

Breezy Jack Johnson makes Tahoe connection



Jack Johnson will return July 29 to the stage at Harveys for his second consecutive sold-out show. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Susan Wood

STATELINE — Donning a Keep Tahoe Blue T-shirt, singer-guitarist Jack Johnson made his priorities clear early on to the environmentalists and fans on hand for the Harveys Summer Outdoor Concert Series Friday night.

Booths to support his philanthropic, eco-friendly messages, soft rock smooth enough to provide the urge to swing in a hammock to gentle breezes, and a painter's palette sky marked the evening.

“They told me you’d be kind, and a beautiful sunset was happening,” Johnson told the crowd after the opening number from his four-member band. He was referring to ALO – Animal Liberation Orchestra – that first took to stage July 28.

Johnson isn’t your average rock singer-songwriter. For starters, even before he started playing, the Johnson Ohana Foundation he created with wife Kim donated \$4 million to 400 nonprofit agencies around the planet. Among them are the League to Save Lake Tahoe, Sugar Pine Foundation, Sierra Watershed Education Partnerships, Clean Tahoe and Tahoe Rim Trail Association.

Johnson puts his money behind his claims of caring about the environment. In 2008, he adopted the concept of “greening” meaning reduce and reuse – applying the concept to the 2010 tour.

The musician, who was also a professional surfer in Hawaii, has developed quite a following. A mass of people showed up Friday night – general admission style – standing and dancing most of the time in the Harveys back parking lot.

The cool vibe was accentuated by the show the night sky was giving, as well as the melodies and effects on stage.

During his landmark love-lorn tune “Sitting, Waiting, Wishing” off the “In Between Dreams” album of 2005, smoke billowed from the machine on stage. It was as if Johnson sent his audience to the Na Pali Coast of Kauai, where the fog rolls into the valleys in a dream state.



Thousands of fans sway to the music of Jack Johnson on July 28 at Harveys. Photo/Kathryn Reed

"This is the kind of music that transports you," South Lake Tahoe City Councilwoman Wendy David summed up, while embracing the free-flowing style of the artist with her husband, Kerry, from the bleachers.

When he broke into his hit single "Upside Down," the crowd roared as he sang "I don't want this feeling to go away."

He urged the concert-goers to raise their kids in the air to get the full effect of the vibe, which was essentially created for them since the song comes off the album "Sing-A-Longs and Lullabies for the Film Curious George." The kid-friendly band at one point even brought a stunned boy in the front on stage to use his light sabers to spur audience participation.

Coco McCue of Gardnerville thought of her grandson, who couldn't make it that night.

"He loves Jack Johnson," she said, citing the youngster's love of Curious George. McCue, who owns a few of Johnson's albums, sat in the bleachers enjoying the high view over the sea of people crushed in to make their connection with Johnson.

Johnson also helped with that connection by enlisting a

drummer straight out of Tahoe, introducing Adam Topol. Topol called out to North Tahoe High School graduates and asked who's been to Tahoe City hangouts like Rosie's. The audience responded with vigor.

Johnson and Topol apparently joked with each other about Tahoe's high elevation.

"Man, do you feel this altitude?" Johnson recounted asking Topol.

In turn, Topol supposedly told Johnson it was "nothing" and that's because he "grew up here."

The drummer consequently showed off his specific jazzy, Afro-Cuban percussion fundamentals throughout the night. His journey demonstrated it was a far cry from when he started out touring school talent shows, while later discovering at USC that people actually pay to hear bands. He recalled playing cover songs at a party with a homegrown band, in which "someone gave me \$50, and I got this girl's phone number," the band's website read.

The perform-for pleasure, laid-back-surfer lifestyle and mentality of Hawaii and Santa Barbara permeated the whole evening with Johnson's band as well as California-based ALO. The ensemble joined Johnson on stage for a set, highlighted by the sensuous "Girl I Wanna Lay You Down" and "Big Sur" that the front man said "because this song is about that." He described the beach scene around a campfire where a pick-up band would improvise music.

Johnson's small band had highlights of its own – in particular his keyboardist Zach Gill, who occasionally brought out his buka for accompaniment. The Japanese wind instrument provided a bellowing style to tunes.

And in pure Hawaiian style, Johnson added to the latest craze among wannabe musicians by pulling out his ukulele for the

sweet, sentimental “Breakdown.”

Within a long encore, Johnson even launched into a special song about gambling with Willie Nelson, declaring the legendary country singer “got stoned and took my cash.”

Diverse and eclectic, Johnson and his band not only delighted the concert-goers with other fan favorites like the cute “Banana Pancakes,” in addition to “Better Together” and “Good People.” The latter two have a social conscience message about the quest for a tender goodwill and respectable humanity.

He received a rousing applause near the end of the night with “Home,” citing it’s “wherever we are,” a song he wrote for his three children on the North Shore of Oahu.

“You guys made us feel at home,” he told the crowd.

Harveys shares the love a little longer this summer with more shows to come, including: the second Johnson show tonight; Slightly Stoopid on Aug. 4; The Who on Aug. 16; and performances by Eric Church on Sept. 2-3.

Ex-LTBMU, TRPA leader to give talk

In Bill Morgan’s book, “Morgan’s Tahoe,” he tells more than 30 stories of happenings at Tahoe in which he was involved from 1965 to 1989. That period was one of the most turbulent times in Tahoe’s history.

As forest supervisor of the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, followed by several years as executive director of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, he was caught up in the turbulence.

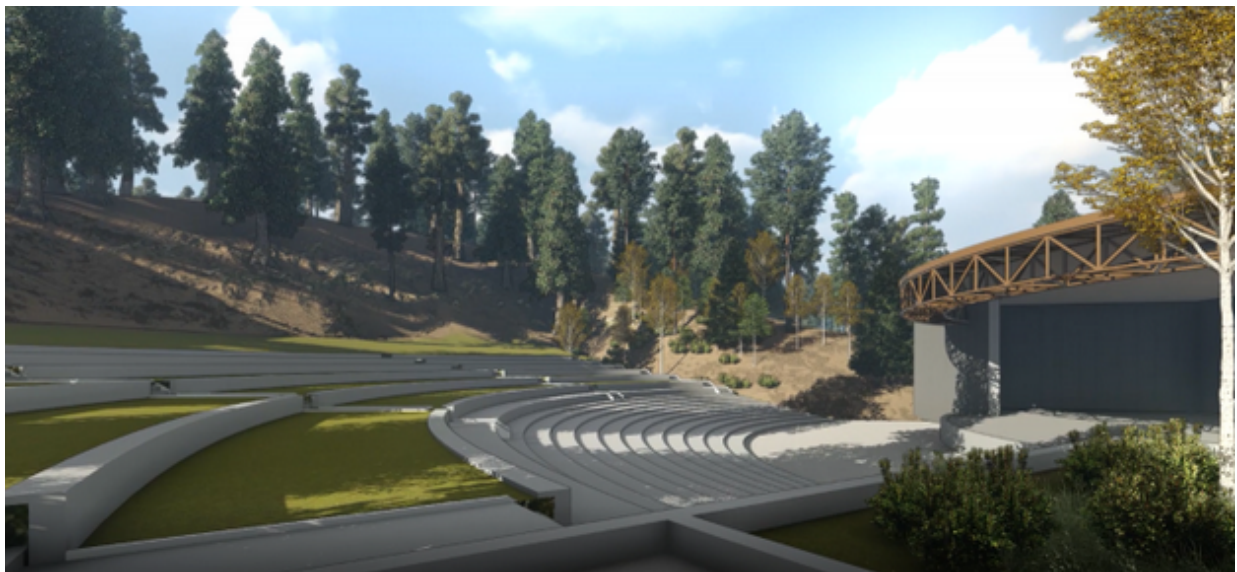
His firsthand knowledge of those happenings has given him a unique perspective of Tahoe in those days.

He will share a few of the more fascinating episodes, in particular ones that led to the spirit of cooperation on environmental matters that Tahoe is known for today, on Aug. 24 at 6pm at the Tahoe Environmental Research Center on the campus of Sierra Nevada College.

Registration for this event is required. Seating is open at 5:30pm to guests who have preregistered, open seating starts at 5:50pm.

A \$5 suggested donation will be collected at the door.

Truckee performing arts venue makes progress



The Stages at Northstar is inching closer to reality.
Rendering/Provided

By Carole Jablon-Bernardi

When Abraham Lincoln ordered the completion of the Dome of the Capitol Building while the Civil War loomed, critics loudly protested. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, in the middle of World War II, dedicated the National Gallery in Washington, D.C. John Kennedy asked for legislative support of the arts in 1962 while relaying both presidential acts mentioned above, adding, "The life of the arts, far from being an interruption or a distraction in the life of a nation, is closer to the center of a nation's purpose – and a test of a nation's civilization."

While Lake Tahoe cannot be categorized as a large city heavily populated by political critics or lobbyists, it seems to support a trend of community performing arts centers that continue to surface in mountain resort areas, and small towns throughout the country. This effort is now happening in North Lake Tahoe with The Stages at Northstar.

In 2015, the Tahoe Regional Arts Foundation (TRAF is now a 501(c)3) introduced a conceptual project for a multi-faceted indoor-outdoor performing arts center built on 17 acres of Northstar's Castle Peak area. The land, provided by Vail Resorts under a 75-year sublease (no fee) plan, would make the facility a tenant of Northstar but managed by TRAF.

At that time, the plan called for an outdoor amphitheater (potentially 3,000-plus seats), two indoor theaters, and a main theater that would seat 500 at 33,000 square feet.

Fast forward to the most recent update on the project.

On July 24 TRAF signed a consultant agreement with USC's School of Dramatic Arts.

"USC's SDA will consult with us during the predevelopment and construction phases of the theaters. Post construction the Tahoe Regional Arts Foundation will work with the USC SDA on

cooperative educational programming,” TRAF’s board Chairman Keith Vogt told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Vogt this month spoke to an interested and somewhat anxious community audience.

As with any conceptual project, the design has been tweaked and is still waiting for final approval by the board of directors. Securing funding has not changed greatly with a goal of \$50 million still the big target, and an endowment to help ensure its success. TRAF has secured its first seven figure grant donated as start-up funding. Down the road there will be “donor naming opportunities” for specific structures and areas of the center.

A feasibility study was completed in 2014 and was updated this year. Changes were due to the difference in the economy in the last three years, reflected in the contributions to the county from theater activities.

Traffic and noise impact studies are in the works.

Fiscal impact has remained the same, projected at \$4 million. Vogt assured the audience that numerous businesses in the North Lake Tahoe community should feel a positive impact from the project’s completion.

Once funding has been met it will take two building seasons to construct (possibly in stages), with the earliest completion being 2021.

“The basic issue for all the arts in the Tahoe region is a severe lack of space. We want to fill that void and provide an iconic theater space for our high school and community college students to learn how the theater works,” Vogt said.

TRAF will ultimately manage and operate the center, with a starting staff of approximately five administrators.

Performing arts centers have the ability to become

cornerstones of the creative life of their communities, but they cannot succeed without support from their communities. TRAF has "supporters" which include the Truckee Community Theater, Innerhythms, Reno Philharmonic, the Economic Development Agency of Western Nevada (EDAWN), North Lake Tahoe Resort Association and Placer County. At the Truckee gathering this month, numerous accolades were voiced on the positive aspect the project could have on the community. One attendee even shouted, "How soon can you build it?"

Improving the quality of life for the communities they serve is certainly a priority when soliciting support from residents, and business owners alike.

Bob Taylor, executive director of the long standing Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival at Sand Harbor, said, "The most important factor in the success of any artistic project (such as this) is tremendous wide-spread community support. All three of the theaters I work for, in Lake Tahoe, Boise, Idaho, and Cleveland, Ohio, began as community driven efforts ... and they are all thriving, vital organizations 45, 40 and 56 years, respectively, thanks to those visionary leaders."

In March, President Trump, in his first federal budget, took a different approach than his predecessors. He proposed eliminating the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Humanities. But many in Tahoe-Truckee are no longer taking their lead from Washington.

While it's hard to argue against the arts as a whole, like all development in the greater Lake Tahoe area it needs to be scrutinized. How will this affect traffic in Truckee as well as the Lake Tahoe Basin? What about the height of the structure. And noise? While the project is outside the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's jurisdiction, the impacts will be felt in the basin. Some would like the Governing Board to at least be given a briefing on the project.

How summer vacations took hold in the U.S.

By Stephen Mihm, Bloomberg

Planning a trip to the beach, a lake, or some other spot in the great outdoors in the next month or so? Please take a few moments to thank a small but influential group of reformers, idealists, and busybodies who created an enduring American institution: the summer vacation.

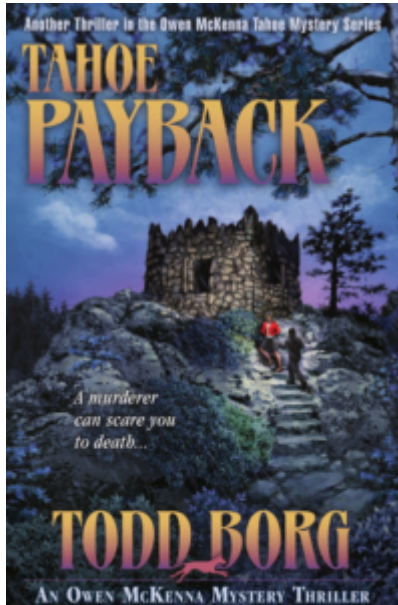
Prior to the late 19th century, few Americans took breaks from work. The ethic of hard work and deferred gratification popular among the Puritans – never mind the simple fact that few people could afford to get away from tending farms – limited leisure.

Well into the 19th century, summer vacations remained restricted to elites: wealthy slave-owners who fled to cooler climes in the summer, or elite merchants who could afford to leave their businesses in the hands of trusted subordinates. But most adult Americans, by choice or by necessity, simply toiled away during the summer months. As always.

Read the whole story

Borg releases next Owen

McKenna murder-mystery



Owen McKenna is back, this time investigating a murder on Fannette Island.

The fictional detective is the star to the series of books written by local author Todd Borg. Borg just released his latest mystery thriller “Tahoe Payback.”

It is available **online**.

Borg will be scattered about Northern California and Northern Nevada giving talks, signing his book as well as selling them.

Signings and talks:

Carson City/Carson Valley

Aug. 4, 6pm: Shelby’s Bookshoppe, 1663 Lucerne St. in Minden Village, Minden.

Aug. 5, 8:30am: Red Hut Cafe, 4385 S. Carson St., Carson City.

Sept. 19, 4:30-6pm: Minden Library Author’s Day, Minden.

Sept. 23-24: Candy Dance Festival in Genoa.

Foothills

Oct. 18, 1pm: Murphys Library.

Oct. 18, 5:30pm: JacksonLibrary.

Kings Beach

Aug. 11, 6pm: Kings Beach Library in The Garden.

Mountain View

Sept. 9-10: Mountain View Art & Wine Festival.

Reno

July 29, 11am: Sundance Bookstore, 21 California Ave., Reno.

Aug. 12, 8:30am: Red Hut Cafe, 3480 Lakeside, No. 1, Reno.

Sept. 16, 3-8pm: Nevada Humanities Literary Crawl in Reno (details to be announced).

Oct. 21, 10am-2pm: Writing workshop called "How To Map A Murder" at the Truckee Meadows Community College, Meadowood Center S315 in Reno.

Sacramento

Nov. 3-5: Sacramento Fine Arts Show, Sacramento Convention Center, Sacramento.

Nov. 17-19: Sacramento Harvest Festival, CalExpo, Sacramento.

San Jose

Nov. 24-26: San Jose Harvest Festival, San Jose Convention Center, San Jose.

San Mateo

Nov. 10-12: San Mateo Harvest Festival, San Mateo.

South Lake Tahoe

July 28, 4-7pm: Artifacts, 4000 Lake Tahoe Blvd. (in the Raleys Village Center)

Aug. 6, 8:30am: Red Hut Cafe at Ski Run Boulevard, South Lake Tahoe.

Aug. 15, 6:30pm: South Lake Tahoe Library.

Tahoe City

July 29, 3pm: Geared for Games, Boatworks Mall, Tahoe City.

Aug. 14, noon: Tahoe League for Charity, Tahoe City (details to be announced).

Truckee

Aug. 8, 6pm: Word After Word Books, 10118 Donner Pass Road, Truckee.

Musician giving back to Tahoe nonprofits

For most musicians their tours are all about making money. Not for Jack Johnson.

The singer-songwriter who will be playing two sold-out shows in Stateline on Friday and Saturday nights as part of the Harveys Outdoor Concert Series is giving away thousands of dollars to local nonprofits.

Johnson plans to match donations up to \$2,500 to the League to Save Lake Tahoe, Tahoe Rim Trail Association, Sugar Pine Foundation and Sierra Watershed Education Partnerships.

Since 2008, Johnson and his wife, Kim, have donated \$4 million to environmental, arts and music organizations through their Johnson Ohana Foundation.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Concert to raise money for Boathouse Theatre

During the Great Gatsby Festival the Vahalla arts group will be hosting the second annual boathouse fundraiser.

This will be an opportunity to step back in time to relive the tumultuous 1920s. Prohibition was in effect. Jazz was all the

rage and flappers danced the night away.

Wear a costume and be immersed in the decade that roared. The event will include a wine, beer, non-alcoholic beverages and appetizer reception, and a concert featuring early jazz from The Earles of Newtown in the Boathouse Theatre.

This will be Aug. 12 at 6:30pm. The \$50 tickets are available **online**.

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Zumba

Zumba is one of 10 adorable kittens at the shelter right now. They are all different colors – orange, gray, calico, tabby, black , white – you have your choice of your favorite color. Both males and females.

All are spayed/neutered, microchipped, tested for FIV, and vaccinated. They are at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many other dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes. Go to the Tahoe animal shelter's Facebook page to see photos and descriptions of all pets at

the shelter.

Call 530.573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet. For spay-neuter assistance for South Tahoe residents, go **online** or call the animal shelter. Vouchers are available there also; bring \$25 and a copy of a photo ID and a local utility bill.

– Karen Kuentz

Carson bypass opens to human-powered transport



Swarms of people on July 22 break in the 1-580 connector in Carson City. Photo/Susan Wood

By Susan Wood

CARSON CITY – Americans love the open road.

That sentiment is not reserved to travel on four wheels – as evidenced July 22 in Nevada's capital city to commemorate the completion of the last leg of the Interstate 580 Carson City Freeway.

Travelers of all sorts and all ages took the invitation from the Nevada Department of Transportation on Saturday morning to zoom up and down the 2-plus mile stretch between the Highway 50-Spooner Junction and Fairview Avenue.

With a majority from Carson City, more than 1,000 people showed up on road, mountain, cruiser, BMX and vintage bikes, accompanying walkers, runners, skateboarders, Rollerbladers, roller skaters as well as pedestrians with baby carriages and scooters. Drones and Ultralights even flew overhead.



Artwork is part of the freeway, with the eagle to be near the Spooner intersection.
Photo/Susan Wood

Many locals expressed relief and exhilaration that the day had

come, considering the long, hard-fought process. The freeway is expected to open in early August, according NDOT – which celebrated its **centennial last March**.

The interstate completion allows one to drive from the south side of Carson City to the San Francisco Bay Bridge without a stoplight. This means going to Reno first.

Doing so was no easy task over the last few decades. The \$42 million project – which includes an accompanying trail and décor – underwent at least seven contracts to accommodate the funding stream that included additional sales tax. The construction that started in June 2015 required 1 million cubic yards of earth excavated, 97,000 tons of asphalt paving and 950,000 pounds of reinforcing steel installed.

“We’ve waited a long time for this,” Carson City Mayor Robert Crowell said, recalling the milestones of progress amid the challenges.



Cyclists would love for this smooth pavement to be the norm everywhere. Photo/Susan Wood

He remembered the late Nevada Gov. Kenny Guinn driving a black Cadillac over the first freeway section from the north end of town to Fairview Avenue in 2006. With overpass crossings at Koontz, Snyder and Clearview, the new leg links Fairview with the Highway 50 connection to South Lake Tahoe.

"I-580 allows us to showcase the state Capitol that will be the envy of all," Crowell told the cheering crowd.

He acknowledged the tough road in getting to the day of opening given criticism the bypass would "kill downtown" – as declared by his own father. The mayor also tipped his hat to nearby businesses enduring dust.

"This is a turning point we must embrace with vigor," Crowell said.

For one person in particular, the morning was an emotional one.

"My heart beats a little faster thinking about this," the mayor said.

The freeway was dedicated to the late Carson City Sheriff's Deputy Carl Howell, who was shot and killed in August 2015 on a domestic battery call on the east side of town.

"The family doesn't have enough words to explain the wonderment about this. The honor and accolades are over the top," his father Kevin Howell said, while wearing his son's badge No. 5466. "I never stop thinking about him."

Now he'll be reminded of the community's gratitude when he drives the freeway around town.



Kevin Howell with his son, Carl's, badge.
The freeway honors the fallen sheriff's
deputy. Photo/Susan Wood

Once it opens, NDOT estimates 43,000 vehicles daily will use the section of freeway by 2035.

But on Saturday it was all about human power – in its many forms.

"It's nice to have this crowd. Look at all these cyclists," Alta Alpina Bike Club member Michael Bayer said, while visiting with friends under the overpass. The freeway turned into a giant social hour.

Mayer guessed that over half of the bike club's 200 members came out to support the free event.

The avid cyclist contends the public only needs a nudge such as this to get them to see the beauty and benefits of using a bicycle as a means of transit.



The removal of the “freeway ends” sign will happen in August.
Photo/Susan Wood

A Carson City retail worker on roller skates had another idea.

“I’m doing shameless self-promotion,” Danielle Friend said.

She used the opportunity to hand out fliers highlighting Eyemart, a new business on the south side of town.

Like so many others who covered the short stretch, Friend was geared up for a workout that morning.

A workout is what Carl and Leanne Heard were going for too. The doctor-nurse duo, who work at Carson Tahoe Hospital, decided he would place a bungee cord between them. He was on Rollerblades and she tugged him on her mountain bike.

“I’ve said he almost brought a whip,” she said, laughing.

And with that, the couple took off.

William Frederick admitted to having his hands full trying to round up his 4-year-old son, James, who ran into the mayor on his bicycle.

"This is great. I never thought it was going to be," Frederick said, calling the event an historic milestone experience for Carson City.

Gardnerville resident Scott Doerr agreed, while taking a break on his vintage New Belgium bicycle with a basket up front. He appeared content leisurely sauntering up the road on his Fat Tire bike.



All ages enjoy the rare opportunity to be on the freeway before it opens to cars. Photo/Susan Wood

Skateboarders Robbie Rupp and Devon Fulmer were a little more

serious about the endeavor, sizzling in 80-plus degree heat on the smooth asphalt at about 20 mph.

The members of the Wheelhouse Club had been looking forward to the event to ride their skateboards where no vehicle dares to go just yet. Apparently, they're not alone. Fulmer, who works at the Wheelhouse skateboard shop, said he knew of an Arizona woman who flew into town with her bicycle to ride the new freeway section.

Nevada Highway Patrol officers Greg Moore and Erik Lee turned their Saturday duty into a community event. Some attendees saw the opportunity to look into hitching a ride with a cop.

"Everybody asks," Lee said, while standing next to his shiny, fully-equipped motorcycle. Ironically, the officers were out there to keep an eye on the traffic with its varying speeds people were traveling. They were tasked with rounding up the public at 11:45am.

No traffic is allowed on the road until it officially opens to vehicles.

Mini gold rush in N. California

By Michelle Robertson, San Francisco Chronicle

When asking seasoned miners about this year's so-called gold rush in Northern California, it can be a challenge to obtain trustworthy information.

"People who are smart don't advertise what they've found,"

said Bob Van Camp, better known as “Digger Bob.” “If you’re finding nuggets in an area, you don’t tell anyone about it; I’ve made that mistake before.”

Northern California was pelted with record rainfall this winter, and miners predicted that once all the water washed away, gold would be left in its wake. It appears that their predictions are panning out.

Read the whole story