Festival of Trees and Lights tickets about to go on sale

The Barton Foundation's second annual Festival of Trees and Lights kicks off the holiday season Dec. 3-5 at the MontBleu Convention Center in Stateline.

The festival features nonstop holiday entertainment; trees decorated by local designers, Barton employees, and local schools; visits with Santa Claus; an expanded children's craft area; and a community stage.



Decorators compete for best tree at the 2009 event. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Here is a rundown of the ticketed events:

* Teddy Bear Hospital provides an interactive way for kids to learn about their health and hospitals in a safe, "no poke" environment from real doctors, nurses and caregivers. Every child 12 and under attending the festival during public viewing and Family Night will receive a free teddy bear. Their bear is then admitted to the hospital, diagnosed and treated. Sponsored by the Tahoe Emergency Physicians.

* Family Night, Dec. 3 from 5-9pm offers a time for families to experience the festival together. The $25 (up to five people) admission includes a Santa photo, light refreshments, holiday-inspired crafts, face painting and marionette show. Cap off the evening with a free holiday light show presented by Horizon Casino Resort.

* Teddy Bear Breakfast is Dec. 4 at 9am. Bring your child's favorite doll or stuffed animal to be adorned with holiday flair while you enjoy a kid-friendly buffet. Costumed characters will roam the room and, of course, Santa is there to hear your child's wishes and to create that keepsake holiday photo. Adults $20; children 12 and under $15.

* The Gala, Dec. 4 at 6pm is the Barton Foundation's largest annual fundraiser. The black-tie optional event features a live auction, expanded silent auction, live entertainment and the winning cocktail from our Signature Cocktail Contest, the Nutty Mulligan by Edgewood's Chip Norton. Tickets are $150 per person.

* Fashions in a Winter Wonderland, Dec. 5 at 11am. This Champagne Brunch and Fashion Show features holiday and resort looks from local retailers on the runway. Tickets are $35 per person.

* Polar Express, Dec. 5 at 3 and 6pm, features two departures. Dress up in your best pajamas and grab a seat on one of our "trains." Have your ticket punched by our conductors, sing carols as you make your way to the Red Hut for a cup of hot chocolate. From there the "trains" continue on to MontBleu for refreshments, the reading of the Polar Express, and the songs of the Tahoe Belles choir. Space is limited to 300 people per departure. Tickets are $15 per person.

Proceeds from the Festival of Trees and Lights benefit the Barton Community Clinic, which provides medical care to the community, especially for those living in poverty or without

insurance. Barton is planning an $800,000 expansion and renovation of the existing clinic to improve service for the more than 1,600 patients visiting the clinic each month.

Tickets go on sale Nov. 8 at 9am. Bring a non-perishable food item for Christmas Cheer and receive a $1 off Public Viewing or Family Night.

For a complete schedule, to purchase tickets or for more information, go online or call (530) 543.5909.

Significance of tossing trash into water resonates with kids

By Kathryn Reed

MEYERS – A bunch of kids sit around a pond with plastic bottles floating on it. It's their fault. Each one thought it would be OK to toss their empty into the water.

"We created this problem, didn't we?" Cindy Wise asks the kindergartners.



Students draw on a water

drop to show what water means to them. Photos/Kathryn Reed

This pond, as it were, is actually a dark blue sheet representing a body of water. The youngsters are in Aimee Rice's class at the Environmental Magnet School. Wise is with the Tahoe Resource Conservation District; part of a Wonders of Water program being taught for the second year in South Shore schools in grades K-6.

With the curriculum grade appropriate and tying into state requirements, youth this month in Lake Tahoe Unified School District and at Zephyr Cove Elementary are learning about watershed health, water conservation, fish life cycles, food webs, water cycles, water quality and the importance of stewardship of water resources.

"Year after year, concepts and topics become a bit more complex and build upon one another. Ideally, students will have been exposed to several years of different activities, making them much more informed about local and global water and conservation issues," explained Pete Brumis with TahoeRCD.

The kindergartners in Rice's class on Tuesday could not have articulated exactly what they were learning, but they quickly figured out their one bottle of litter and their friend's and their other friend's adds up to a whole lot more than just one bottle.

"The Earth can be killed," Bella Munson said of what happens if this sort of thing were to really happen.



Bella Munson

Though that is not likely to be the immediate outcome, Wise said, “Ecosystems can be killed.”

Before tossing the bottles in the “water” a bunch of (paper) animals that might be found in a pond were put into the water. With imaginations going, they were swimming in a pristine body of water.

Once the bottles were tossed in, they were overrun, killed. Only bottles could be seen.

One by one the students took out their bottle and tossed it into a blue bag – the icon for South Tahoe Refuse’s recycling program. As they plucked the bottles, to the tune of “Mary had a little lamb,” they sing “Garbage should not go in the water, should not go in the water.”

The animals are back. No more muck to contend with.

“This brings their local environment into the classroom. This is where it all begins,” Rice said.

Internet marketing classes in

Kings Beach

The North Lake Tahoe Chamber of Commerce and the Sierra Economic Development Corporation have partnered to offer Internet marketing classes for beginners and intermediate users Nov. 2, 9 and 16, 6-8:30pm at the North Tahoe Event Center in Kings Beach, 8318 North Lake Blvd.

The Nov. 2 class is for beginners and will teach participants how to get top rankings on Google, how to access free tools and pick the right keywords for their business and market locally. The cost is $45/person.

The Nov. 9 class is for Intermediates I and will focus on how to set up a Google Ad-words account to bid on keywords. The class will also cover strategies to building inbound links to businesses' websites. The cost is $45/person.

The Nov. 16 class is for Intermediates II and attendees will learn how to create buzz and compelling content through social marketing, such as Facebook, Twitter and blogs. The second half of the class introduces participants to one of the most powerful tools to measure their websites. They'll be able to learn where their visitors are coming from and how to improve their websites.

Coryon Redd, an entrepreneur who has grown an e-commerce business of cell phone batteries and accessories to more than $3 million in annual sales, will teach the classes that include search engine marketing, link building, comparison shopping and website development – a proven blueprint that will translate to more traffic and converting more shoppers into buyers at participants' websites.

To register, click to the Sierra Economic Development Corporation website at www.sedccorp.biz or call (530) 823.4703. Deadline to register is Oct. 29.

Gay man, ex-skinhead unite to fight biases

By Carlos Alcalá, Sacramento Bee

When Matthew Boger was 13, he told his mother he was skipping school because he was being bullied, and that he was being bullied because he was gay.

“I was sort of seeking her help,” he said.

He didn’t get it.

After trying to convince him that he couldn’t be gay, she grew angry and “dragged me across the room and pushed me out the door,” said Boger.

Now, at 44, Boger lives on 20 beautiful acres over the Cosumnes River in El Dorado County. But he was homeless for most of his teen years, because his mother kicked him out of their Bay Area home.

That may not have been the worst of it.

Read the whole story

Presentation about Antarctic

ice region

Flying under the Big Ice: Robotic submarines under Antarctic ice is a resentation by Alexander Forrest at UC Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center in Incline Village.

Forrest will have just returned from a research excursion using robotic submarines under the Erebus ice-tongue in McMurdo Sound, Antarctica.

Learn about the unique physical characteristics of seawater under this ice shelf, the influence on the formation and growth of sea ice within the sound, and the affect on marine biology. By deploying a robotic submersible, known as an Autonomous Underwater Vehicle (AUV), the international research team will map under-ice structure and ice thickness; document three dimensional convective and mixing processes; measure phytoplankton distribution; and, model the effect of ice-ocean coupling on water mass evolution, sea ice formation, and biological processes.

This AUV deployment embodies the use of a pioneering technology to make advances in Polar exploration that would not be possible otherwise.

Charting these processes is critical because our Polar Regions are rapidly losing ice cover. International collaboration by scientists and engineers in the fields of physics, chemistry and biology will help us to better understand these processes before the opportunity disappears all together.

Forrest is a postdoctoral scholar with the UC Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center. He focuses on questions in physical limnology and works on under-ice applications of AUV technologies in a diversity of environments. He has extensive AUV survey experience from the Caribbean to the Caspian Sea.

Details:

Date: Dec. 8

Time: 5:30pm no-host bar. Program begins at 6pm.

Cost: $5 donation requested

Location: Tahoe Center for Environmental Sciences, 291 Country Club Drive, Incline Village.

Collie Buddz to bring his music to Stateline

Collie Buddz from the isle of Bermuda has done something not impossible but something once seemingly implausible. He's become the most buzz-worthy current reggae artist over the past few years.

He's bringing his brand of music to MontBleu in Stateline on Nov. 12 at 8pm. Doors open at 7pm. Tickets are $15 in advance at the casino or $25 at the door.

In summer 2007, Buddz' Columbia Records self-titled debut album stormed the charts entering the Billboard Reggae Chart at first position. The reggae singjay became an international star when this album then went on to debut across the world at the top of every chart from Japan to Germany.

Incorporating influences from hip-hop to soca, Collie's music nevertheless has a rock-solid foundation in reggae – and its power to connect ghetto reality with the highest heights of human aspiration – that is a rarity even in Jamaica. But, to say he's connected to the Caribbean community would be an understatement. Buddz, born Colin Harper, has become the Caribbean culture's resident ambassador.

In spite of averaging an 11-month yearly touring schedule since 2007, Buddz is prepared to release a sophomore album.

Wanting to release music more frequently and with fewer restrictions, Buddz's affiliation with Columbia Records/Sony Music Entertainment ended in 2008. He has since founded his own independent record label, Harper Digital alongside his brother, Smokey, and DJ Genie, while working with his longtime management group Mojiza Management.

Nevada Women's History Project welcomes authors

By Susan Skorupa, Reno Gazette-Journal

Nearly three dozen local novelists and nonfiction writers are coming to lunch.

The Nevada Women's History Project is staging its third authors' luncheon Nov. 6 where book lovers can mingle with the writers they already appreciate and meet some new ones, all to benefit History Project programs.

This year's keynote speakers are Range magazine publisher C. J. Hadley and Lake Tahoe writer and weather historian Mark McLaughlin. Jennifer Burton is the moderator.

Attendees can talk to their favorite authors, buy their books, get autographs, then talk to more authors during lunch and afterward. The event includes a silent auction and raffle.

Read the whole story

Education – topic of movie, discussion in Incline

2010 is turning out to be the year of the education documentary. This summer, no fewer than four documentaries, most of them independently produced, were released. All present various perspectives on the current state of U.S. education. School reform has become compelling drama and the media attention surrounding these films and others has helped spark a national debate.

To give this important issue the platform it deserves, Sierra Nevada College's Teacher Education Department has collaborated with Lake Tahoe School Parents Association to present the 2010-11 "Discussions on Education Series."

During the next few months, the series will present "The Race to Nowhere," "Two Million Minutes," "Do Schools Kill Creativity," and "Bring on the Learning Revolution" on the SNC campus, Tahoe Center for Environmental Sciences, rooms 139/141, Incline.

The first film "Race to Nowhere" will be screened Nov. 4 at 6:30pm.

The series will explore depictions of the American school system from provocative, at times opposing, perspectives with the intent to start and support an on-going dialogue among the audience; and to seek answers, discussion, and understanding from a variety of points of view. The premise of the SNC/LTS discussion series is that the documentaries are the start of the conversation and not the end.

Facilitators from both schools will lead post-film discussions

designed to create positive dialogue about the challenges facing education reform in the U.S.

All events are free and open to the public. Seating is limited.

For more information, contact Katrina Midgley, Teacher Education Department, at (775) 831.1314, ext. 7517, kmidgley@sierranevada.edu, or Mary Danahey at marydanahey@gmail.com.

Upcoming discussions:

Jan. 13: “Two Million Minutes” is a groundbreaking, controversial documentary film about how students in the United States allocate their high school years (approximately four years or 2 million minutes) compared with India and China. www.2mminutes.com/films

March: “Do Schools Kill Creativity” and “Bring on the Learning Revolution” are two TEDTalks lectures by visionary leader/author Sir Ken Robinson in which he challenges the education system to cultivate creativity and acknowledge multiple types of intelligence. http://www.ted.com/speakers/sir_ken_robinson.html.

Carson City emerges as retiree destination

By Catey Hill, SmartMoney

All the charm of Asheville, but with cheaper housing. The recreation of Boulder, without the income tax. The sunshine of Sedona, with a lower cost of living. With today’s would-be

retirees as concerned about whether they'll get to retire as they are about where, the best cities and towns for retirees now have a much higher bar to clear: They can't just be great places – they have to be affordable.

That leaves most of the old standbys off the list. As boomers have gotten older, they've flocked to places like Sarasota, Fla., Pinehurst, N.C., and Eugene, Ore., driving up prices along the way. Two decades ago, Asheville was a tiny, affordable North Carolina town; in the last two decades, since the North Carolina Center for Creative Retirement was established, the population's grown 24%, and the cost of living is now higher than the national average, according the Council for Community and Economic Research. But the real story is in the meteoric rise of real estate prices in retiree-friendly markets: Despite the national housing collapse, prices in Boulder, Colo., have risen 10% in the last four years, according to Zillow.com, while other cities, like Madison, Wis., have suffered very small declines. As a result, many of those spots are prohibitively expensive, even after prices have fallen.

Meanwhile, nest eggs have shrunk, and retiree incomes are stagnating. Social Security benefits didn't rise in 2010, nor will they in 2011. Benchmark Treasury bond yields are at their lowest since January 2009, and certificates of deposit are earning almost nothing – at 0.55% interest, a one-year $10,000 CD would earn just $55. Forget what the Social Security Administration says: For anyone looking to make their savings last, cost of living does matter.

Read the whole story

Ski film ‘The Story’ debuts in Crystal Bay

The exclusive Lake Tahoe premiere of “The Story” comes to the Crystal Bay Club Casino in Crystal Bay on Oct. 29.

It highlights the ski talent of mountain sports biggest stars. The evening will begin with a special tribute to international adventure sports legend and North Lake Tahoe resident Shane McConkey with the screening of the new short film “Shane & the McConkeys.”

The show starts at 8pm. Tickets are $15 per person.