Elegant Evening raises thousands for South Shore

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – More than 300 people filled the convention center at Harrah's Lake Tahoe on Saturday night in support of Soroptimist International of Tahoe Sierra.

The service club's annual Elegant Evening surpassed last year's attendance, which was just less than 300.



People scour the silent auction tables March 27. Photo/Kathryn Reed

The money raised from the $50 tickets and silent auction items stays in the community. The mission of Soroptimist to help women and children. That's exactly what this group of women does.

A slide show ran during the night of different events these women help with, including Drug Store Project, which is March 30.

For more information, click here.

Mancuso donates $10,000 to Tahoe City school district

During the Olympic Games last month, Procter & Gamble presented a $10,000 check to Squaw Valley native Julia Mancuso, who was fresh from winning a silver medal in women's downhill and another in the women's Olympic combined. Procter and Gamble, Crest & Oral-B recognized Mancuso as one of five Team USA Olympians for the "Smile with U.S." campaign.

Mancuso has turned that check over to the Tahoe Truckee Unified School District.

"I achieved what I did at the Olympics in large part due to my childhood growing up in the Tahoe-Truckee region and all the programs I was allowed to be involved in," Mancuso, who was a student of TTUSD, told the district. "Giving back in this way feels so good and is a small token of my appreciation for all the people who helped me along the way."



Julia Mancuso

Mancuso asked for the funds to be earmarked for physical education and health. Besides skiing, Mancuso also suited up for the soccer and track teams at North Tahoe High School in Tahoe City.

Competing at the international level at such an early age made it difficult to maintain a normal high school schedule at Lake Tahoe and Mancuso ultimately landed at Park City where she attended the Winter Sports School. Mancuso's young Tahoe-Truckee ski racing successors don't have to move away to realize their dreams. Three years ago, TTUSD launched the North Tahoe Ski Academy.

Acknowledging the snow sports competitors' often hectic travel schedules, the program allows students to schedule a portion of their course load at the high school, freeing them to train in the afternoons with the ski or snowboard team of their choice. Students then make up the balance of their required curriculum through independent study programs.

Chile temblor adds to Tahoe couple's vacation memories



By Kathryn Reed

One month ago today, Marty and Leslie DeTarr's vacation plans got shaken up a bit in a way that could never have been predicted.

The South Lake Tahoe couple was in Chile when the deadly and devastating 8.8 earthquake struck the South American country.

They were supposed to fly back to the States on March 1. That didn't happen.

"We were emailing American Airlines and the travel agent.

There was no response," Marty DeTarr said. "(March 2) we got a response from the travel agent who said it might be 10 days."

The airlines said things would be back to normal at the Santiago airport in three days. That didn't happen.

"We heard later the ceiling at the airport terminal had caved in and wiped out all the computers," DeTarr said.

They didn't feel the earth move because they were about 1,000 miles from epicenter down in Patagonia near Torres del Paine.

But many of the people working at the resort they were staying at were from that country's capital and knew of family and friends who had died. One worker relayed stories about the tsunami on the small coastal town of Constitución.

"He said cars were in the street at night and the next morning they were gone. They had rolled out into the ocean," DeTarr said.

With no one coming and going, the Explora Lodge had no problem putting the DeTarrs up for a couple nights – for free.

"We weren't in fear or concerned about our lives," DeTarr said of the experience.

By March 3 their 3.5-week vacation was just about over. It meant riding a bus for more than four hours to Calafate, Argentina; finding their luggage at a different location across the border than where the bus parked; and then paying $250 for a taxi ride to Buenos Aires. From there, it was a plane ride into Reno.

Silver State twisters rare, but memorable

By Ed Vogel, Las Vegas Review-Journal

CARSON CITY – Mrs. Joe Leavy was sitting on the bed in her home up the road from the Hoover Dam construction site when a mammoth wind on July 24, 1931, shook the house and carried her out of a window and into the sky.

Leavy was spirited away on a "magic carpet ride" on her mattress as a twister ripped apart 12 nearby homes and left seven people injured.

She "landed in a heap with the mattress, shaken up but unhurt," according to the seemingly straight account in the Review-Journal.

"Autoists" described the tornado "as bounding along, in zig-zag fashion, coming down with its point here and there."

A tornado in Nevada?

Read the whole story

Tahoans honored by Nevada tourism agency

Bruce Rettig of Meyers was one of 11 people honored Thursday with a VolunTourism Awards at the Nevada Commission on Tourism's 20th Rural Roundup conference.

"Volunteers are vital to promoting tourism in rural Nevada

because they care deeply about enhancing their community's tourism attractions, and their work is a labor of love," Lt. Gov. Brian K. Krolicki, NCOT chair, said in a press release. "We are very proud of our devoted rural tourism volunteers, we appreciate their fine work, and these awards are our way of thanking them."

Nevada's six tourism territories selected the VolunTourism recipients, and one award was given posthumously, to the late Gene Kaplan of Wells, who died in 2008. In addition, four outstanding individuals who have contributed decades of hard work received Tourism Lifetime Achievement awards.

In addition to the tourism awards, Brittany Masin, 17, an Incline Village High School senior, received the 2010 June Stannard Memorial Scholarship, which she will apply toward studies for a major in hospitality management at UNLV.

Receiving VolunTourism awards in each territory were:

Indian Territory – Bruce Rettig, a Web designer and president/owner of Charter Advertising/Design, at Lake Tahoe, for sharing his marketing and advertising expertise with Indian Territory and for his advocacy of American Indian historic resources.

Cowboy Country Territory – Peg and Gene Kaplan, for creating, restoring and promoting tourism attractions in Wells and Elko County.

Las Vegas Territory – Jennifer Mahar Mulder, associate publisher for Relocation Resources guide in Las Vegas for meeting planners, has been involved with the territory for only 10 months, but already has done a commendable job of instituting upgraded technology to streamline the membership program.

Nevada Silver Trails – Rebecca Elkins, with her husband, Jerry, own and operate the Horse Fly Ranch for guests in

remote, scenic Monitor Valley north of Tonopah.

Pony Express Territory – Jan Morrison, entrepreneur and staunch promoter of tourism in historic Austin and Pony Express Territory, is founder-owner of Main Street Shops and St. Augustine's Catholic Church building, which she is transforming into a cultural arts center and tourism attraction.

Reno Tahoe Territory – Mary Reno, sales manager for the Silver Legacy Resort Casino in downtown Reno, for devoting her time and expertise to local and regional tourism-building programs and events.

Tourism Lifetime Achievement Awards honored two individuals and a couple for their decades-long passion and commitment to building rural tourism.

The winners are:

Virginia Ridgway of Goldfield, longtime, enthusiastic, resourceful rural tourism booster, authority on local history and created the concept of marketing area highways as Nevada Silver Trails.

Wally Cuchine of Eureka, manager of the historical Eureka Opera House and art gallery and a recipient of the Distinguished Nevadan Award from the University of Nevada Board of Regents, has championed cultural tourism statewide, serving on numerous boards ranging from Pony Express Territory to the Nevada Humanities programming and grant-giving council. His love for art has created

Don and Carol Shanks of Pioche, a husband-wife team, have been unceasing supporters and leaders of tourism building and promotion in Nevada Silver Trails Territory.

Earth Hour focuses on climate change



During Earth Hour on March 27 at 8:30pm, hundreds of millions of people around the world will turn off their lights for one hour as a call to action on climate change.

From Mongolia to Argentina, the Arctic to Antarctica, from the Cook Islands to Russia and across the United States, lights at homes, businesses, government buildings and iconic landmarks will dim, making the switch toward creating a cleaner, safer and more secure future.

Already a record 115 countries have joined the movement and 6,000 cities are projected to participate.

In the U.S., 26 states have officially pledged to observe Earth Hour: Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, Maryland, New Hampshire, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Vermont, Washington, West Virginia and Wisconsin.

Lights will be dimmed at some of the U.S.'s most iconic landmarks including Mount Rushmore in South Dakota, St. Louis' Gateway Arch, Sea World in Orlando, the Las Vegas Strip, New York's Empire State Building and Chrysler Building, the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, Washington D.C.'s National Cathedral, California's Santa Monica Pier, and the Space Needle in Seattle. Internationally the Brandenburg Gate, Eiffel Tower, Hiroshima Peace Memorial, India Gate, and the world's tallest building Burj Khalifa in Dubai, UAE are all

participating.

For more information, click here.

Soroptimist: Giving a voice to women throughout the world

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – "In spite of all the progress we have made in the last 100 years, women and children are the most oppressed group in the world, including our own country."

Cathy Standiford, president of Soroptimist International of the Americas, conveyed that sobering reality as the guest speaker Wednesday of Soroptimist International of South Lake Tahoe.



Cathy Standiford

"We are Soroptimist because we are bothered by those things. I believe the world can change when we are bothered enough," Standiford said during the lunch at Harrah's Lake Tahoe.

She pointed to the local club developing the Fighting Chance program for schoolchildren after Jaycee Lee Dugard was

kidnapped nearly 19 years ago and founding the South Lake Tahoe Women's Center years ago as evidence the mission is working on the South Shore.

"Think how different your community would be if you weren't here," Standiford said.

Remembering the mission of Soroptimist – improving the lives of women and children – is the most important thing to remember, she told the local chapter.

Being open to possibilities and having a willingness to learn new things are traits that have served Standiford well.

She heads up one of the four federations that make up the international organization. Standiford oversees 38,000 members in 19 countries.

Through her post she has traveled to many of those countries as well as ones where Soroptimist is helping empower women – like Rwanda and Sierra Leone.

Standiford said women throughout the world want the same things – economic opportunity, an education for their children, their voice to be heard, security and peace.

"What I can't figure out is why these dreams are so far out of reach for so many," Standiford said.

Virginia City cemetery sleuths don't rest

By Ashley Power, Los Angeles Times

You’d expect some weird things in Candace Wheeler’s work space, since she helps manage burial grounds near the former Comstock Lode, and the 120-pound sleeping cherub on her filing cabinet certainly fit the bill.

Someone had swiped it from a Virginia City cemetery decades ago. A woman rediscovered it while cleaning her grandfather’s garage and brought it to the Comstock History Center.

“It doesn’t even faze you, not up here,” Wheeler said of the curious donation. Stuff plundered from the Comstock cemeteries has a way of boomeranging back.

Read the whole story

Talent contest applicants sought

The 5th annual STARS of Tomorrow Talent Competition is April 22 at the South Tahoe Middle School Theater from 6-9pm.

The competition is open to students in grades 9-12 on the South Shore, California and Nevada.

Applicants will be judged on technique, difficulty, staging, and presentation. The competition will be open to soloists, duets, trios, and quartets in vocal or instrumental music, dance, drama, and other performing arts.

Applications and copies of the contest rules will be available from performing arts instructors and at the school administrative offices.

For more information, call Dick Van Buskirk at (530) 541.6487

or Margie Maxhimer at (530) 318.7717.

Applications must be submitted to the Kiwanis Club by 5pm April 12.

Students planning to compete must be available for dress rehearsal on April 21at the South Tahoe Middle School Theater from 6-9pm.

Michael McDonald to close LT Music Festival

Grammy winner Michael McDonald brings his instantly recognizable and smooth voice to the Lake Tahoe Music Festivalâ€™s final show.

McDonald performs at Northstar-At-Tahoe Resort Aug. 7 as part of the festivalâ€™s six-concert season taking place July 22â€“Aug. 7.

McDonald has been a fixture in American pop music for over three decades and continues to serenade fans with hits such as â€œI Keep Forgettinâ€™,â€ Grammy-winning â€œYah Mo B Thereâ€ with James Ingram, and his No. 1 pop single â€œOn My Own.â€ With past credits that include working side-by-side with Steely Dan, McDonald was also the voice of the Doobie Brothers, singing hits like â€œTakinâ€™ In To The Streets,â€ â€œMinute By Minute,â€ and, the No. 1 single and Grammy-winning â€œWhat a Fool Believes.â€

â€œSoul Speak,â€ McDonaldâ€™s latest album, is a compilation of his own interpretations of songs he loves and follows up on the exploration of Motown hits he recorded on the â€œMotownâ€

and â€œMotown Twoâ€ albums. The song selections on â€œSoul Speakâ€ range from the blue-eyed soul McDonald is known for with songs like â€œFor Once in My Life,â€ â€œWalk on Byâ€ and â€œLove TKOâ€ to more surprising selections including Van Morrisonâ€™s â€œInto the Mysticâ€ and Leonard Cohenâ€™s â€œHallelujah.â€

Tickets are $37 for general admission and $60 preferred/ They go on sale April 1.

For more information about the Lake Tahoe Music Festival, log on to www.TahoeMusic.org or call (530) 583.3101.