Lukins, STHS, senior attendance assistant, 21 years
- Steve Dorman, maintenance, craftsworker, electrician, 18 years
- Cathy Crabtree, STMS, cafeteria, 25 years
- Sandra Bobman, Tahoe Valley, library assistant, 35 years
- Andy Balwing, STHS, custodian, 35 years
- Jerry Buckley, bus driver, 18 years
- Sandy Hood, Sierra House, instructional assistant, 26 years
- Hillary Dembroff, occupational therapist, 15 years
- Cheryl Walters, STMS, instructional assistant, 33 years
- Holly Weber, Sierra House, cafeteria supervisor, 28 years
- Romeo Alaoen, STHS, custodial supervisor, 36 years
- Wayne Blaylock, STHS, custodian, 26 years
- Pam Giordano, STHS, cafeteria assistant, 22 years
- Kathy Humphreys, EC, administrative assistant, 20 years
- Jerry Lufrano, Al Tahoe/EC, custodian, 26 years.