Bill Lane 1919-2010

Publisher's note: ***Bill and Jean Lane have had a home at Cascade Lake for many years.***

By Paul Rogers and Mack Lundstrom, San Jose Mercury News
Bill Lane, who built Sunset magazine into an icon of Western living, helped found the town of Portola Valley and donated millions to Stanford University and environmental causes from open space preservation to restoration of Yosemite National Park, has died.


Bill Lane

With family members at his side, Lane died of respiratory failure at 7:30 p.m. Saturday at Stanford Hospital. He was 90.

Lane and his brother, Mel, who died in 2007, ran Lane Publishing from the late 1950s until 1990. Mel Lane oversaw Sunset books, while his brother was publisher of Sunset magazine. From their Menlo Park headquarters, the brothers turned their father Laurence's 1928 investment of $65,000 into one of the nation's leading regional publishing companies.

"He saw incredible possibility in the West. It was a can-do place. That's what Sunset stood for – build your own house, make your own food, hike a trail," Bill Lane's daughter, Sharon Lane of Nevada City, said Monday. "He saw himself and the magazine as an ambassador for the West."

Read the whole story

Birding lecture at Sierra Nevada College

Come see what Saturday Mornings at SNC (formerly Senior Saturdays), the award-winning joint offering of Sierra Nevada College and Incline Village Parks & Recreation Senior Programs, are all about.

Share coffee with SNC's faculty and other knowledgeable locals as they present bite-size offerings of intellectual material. An optional continental breakfast will be provided for $3.

Learn about the birds most likely to be encountered in the Tahoe region from Kirk Hardie, a co-executive director of the newly formed Tahoe Institute for Natural Science. The presentation will cover identification tips and natural history information for each species.

Kirk Hardie grew up in Sacramento and spent most winter weekends skiing in the Tahoe region. He has been an environmental educator in Idaho, Oregon, California, and Nevada, highlighting the beauty of birds in the natural world, among many other topics. He received his master of science degree in biology from UNR in 2009, where he developed a four-week high-school curriculum based on the ecology of the Great Basin.

The Tahoe Institute for Natural Science is a nonprofit organization seeking to advance the natural history, conservation, and ecosystem knowledge of the Tahoe region. Its long-term goal is to bring a world-class interpretive nature center and educational facility to the Tahoe area. Currently, the organization engages in multiple science, education, and outreach programs to promote greater appreciation,

understanding, and stewardship of the natural resources of the Tahoe region. www.tins.org

Date: Aug. 14

Program: Birds of the Tahoe Region

Time: 10am–noon

Where: Prim Library, Sierra Nevada College, 999 Tahoe Blvd., Incline Village

Fee: $3 Optional Continental Breakfast

For details on course offerings, visit www.Inclineseniors.com or call (775) 832.1310.

NFL advertising changes allow scenic images of Nevada

By Richard N. Velotta, Las Vegas Sun

The National Football League has unveiled its advertising, sponsorship and promotion guidelines for 2010, and the good news for Las Vegas is that some changes will allow the city to be shown off in TV ads during the upcoming regular season.

The bad news for the city's promoters is that showing off our hotels and casinos – or even a pair of flying dice above a craps table – and invoking our world-famous motto, "What happens here, stays here," are still considered too racy for the NFL's taste.

Still, the revised guidelines are an important step in displaying Las Vegas in commercial messages that appear during

the games that sports books annually thrive on. But advertisers still won't have carte blanche to put anything about Las Vegas on the air.

In the NFL's 2009 postseason, the league had what amounted to a four-week trial period with a revised advertising policy. Those guidelines will be in place for the entire 2010 season, giving advertisers an opportunity to deliver messages on national broadcasts for the 17-week regular season.

Read the whole story

'Masters of Magic' comes to MontBleu

"Masters of Magic," a high-energy, family-friendly show featuring four headliner magicians with grand illusions, sleight of hand, and a splash of comedy, will appear at MontBleu casino in Stateline Aug. 4–Sept. 5.

Tickets are $19.95 for adults and $12.95 for children 17 and under.

Starring in this production is world champion master magician Tony Clark. In addition to producer of the year, he also won the coveted titles of world's best sleight of hand magician at the International Magic Awards, world class champion at the Society of American Magicians, Best Classical Magic Act Award at The World's Magic Awards which aired on CBS.

Clark has also been in episodes of the TV series "Masters Of Illusion".

Headliner Danny Cole, 28, has made a significant mark in the

world of magic. He was named stage magician of the year by members of the Magic Castle in Hollywood. Cole has consulted and created magic for other magicians and has been a featured performer in gala shows and at variety theaters around the globe.

His approach to illusion incorporates concepts and principles that raise magic to an art form.

Joel Ward and his assistant, Stacey, have been featured in “Lance Burton’s Young Magician’s Showcase” on Fox. Ward’s vitality and original tricks earned him first place at the International Brotherhood of Magicians Competition, the world’s largest magic organization. He started performing when he was 10, and by 15 he became a World Champion Teen Magician.

For more than a decade, Bryson Lang has entertained thousands with his unique comedy and juggling act. He’s performed on PAX TV’s, “Master’s of Illusion” series and appeared on the “Extreme Gong Show” – where his act won first place. He was also a featured juggler on, “Charmed” and “That ‘70s Show”. Lang has appeared in “Austin Powers II” and “Batman and Robin” and has been a featured act at corporate events for Disney, Toyota and Hawaiian Tropic.

Tickets are available at the MontBleu Box Office, 800.648.3353 or at www.ticketmaster.com.

Tesla – a silent roadster making noise in the car world

By Susan Wood

INCLINE VILLAGE – The wind in my hair, a tight grip on the steering wheel and the cozy comfort of being framed into my seat – the feeling was electrifying.

My first adventure behind the wheel of the new Tesla Roadster Sport electric car on a recent summer night seemed so natural.



Susan Wood takes a Tesla for a spin. Photos/Kathryn Reed

For one thing, I've had muscle cars before. At 16, I owned a 1968 California Special Mustang. They only made them one year. Then, I moved over to a Chevy Camaro of the same year. This car bared a 327 V8 engine with dual exhaust. Responsiveness is something I'm accustomed to.

There's a lot that's different about this latest car made by Tesla of Palo Alto, the quasi darling of green technology, which went public this summer. Shares are expected to trade at about $14.

A low-maintenance engine plugs into a charging station, turning 240 volts over a 3.5 hour-period into 245 miles of driving luxury. This vehicle is anything but business as usual. (For gearheads, the electric, rear-wheel drive car is powered with a liquid-cooled battery pack consisting of 6,831 lithium ion cells.)

Its sexiness lies with its look and its feel. It has a body of

a roadster (mine, a color called “very orange”) that appears to belong on a racetrack. Its light carbon fiber frame floats between zero and 60mph in three seconds. My racing bicycle made of the car frame’s same material would be hard-pressed to produce such a smooth and fast ride.

With the top off while pulling out of the Hyatt Regency parking lot onto Lakeshore Boulevard, I tried to see what this expensive toy could do. I was not disappointed.

First, I didn’t know the car was turned on because it’s so quiet. I pushed a button and suddenly I’m in drive. Other buttons include park and reverse. (If you’re backing up, a handy visual screen provides the view from the back end.) Needless to say, I kept reaching for a stick shift.

As with most vehicles in this price range, there is something for the cold of Tahoe: warmers on executive leather seats are included on the sport model. For the musically inclined, it also comes equipped with a special slot for iPods.

Then I noticed no power steering – something to be thankful for when I pressed on the accelerator. “Wow,” I thought as the car took off like a dart. I soon found the brake, as I headed for the loop from Lakeshore to Highway 28 and back.

“Tesla wanted to prove electric vehicles are not dinky golf carts. They can be sexy and practical for everyday use,” said Miki Sofer, Tesla’s client advisor and my passenger for the joyride.

Joy it was.

The stares from people are worth capturing.

It was unfortunate Incline Village was busy on this Friday night. Otherwise, I would have tested that zero to 60 claim.

The 7-year-old company brought the vehicle to Tahoe for a demonstration weekend designed to get people who can afford it

(not the media) to see what the vehicle is all about. They say the rear-wheel drive works in snowy Canada.

The name comes from Nikola Tesla, a mechanical engineer who discovered the alternative car.

Indeed, I would consider this car to be the alternative – in price tag as well. The roadster starts at $101,500 after a $7,500 federal tax credit, so it's hardly affordable for every motorist.

When asked, Tesla executives said the car is so pricey because it is hand built. They also cited the cutting-edge technology. When further developed, the price should come down.

The ideal market, according to the company, consists of people looking for high performance vehicles like those driving Ferraris, Mustangs and Priuses.

"We see owners who love the car for its performance and design and also owners who are proud to drive the cleanest car on the road right now," spokeswoman Khobi Brooklyn said of the 1,000 bought in 25 countries.

The thought is, electric vehicles' time has come.

The California Energy Commission is funding 4,047 more chargers in the state to add to the existing 1,271. The one I drove stopped in Davis to get charged along its drive from the Bay Area to Lake Tahoe. UC Davis is considered the hub of research on the plug-in hybrid electric vehicle in the state.

Reducing greenhouse gases is all the rage now, especially prompted by the major oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. Tesla officials provided no comment on that subject. But the energy commission suggests "EV" technology benefits the state "economically and environmentally" by putting employees to work and clearing the air. And although electric vehicles run on a grid fueled by nuclear and coal, energy analysts believe

“de-carbonizing” the power line they run on would be easier to change than attempting to reduce carbon emissions from gas guzzlers.

The commission has figured the nearly 26 million registered vehicles operating in California produce about 40 percent of the state’s greenhouse gas emissions. In 2007, Californians consumed an estimated 20 billion gallons of gas and diesel fuel on the state’s roadways.

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Legendary Burgett returns to Tahoe for reunion tour



Jim Burgett returns to Lake Tahoe for a night of good old, roof poppin’ rock in the South Shore Room at Harrah’s Lake Tahoe on Aug. 14.

“Jim Burgett’s Legendary Rock ‘n’ Roll Reunion” brings together a host of musicians and singers, many of whom were mainstays in the lounges and showrooms of Reno and Lake Tahoe during the past five decades.

On the bill with musical pioneer Burgett will be special guest star Marlene Ricci, a pop singer who was a protégé of and opener for Frank Sinatra. There will be special appearances from original Burgett band member J.B. Estes, on bass and vocals, and others including Mike Coulter, on tenor sax and vocals, and Fred Gallant on drums.

The “Rock ‘n’ Roll Reunion” features another legendary Nevada act – Sidro’s Armada – who will be backing up Burgett, with

Sidro on guitar, Ward Wallace on bass, Mark Adams on drums, Rick Bisbee on keyboards, Steve Sand on keyboards and horns, and Mary Ball on vocals and keyboards. Burgett and the band will be performing some of the great rock ‘n’ roll hits from the ’50s, ’60s and ‘70’s, some of which were penned by Burgett. Ms. Ricci and Sidro’s Armada will also perform solo segments.

It has been 50 years since Burgett and his band first played the hotel, turning the lounge into a party for those who loved the rock music of the day. When Burgett initially visited Tahoe in 1958, there was no rock ‘n roll being played live anywhere in the city. He took it upon himself to rent the South Shore American Legion Hall three miles down the road from Harrah’s and transform it into a venue in which his band could play and locals could dance. Thus began the legendary Tahoe local teen dances that built a new community around which youth could rally.

Buoyed by the hall’s success, in 1960, Burgett approached Harrah’s about a gig in the lounge. Accepting the only shift available – 6am-noon – he offered not to be paid if he couldn’t fill the room during those hours. But the band’s infectious music and Harrah’s employees who got off their shift and wanted to party turned the gig into a standing-room-only success. By 1962, Burgett and his band were popular headliners at Harrah’s both in Lake Tahoe and Reno, playing various shifts, 26-30 weeks a year.

He began promoting artists while he was working at Harrah’s, booking acts into a space formerly occupied by a Safeway market in South Lake Tahoe. First called the Sanctuary and then The Fun House, Burgett booked nascent headliners including Steppenwolf, whose record “Born to Be Wild” hit No. 1 just as the group came to town. Other acts Burgett brought in included The Grateful Dead, Santana, Tower of Power, the Guess Who, Chuck Berry, John Lee Hooker, Wayne Cochran and the CC Riders, none of whom had yet experienced their major

recording successes.

In the ’70s, he started managing Marlene Ricci and was responsible for introducing her to Sinatra, helping establish her success.

Last year on Burgett’s 74th birthday, a surprise party for him was held on the beach at Tahoe, at which his former band member, J.B. Estes and his wife entertained. Burgett was asked to get up and sing and when he did, a large crowd gathered. That got such a buzz going about Burgett, both on the Internet and elsewhere, that he decided to call Harrah’s Lake Tahoe and see about a reunion gig at the hotel.

Back in the Legion Hall days, a Tahoe newspaper reporter wrote about Burgett: “The singer is Jim Burgett, high priest of the new music, Spanish-booted velvet-lapel’d, velveteen-cuffed Big Daddy of the new cult whose psychoanalysis has been breaking down inhibitions since somebody named Elvis first discovered the Hallelujah Trail.”

Find out what that last sentence means on Aug. 14 at “Jim Burgett’s Legendary Rock ‘n’ Roll Reunion.” Tickets are $25, plus fees, and are available by calling 800.786.8208 or online at www.SouthShoreRoom.com.

Old cars turn grown men into kids during Hot August Nights

By Guy Clifton, Reno Gazette-Journal

Reno’s Russ Sheltra has participated in every Hot August Nights for one simple reason.

“For one week out of the year, we get to be kids again,” said Sheltra, 68, who will be entering his prized 1963 Corvette and 1957 Chevy in this year’s Hot August Nights, which starts today at South Lake Tahoe and moves to Reno on Sunday with a pre-kickoff show-n-shine at Sheltra’s Bonanza Casino.

Since Hot August Nights debuted in Reno in 1986, Sheltra has been taking the week off from work to enjoy the event, which celebrates the classic cars and music of the 1950s and ’60s. For Sheltra, both the cars and the music remind him of his high school days in Southern California. He graduated from Canoga Park High School in 1959.

Read the whole story

Gaming – an intriguing study for academia

By Richard N. Velotta, Las Vegas Sun

When gambling went from being a pastime largely offered by organized crime to a leading entertainment industry, academia took notice and wanted to study it.

Thus began the University of Nevada, Reno’s Institute for the Study of Gambling and Commercial Gaming in 1989.

Its leader is William Eadington, an economics professor with an interest in the study of addictive behavior. He had already organized the International Conferences on Gambling and Risk Taking at Lake Tahoe every three years since 1974 and, over time, built a reputation as an expert on the gaming industry.

The UNR institute encourages and promotes research and

learning on gambling, and Eadington is internationally recognized as an authority on the legalization and regulation of the industry. He has written and edited several books on the economic and social effects of commercial gaming.

Read the whole story

Book signing features non-fiction Death Row reversal

After learning a distant cousin whom he'd never met had been convicted of murder and then meeting Ray Krone on Death Row, Jim Rix began investigating the case. Rix's diligence eventually led to his cousin's freedom.

It wasn't easy. It took 10 years, two trials and an eye-opening odyssey through the criminal justice system that led Rix to conclude that the only way to get his cousin out of prison was to find the real Snaggletooth Killer.

The legal adventure has been put to words in the book "Jingle Jangle: The Perfect Crime Turned Inside Out".

Rix will be at the Carson City Costco July 31-Aug. 1 from noon-4pm signing his book.

Tahoe mystery writer on regional book tour



Todd Borg, Lake Tahoe's award winning mystery writer, is on the book signing circuit.

His latest thriller – "Tahoe Heat" – will be in bookstores starting in August.

The series of books follow the exploits of Detective Owen McKenna. No need to read them in order to know what is going on. For people who know Tahoe, many places mentioned in the books will be familiar.

For more information about Borg and his books, click here.

Here is Borg's book signing schedule:

South Lake Tahoe

July 30 4-7pm: Signing at Artifacts, 4000 Lake Tahoe Blvd. (in the Raley's Village Center near Stateline) (530) 543.0728

Aug. 4 6pm: Talk and signing at the South Lake Tahoe/El Dorado Public Library, 1000 Rufus Allen Blvd. (530) 573.3185 (Signing at 6pm, talk at 7pm)

Aug. 5 5-7pm: Signing at Lake Tahoe Master Framing, 3440 Lake Tahoe Blvd. (530) 541.8438

Aug. 14 9-11am: Signing at The Red Hut on Ski Run Boulevard.

Tahoe City

Aug. 7 3-5pm: Signing at Bookshelf at the Boatworks Mall. (530) 581.1900

Reno

July 31 11am: Talk and signing at Sundance Bookstore, 1155 W. Fourth St. (775) 786.1188

Aug. 1, 11am: Signing at Borders, Reno, 4995 S. Virginia St. (775) 448.9999

Carson Valley

Aug. 1, 3p: Talk and signing at Eddy Street Books, 1225 Eddy St., Gardnerville. (775) 782.5484

Aug. 7, 11am-1pm: Signing at Borders Carson City, 911 Topsy Lane. (775) 267.0755

Sacramento

Aug. 21 3:30pm: Signing at Book Lovers Bookstore, Madison and Manzanita streets. (916) 332.3133

Placerville

Aug. 14 3pm: Talk and signing at El Dorado Arts Council, 459 Main St. (530) 295.3496

Grass Valley

Aug. 21 11am: Talk and signing, at The Book Seller Bookstore, 107 Mill St. (530) 272.2131