

Truckee students take on project to help other countries

Proceeds from plastic bottles or aluminum cans in Truckee will help purchase solar cookers for people in economically disadvantaged countries, thanks to the efforts of Sierra High School seniors.

Sierra High School requires all seniors to participate in a service learning project.

This year's service learning project is a community effort that benefits Solar Cookers International. Seniors are asking local businesses, agencies and schools to participate in the program by placing recycling containers at their site. Proceeds derived from the recycling will go to SCI, which will in turn purchase solar ovens for needy countries such as Haiti, Pakistan, India, Africa.



Solar cookers help people in disadvantage countries.

Photo/Provided

The SCI website explains that refugees and other displaced people frequently lack access to sufficient cooking fuels and safe drinking water. When infrastructures are in ruins and no

energy or gas is available, solar cooking utilizes the sun to cook hot food. Additionally, when fuel is scarce, cooking with the sun offers a clean, workable solution. Importantly, solar cookers fight cholera by heating water to pasteurization temperatures. And finally, using a solar cooker requires only the sun, and does not necessitate searching for other forms of fuel.

Sierra High School seniors are actively searching for businesses and public entities that have room for a 32-inch by 18-inch recycling container. Those interested in participating should call Sierra High School at (530) 582.2640.

Tickets on sale for Rundgren at MontBleu

Todd Rundgren comes to MontBleu in Stateline on July 14 for a one-night concert.

His landmark albums have included such classics as “Bang the Drum”, “I Saw The Light”, “Hello It’s Me” and “Can We Still Be Friends.”

Rundgren’s production projects include albums by Patti Smith, Cheap Trick, Psychedelic Furs, Meatloaf, XTC, Grand Funk Railroad, and Hall And Oates.

This spring he released “Todd Rundgren’s Johnson” a fresh batch of songs in a tribute to early bluesman Robert Johnson.

Doors open at 8pm; show begins at 9pm. Tickets are \$35/\$50/\$95, plus fees.

South Tahoe cancer survivor to fire Amgen start gun

South Lake Tahoe resident and cancer survivor Valerie Smith will fire the gun to start the largest cycling event in the United States.

Smith was selected to start the May 15 race by Amgen's Breakaway from Cancer, a national initiative to increase awareness of the important resources available to people affected by cancer – from prevention through survivorship.

Smith was diagnosed with ovarian cancer two weeks after her 34th birthday in December 1999. Doctors found three tumors and the cancer had metastasized throughout her abdomen.



Valerie Smith

Today, she has no evidence of the disease and she continues to run not only because she loves it, but also because she feels it keeps the cancer at bay.

As part of the Breakaway from Cancer Amgen Tour of California activities, cancer survivors will not only participate in each of the race starts, but also jersey presentations at each finish and other activities throughout the eight-day event.

Dogs helping to engage young people to read

Bona Fide Books is going to the dogs. Starting May 18 “My Reading Buddy,” a literacy program for elementary school-age students, will accept drop-ins from 3:45-4:45pm every other Wednesday at the publisher’s Meyers’ location.

During each session, four children will enjoy an individual 15-minute reading period with a canine listener and a tutor. Age-appropriate books are provided and there is no charge.

“My Reading Buddy” is a literacy program developed and sponsored by the Lake Tahoe Humane Society and S.P.C.A. designed to provide encouragement in a stress-free reading environment. The program has been popular at the Tahoe Boys & Girls Club and the South Tahoe Public Library for more than three years.

For more information, contact Kim Wyatt at Bona Fide Books, (530) 573.1513, or Liz Maul, Outreach and Education Manager at the Lake Tahoe Humane Society and S.P.C.A., (530) 542.2857.

Bona Fide Books is located at 1069 Magua St., No. 4, in the cul de sac behind the Getaway Café in Meyers.

Douglas Paul Lee – 1959-2011

On Jan. 10, 2011, our little brother Douglas Paul Lee passed away in Columbia, Tenn.

Doug was born April 28, 1959, in Gardena, Calif., to Patricia Ruth and Clarke David (Mickey) Lee. He was their seventh child.

He was 51.

He was preceded in death by brothers Terry David Lee and Thomas Earl Lee.

He is survived by a sister Vicki Lee Tait of Elyria, Ohio; brothers T. Michael Lee of South Lake Tahoe, Patrick L. Lee of Hesperia, Calif., and Dennis C. Lee, of Idaho.

Doug grew up in Southern California and in Henryetta, Okla. He later lived in Kansas City, Mo. He quit school in the 10th grade, but was not satisfied with that outcome and at the age of 35 he received his GED in South Lake Tahoe in 1994.

While living in South Lake Tahoe he worked as a cook for Caesars Tahoe. He also played on Caesars softball team, which was one of his favorite times.

Doug was a military veteran as he served in the U.S. Army as a cook in the late-70s stationed among other places in Seoul, South Korea.

Doug was a huge sports fan, loving both baseball (Dodgers) and football (Rams and Kansas City Chiefs). He spent the last 12 years in and near Nashville, where he lived with his life partner Susan who he called, "The love of my life."

I can attest Doug and his life were a whole lot better and successful with her in his life. Doug's remains were cremated and when Susan passes their ashes will be interred together.

Doug wasn't dealt the best cards in his troubled life, but God bless him he made the most of what he had. Doug was a loving, selfless individual who would try and help anyone if he could. He had his problems and he dealt with them, but he was one of the sweetest and most loving people who I have ever known. I

miss my little brother more than you can ever imagine.

Until we meet again bro, Happy Trails.

– *Dennis C. Lee*

Nevada embracing Travel-Tourism Week

The Nevada Commission on Tourism will honor National Travel and Tourism Week, which runs through May 15, with an effort to enlist the state's tourism industry in the Power of Travel Coalition.

"The Power of Travel Coalition is a grassroots effort to unite those employed and affected by the tourism industry. Much of our tourism industry in Nevada is led by grassroots volunteers, so there is a natural parallel between the coalition and our industry," Lt. Gov. Brian Krolicki, NCOT chair, said in a statement. "This shows the power of volunteers and those who care deeply about the health of the industry and our state."

Tourism is Nevada's No. 1 industry, employing about 427,000 Nevadans. Nationally, tourism employs 10.1 million Americans, according to the U.S. Travel Association. Every employee in every restaurant, hotel, gift shop, transportation company, airline, museum and special event can count himself or herself a part of the vast industry that drives Nevada's economy.

The U.S. Travel Association established the Power of Travel Coalition to amplify the voices of the millions of Americans employed by the tourism industry. It is the only national

association tasked with promoting travel to the United States and working to elevate the importance of the industry among lawmakers.

To get involved with the Power of Travel Coalition, Nevadans simply have to go the website and enter their name and email address. This will enroll them to receive updates on legislation affecting tourism, issues facing the industry and efforts made nationally and locally to protect and promote the tourism industry.

Class to help parents learn how to lessen children's stress

Children experience more stress today than ever before, living in a world that often seems to move at a dizzying pace. Does your child experience:

- *fears
- *shyness
- *test anxiety
- *difficulty dealing with change
- *sadness
- *negative effects from being bullied.

If you answered yes, then consider learning practical coping strategies and the method Emotional Freedom Technique.

The class will cover:

- *how EFT works

- *the best language to use with children

- *when to use EFT

- *using EFT when everything is going great – to make things even greater

- *using EFT with children of all ages.

Two workshops are offered May 22 – 9am-noon and 1-4pm.

Both are Balance Body Fitness Studio, 276 Kingsbury Grade, Ste. 107 (next to the 7-Eleven), Stateline.

Cost is \$20 per person or \$30 per family (two adult family members). It includes a workbook.

Register by going online or call Balance Fitness (775) 580.7267.

Pre-registration ends May 20 at 5pm. If space is available, registrations will be taken at the door.

Free childcare available on site as this is a workshop for adults only.

The workshop will be taught by South Shore mind-body therapist Rosemary Manning.

Virginia City parade honors

Law enforcement

The Silver State National Peace Officers Museum's Second Annual Police Memorial Week Parade in historic Virginia City is May 14 at noon.

This parade is held in honor of law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty throughout history as well as for those who currently serve and have served their communities in the law enforcement profession.

The Silver State National Peace Officers Museum features historical artifacts from the law enforcement profession dating to the 1780s from all across America and is located within the 1876 Storey County Jail inside the courthouse.

The parade is in conjunction with a Restored Emergency Vehicle Show and Collectors Show which run from 9am to 4pm.

For more information, call the museum at (775) 847.7800.

Reno Discovery Museum making headway for fall opening

By Jackie Green, Reno Gazette-Journal

In what used to be the old Reno City Hall, a climbable tower of clouds hovers above an outline of the Truckee River. Where the City Council once met now stands an 8,900-pound mining tire. Whole sections of glass windows are being installed as child's play replaces the serious business of the city.

Though still in the infant stage, the Terry Lee Wells Nevada

Discovery Museum is beginning to take shape on Center Street in downtown Reno. The front of the building is getting a facelift to add a 2,700-square-foot lobby. A project that melds a children's museum with a science museum and targets ages 1-14, the Discovery plans to open in September. Memberships went on sale Monday, a milestone in the seven-year-long process that has involved \$20.3 million in fundraising. The museum itself will open in late 2011, according to its website.

"Almost all of our funding has been local," said Gretchen Kelly Bietz, director of development for the museum. "We've been well-supported from our community."

When fundraising stalled last year, help came from fourth-generation Nevadan (and "Gilligan's Island" TV star) Dawn Wells and an investing group of five Nevada women. They made a deal: If the museum board could find \$6 million more, they would ante up the rest, ultimately donating nearly \$5 million.

"For their gift, we decided to memorialize Terry Lee Wells," Bietz said.

Read the whole story

Lake Valley fire chief hanging up turnouts for good

By Kathryn Reed

Jeff Michael is leaving home.

The Lake Valley fire chief is retiring after 32 years with the department. It's a place he calls home. A place where the 59-

year-old says he grew up and grew old.

He will be leaving June 24 – the fourth anniversary of the devastating Angora Fire. But that's not why he picked that date. It just happens to be the end of a pay period.



Jeff Michael

Still, it was that fire of 2007 that Michael gets choked up about.

"To this day I still have nightmares about it," Michael said. "That was my fire. That was my back yard. The heroic and valiant efforts of all the firefighting agencies was incredible. We saved a lot of homes, but we lost a lot of homes."

Some of those 254 homes belonged to people who call him boss.

While the fire was fought by many jurisdictions, what wasn't on U.S. Forest Service property, was within the boundaries of Lake Valley Fire Protection District in El Dorado County.

Michael's voice changes tone as he talks about the complacency that has set in over time. he points fingers at individual homeowners and agencies operating in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

"I still hear people not wanting to do defensible space. If we had all the homes treated with defensible space, we would have probably saved who knows how many homes," Michael said.

He's frustrated he'll be leaving before the Forest Service begins the 10,000-acre South Shore Fuels Reduction Project.

“People are not allowing the South Shore Plan to go through. Some environmentalists think it should not go through. And the treatment of the burn area. Let’s get that dead wood out,” Michael says with conviction. (A lawsuit has been filed against the Forest Service to prevent the removal of the dead standing trees in the burn area.) “From a firefighting standpoint you need to get that out of there. It’s how you protect the homes there.”

The job has its good and bad moments – like all careers.

“You live for the moment, but you remember the good you do,” Michael said. “I’ve seen some of the faces of kids where their dad or mom was hurt at a car accident. You take them in your arms and you feel their pain. You can’t help but feel the pain and suffering you see.”

Defining the chief

Michael, who became chief in September 2005, is not just a crusader for his district, but an advocate of fire prevention throughout the basin.

“His leadership post-Angora would be the defining moment in Jeff’s career as fire chief,” said Guy LeFever, fire chief with Tahoe-Douglas Fire Protection District. “Replacing him will be very difficult. I hope they have someone locally who understands the political environment that Lake Valley resides in. The Angora Fire was an eye-opener. A tremendous amount of action has taken place since then. He was on the edge of that change.”

Being the top guy has not meant staying in an office all day.

“He leads by example. These guys would follow him anywhere,” Leona Allen, spokeswoman for the department, said. “One of the things I like about him is he is a chief that doesn’t wear a white shirt all the time. He will drive an ambulance. He will drive a truck. He will come in on his day off.”

Andy Kauffer, battalion chief for Lake Valley, doesn't even remember how or when he met the chief – but before he started as a volunteer in 1992.

“He is extremely approachable. This district is his passion. These guys and gals here are his passion. He has a huge heart, but also a firm hand,” Kauffer said.

Kauffer remembers a call when he was a firefighter and Michael was a captain. They were at a structure fire, in the kitchen area of the two-story house. As they were going forward all of a sudden a bed falls through the ceiling, inches from them.

“We almost got taken out by a bed. We still can crack up about it to this day,” Kauffer said.

Changing times

Michael has seen many changes in his career that has solely been with Lake Valley. The 1970 South Tahoe High School graduate started at the department in 1975 as a volunteer. Four years later he was hired full time. In all that time he never called in sick.

First aid equipment was left over from World War II when he started – which was 30 years after the war ended. It was in the mid-1980s that firefighters per California law became emergency medical technicians

One thing he would do differently is become a paramedic.

“They are quite spectacular out there in the field when you see them with the life-saving abilities they have at their fingertips,” Michael said.

He points to the agreement Lake Valley and South Lake Tahoe have with the county to provide ambulance service as something to be proud of. He is excited telemetry units in ambulances that link right to doctors at Barton Memorial Hospital are being tested. That should all be permanent within six months.

Another thing Michael points to when it comes to patient care is the creation of the backcountry bags. It allows his men and women to go off trail with a small amount of meds, a heart monitor and be able to set up an IV for someone injured in the woods.

One legacy he leaves behind is being an integral part in developing the fire academy at Lake Tahoe Community College. He points to Virginia Boyar at the college as the person who deserves the bulk of the credit.

However, Michael is not a big believer in the need to consolidate fire agencies on the South Shore or shut stations. A lot of that has to do with Lake Valley, South Lake Tahoe and Tahoe-Douglas operating with two people to an engine. The only way to get more personnel to the scene is to have another engine arrive.

Mutual aid is huge between agencies in the basin.

"We have always had consolidation talks. It has to be done for a reason besides money; it has to be because of better service. It has to be because taxpayers in the long run will make out on this. I don't see it being at that point right now," Michael said.

What's next?

Michael and his wife plan to spend the bulk of their time on their 40-acre ranch near Markleeville. He'll be tending to the chickens, crops and fruit trees. Retirement will also give him more time to spend with his three grandchildren.

As for his replacement, the five-member board that governs the fire district will go over the applications at the May 12 meeting. This is the first time the board has opened the position to applicants outside of the department.

"It's bittersweet," Michael says of leaving. "I'm always a

proponent that change is good. They can get someone new in there, with new ideas.”