

Tahoe City resort goes green

Lake Tahoe's Granlibakken Resort has been named a Green Business in Placer County by Keep the Sierra Green, a bi-state partnership designed to recognize area organizations that practice sustainable ecological and economic practices.

Granlibakken is one of the first to receive this recognition from the newly formed organization. Companies in Truckee, Incline Village, Crystal Bay, Nevada County and Placer County are eligible.

Keep Sierra Green awards points based on certain criteria in areas including solid waste reduction, pollution prevention, energy conservation, water conservation, employee awareness, unique sustainable practices and plans for the future to maintain recognition. Granlibakken achieved 111 points to wildly exceed the 74 required for certification.

Some of Granlibakken's efforts include:

- * Fuels reduction on more than 50 acres of the 74 acre property;
- * Natural firebreaks created between buildings and high-risk forest areas;
- * Best Management Practices certified across entire property;
- * Replaced polystyrene/Styrofoam cups, takeout containers and plastic cutlery with biodegradable items;
- * Installation of occupancy sensors for lighting in remote and low-traffic areas;
- * "Good Earthkeeping" option for guests to reuse their towels instead of laundering daily.
- * Training for new and current employees on green practices

around the resort.

Granlibakkenâ€™s focus on restoring and maintaining the natural forest habitat surrounding the secluded resort paid off during the 2007 Washoe Fire. The fire reached Granlibakkenâ€™s firebreaks, causing the fire to drop to the ground, stopping the spread onto the property, and throughout the area saving homes, land and wildlife.

For information on Granlibakken, go to www.granlibakken.com; for information on the Keep the Sierra Green program, visit www.KeeptheSierraGreen.org.

Mardi Gras of motorcycling



Bikers stake out their territory in Virginia City.
Photo/Brenda Knox

By Brenda Knox

RENO – There is nothing like the rumble of loud pipes and the smell of leather to let you know you’re in motorcycle heaven.

Ever since getting my Harley in May, I've been looking forward to Street Vibrations Reno 2009. Since it's in my backyard, it was an event I did not want to miss. Street Vibrations ran Wednesday through Sunday, but I couldn't get away that long so settled for Saturday and Sunday with an overnight in Reno.

We headed over to the Carson City Harley Davidson dealership about 9:30am Saturday. It was a bit chilly leaving from Lake Tahoe so we donned full gloves and jackets. By the time we reached Carson City it was in the high 70s and off came the jackets.

The dealership was filled with bikes; traffic monitors effectively got us into a great parking area. Vendors, food, and music were all going strong, even at 10:30 in the morning. We stayed long enough to walk the parking lot, check out all the bikes, shop for and buy a communications system, and share a Hawaiian shaved ice.

Onward to Virginia City. It seemed to be where all of us were headed. Virginia City on the Saturday of Street Vibrations is the Motorcycle Mardi Gras. The streets are lined with hundreds upon hundreds of motorcycles. Harleys were the brand of choice, but there was a fair share of Hondas and other brands, too.

We snagged the first parking slot we saw; near the top of town. Before venturing down into town we stopped at the Cafe del Rio for lunch.

I have been to Virginia City many times and have always eaten in town at one of those diner type places – never again. Cafe del Rio has the best food in town. Roni had steak tacos; I had the Mahi Mahi tacos. Both were served with rice and black beans and very yummy. We'll be going back.

The windows of the Cafe del Rio open up onto the street so we could watch all the motorcycles and the characters ride by. One woman was dressed all in pink, several of the guys had

adorned their bikes with scantily clad women, and the Mardi Gras beads started to fly.

Virginia City really welcomes all of us bikers, and by all of us I mean all ages, all sizes, all origins, all kinds of bikes. The only criteria seemed to be you must have fun.

The hot dogs, pulled pork sandwiches, beer and Bloody Marys were all following freely. This is a party and if you are a biker, a party not to be missed.

Not only are the streets lined with the most beautiful bikes you have seen, but there is a continuous parade of motorcycles riding up and down the main street. The streets are lined with partygoers trying to get women to expose themselves for those infamous beads – and many oblige.

Roni and I decide to walk back up to our bikes and ride through town on our way in to Reno. It's a slow, clutch hand is getting stiff, kind of ride through the center of town; but so much fun and so loud you can't help but get swept up in the party atmosphere.

We finally make it through town, said goodbye to the good times of Virginia City, vowing to be back next year and rode into Reno. In Reno, we pulled in to the Siena, where they appropriately had preferred parking for us motorcyclists right up front. We grabbed our stuff, checked in and headed up for showers. It was about 95 degrees and we were sweating in our chaps and leather vests.

The Street Vibrations party continues in the streets of Reno. The Siena is just outside of the main downtown area, so we were able to walk over to Virginia Street and check things out.

Wow, vendors and more vendors. Leather merchandise, any kind of accessory you could imagine for your bike. My favorite was the Hanes & Vine pipes; those pipes are awesome; but might be

a bit much for my Sporty.

Street Vibrations closes South Virginia Street for blocks in downtown Reno and puts on a great party. Lots of food, music, and plenty of motorcycle accessories. We walked around and shopped for several hours. Finally decided on long sleeve souvenir T-shirts and then walked back to the Siena.

Can't wait for next year.

Brenda Knox is a biker chick who lives in South Lake Tahoe.

Festival of Trees and Lights



Santa is on
his way to the
South Shore.
Photo/Barton
Health

Denise Sloan Smart, Barton Health

A holiday festival is in the works and the fun begins now. The Barton Foundation is hosting its first "Festival of Trees and Lights" Dec. 3-6 at MontBleu casino in Stateline and the community can join the fun before winter sets in.

Volunteer opportunities abound: Santa's helpers, children's face painters, helpers to write letters to Santa, storytellers, concert staff, tree delivery staff and much more are needed to make this event a Tahoe tradition.

This family-friendly holiday festival offers something for everyone in South Lake Tahoe and the neighboring communities, as well as for visitors to the area.

The festival will feature hundreds of trees decorated by local designers, nonprofits and schools; visits with Santa Claus; Polar Express rides and story; a special hands-on children's activity area; a concert with the Cheeseballs; and a community performance stage.

In addition, Barton's black-tie event, The Gala, will move to Dec. 5.

Proceeds from this year's "Festival of Trees and Lights" will directly benefit the Barton Community Clinic which provides medical care to our community, especially for those patients without health insurance.

Tree decorating design workshops will soon be scheduled in which the public can also become involved.

Learn more about the "Festival of Tree and Lights" by calling (530) 543.5612 or go to <http://www.festivaloftreeslaketahoe.com>.

Prostate researchers convene

in Incline

Nearly 300 of the world's leading researchers focused on the problem of prostate cancer are in Incline Village for three days to discuss the latest scientific data and breakthroughs in prostate cancer.

The 16th Scientific Retreat sponsored by the Prostate Cancer Foundation concludes Saturday.

It is projected that prostate cancer will take the lives of 27,000 U.S. men, while 192,000 new cases are diagnosed. While the death rate from prostate cancer has been reduced by nearly 40 percent from what was once projected, the number of new cases diagnosed each year continues to rise. By 2015, the annual number of new cases may grow to 300,000.

“This meeting takes on additional urgency as it has been more than two years since there has been a government-sponsored meeting of this kind,” Howard Soule, executive vice president and chief scientist for the PCF, said in a press release. “This annual meeting is a catalyst for scientific exchange and has helped accelerate scientific discovery for prostate cancer during the past decade. Some of the most promising developments on the field have come out of this meeting and the work of PCF-funded scientists.”

A total of 81 scientific presentations on new research on treatment and prevention of early and advanced prostate cancers from 98 cancer research centers will be featured. The new data to be discussed originate from research programs in nine countries.

Politically correct content not required at the Improv

By Howie Nave

Greetings aficionados of all things comedic. As summer peters out giving way to another season, I'm reminded of things that I'm not sure are politically correct or OK to still say. I'm referring to the term, "Indian summer."

I grew up with that term and to my limited knowledge was always meant in a meteorological light. According to Wikipedia, the generally accepted use of the term is when the weather is sunny and clear and above 70 degrees F, and all of the leaves of the trees have turned but before the first snow has fallen. The term "Indian summer" is also used metaphorically to refer to a late blooming of something, often unexpectedly, or after it has lost relevance. Since that's how I'm often referred to as I'll just continue to use the term until protesting begins for those who are stupid or misinformed (much like those attending town hall meetings on health care).

Or you can just refer to me as "Anointed Bear" which was my Hebrew name growing up. I'm open to discussion. My office number is (775) 586.6266 and I can always be seen on Facebook future friends who are not already there.

Howie Nave is host of the Improv at Harveys at Stateline. Follow his rants at <http://howienave.blogspot.com>.

Improv Schedule-Harveys

Date-HeadlinerFeature

Sept. 23-27 Steve White, Scott Kennedy

Sept. 30-Oct 4 John Caponera, Kat Simmons

Oct. 7-11 Nick Griffin Tom Simmons

Oct. 14-18 Allan Havey, Marc Price

Oct. 21-25 Mark Pitta, Frazer Smith

Oct. 28-Nov 1 Geechy Guy, John DiResta

Nov. 4-8 Stagebenders, Jeff Burghart

Nov. 11-15 Hal Sparks Chris Bonno

Nov. 18-22 Dat Phan, Ron Morey

Nov. 25-29 Rocky LaPorte, TBA

Dec. 2-6 Maryellen Hooper, Darryl Collier

Dec. 9-13 Will Durst, Ronnie Schell

Dec. 16-20 Bob Zany, Mo Mandel

Dec. 23-27 Bruce Fine, TBA

Dec. 30-Jan 3 TBA, Graham Elwood

Showtimes are Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, Sundays at 9pm, and Saturdays at 8pm and 10pm. For more information, call (775) 586.6266.

Sierra garden closing to public

By Debbie Arrington, Sacramento Bee

For his Sierra home, Don Phillips created a view to reflect

his global travels. Then he opened his gardens to the world, allowing visitors to share in the mountain magic.

“I was looking out over the pond at the buttes, at all the flowers and trees, and I realized: How could I not share this with others?” Phillips recalls. “This is a truly beautiful place.”

Since he first opened his hideaway to the public in 2002, more than 20,000 visitors have made the trek up Highway 49 to Big Springs Gardens near Sierra City to see Phillips’ masterpiece. They marvel at the trout-filled pond, studded with water lilies and ringed by a vast collection of flowers. They hike among the big trees in the shadow of the Sierra Buttes. They dine surrounded by beauty.

Read the whole story

USFS employee finalist for film award

Gina M. Thompson, who represents the USFS Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, has been named one of three finalists in the Federal Public Employee category of the California On Location Awards (COLAS).

The COLAS are sponsored by the Film Liaisons, a group representing more than 40 California film commissions, including the El Dorado Lake Tahoe Film & Media Office. They work cooperatively to attract, retain and facilitate film production throughout the state.

A panel of entertainment industry professionals selects the

winners. They will be announced at the 15th annual COLAS event Oct. 11 in Los Angeles.

El Dorado extends school-age immunizations

El Dorado Public Health

El Dorado County parents who are interested in their children receiving free immunizations at their school campus through the IZ Xtreme and Kung Flu Fighters programs have until Oct. 1 to turn in registration forms.

“We’ve extended the deadline a couple of weeks so that more parents have a chance to sign up,” said Phyllis Goldie, supervising public health nurse for the El Dorado County Health Services Department.

The vaccines will be administered during the months of October and November. Skilled nurses from the Health Services Department will give the immunizations to the students and return to the school campus for any follow-up vaccines. Parent permission is required.

IZ Xtreme is offered at the middle school level for students in sixth grade. Students in the seventh and eighth grades may also participate. Parents can choose to have their child receive up to four pre-teen vaccines that protect against six serious infectious diseases. The vaccines offered include: Seasonal flu, Meningococcal, Tdap (which protects against pertussis, diphtheria and tetanus), and HPV (human papillomavirus).

“Parents often tell us that their middle school child is up to date on their immunizations,” said Goldie. “But some parents may not know that certain vaccines their child got as a toddler can wear off over time. When a child gets to 6th-8th grades, it is highly recommended that they receive a booster shot of the Tdap vaccine, which is one of the vaccines we are offering through IZ Xtreme. In addition, we are offering two vaccines that are specifically designed for pre-teens and the seasonal flu vaccine, which is recommended now for all school-age children.”

As second school-based program offered this year through the Health Services Department is Kung Flu Fighters. This is a pilot program being conducted in a few schools in El Dorado County. Through Kung Flu Fighters, children in grades K-5 of targeted schools can receive the seasonal flu vaccine free of charge at the school campus, with parent permission. Schools participating in the pilot program this year are: Northside, Georgetown and Otter Creek Schools in the Black Oak Mine School District; Sierra Ridge Middle and Pinewood Schools in the Pollock Pines School District; Gold Trail and Sutters Mill Schools in the Gold Trail School District, and; Bijou, Sierra House, Tahoe Valley, and Lake Tahoe Environmental Science Magnet Schools in the Lake Tahoe Unified School District.

Parents interested in having their child participate in IZ Xtreme or Kung Flu Fighters can obtain registration forms from their school office, or download the forms from the Health Services’ website at www.edcgov.us/publichealth. The completed registration forms should be turned in to the school office no later than October 1. For questions about IZ Xtreme or Kung Flu Fighters, call the Health Services Department at (530) 621-6112 in Placerville or (530) 573-3165 in South Lake Tahoe.

In addition to the immunization campaigns described above, the Health Services Department will also hold numerous community flu shot clinics this fall and is offering the seasonal flu

vaccine free of charge to children six months through 18 years of age. For dates and locations of community flu shot clinics, call the flu hotline at (530) 621-6188.

At this time, the Health Services Department is only offering the vaccine to protect against seasonal flu. The seasonal flu vaccine does not protect against the H1N1 virus. However, seasonal flu can cause serious life threatening illness in children. The H1N1 vaccine should be available for release later in the year and, if supplies are limited, will likely be provided to high risk individuals initially before being offered to the general community.

World of words runs deep in Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed



It was a night of literary wonder as author after author read his or her work to a full house at the Valhalla Grand Hall.

Tahoe Writers Works assembled this cast of eight who all have ties to the Lake Tahoe Basin. It proves Tahoe is rich with writers who care about the English word – written and spoken, and that there is an audience who still relishes the concept of holding something tangible in their hands to read.

The inaugural Celebration of Writers Around the Lake on Sept. 18 is bound to be a regular event.

Suzanne Roberts let the audience decide the topic of poetry

she would read. "Sex" was the only audible response. She didn't disappoint.

The Lake Tahoe Community College instructor has published several collections of poetry. Her delivery and charisma rival her words.

Michael Makley read from his book about Cave Rock that has yet to be released. The essence of the passage captured the conflict of this famous Nevada landmark being such an incredible spiritual place for the Washoe, while at the same time emitting a similar emotion for climbers. It will be a book to look for in the future.

To not bore the audience, those were his words, Todd Borg opted to not read from his current release in his Owen McKenna Tahoe Mystery Series. He captured listeners with his who-done-it intrigue that always has Tahoe at the center of his prose.

Karen Terrey shared a poem that is still in the works about being at a hot springs along Highway 395 with her dog. It sounded like it was ready for a final printing.

Ellen Hopkins read poetry even though she is the author of 20 nonfiction books. "Tricks," her latest book, debuted at No. 1 on the New York Times Bestsellers' list its first week. One day she should publish her poetry so those who don't attend readings can experience her work.

Other writers at Friday's gathering were:

Gailmarie Pahmeier who is a published poet with another book of poetry ("West of Snowball, Arkansas, and Home") that will be released next year;

June Sylvester Saraceno is English program chair at Sierra Nevada College and accomplished author; and

Jennifer Woodlief who this year released "A Wall of White" about the 1982 deadly avalanche at Alpine Meadows.

For more information about Tahoe Writers Works, go to www.TahoeWritersWorks.com.

V&T Railroad steams through history

The historic Virginia & Truckee Railroad train runs every Saturday through Oct. 31, along a 12.8-mile reconstructed portion of the 16.7-mile original route between Nevada's sister cities.

Trains leave Carson City at 10am, arriving in Virginia City at 11:30am. The train departs Virginia City at 3pm, returning to Carson City at 4:30pm.

Roundtrip tickets are \$48 per adult, \$36 for children 12 and under and \$40 for seniors over 65. One-way tickets are \$29 adults, \$23 for children and \$25 for seniors. To reserve tickets, call 800-NEVADA-1 or visit www.VisitCarsonCity.com and click "buy tickets."

The 60-90-minute train rides include scenic vistas of the "old west" countryside, views of the Carson River, two tunnels and occasional sightings of wild stallions.

The V&T Railway, the richest short-line in American history, originally operated during the raucous silver strike era of the infamous Comstock Lode from 1869 to 1938. The 1860's V&T was privately funded and featured the finest appointments with the most luxurious interiors money could buy, including gold-leaf and brass-adorned locomotives to wooden coaches.

The line brought entrepreneurs, gamblers and aristocrats to

the Comstock. Along with these characters, the train carried the Mother Lode's gold and silver to Carson City and lumber from Lake Tahoe to build the mines in Virginia City.

The \$55 million project, which links the area's storied past with the present and provides a promising future has been 17 years in the making.



V&T Railroad,
Photo by Jim
Grant