Sod removal experience not pleasant



Kathryn Reed attempts to cut the sod at her house in South Lake Tahoe. Photo/Susan Wood

Publisher's note: ***This is one in a random series of stories about what it's like to go through the South Tahoe Public Utility District turf buyback program.***

By Kathryn Reed

It took three tiny shovel indentations into the yard to be convinced this was not the route to remove dead grass. I needed a sod cutter.

Before this summer I didn't know what a sod cutter was let alone that they exist. I'll be fine if I never cross paths with one again. For anyone who has operated a rototiller or aerator, it's along those lines. The difference is the job isn't done once the sod is cut.

The sod has to be removed. It rolls up. But the rolls were too dang heavy for me to move so I got the shovel out and chopped them into sections. Each segment was about as big as a baseball base.

I managed to cut 3½ lines last Saturday. Then a part fell off. Ahern's sent a guy up from Gardnerville to fix it. But by this time several hours had passed and I needed to move on to other things. Saturday was supposed to be my day for yard work. After all, the massage was scheduled for the next day in anticipation of not knowing if I'd be able to lift my arms. Dead grass and dirt are not light.



Note: *If renting from Ahern's, do so late afternoon on a Friday to get the equipment for two days for the price of one. This is because the store isn't open on the weekend. And when calling other places, be wary of them saying they have the device because they may not.*

While waiting for the repairman to arrive, I took out the sod and put it in the area where the garbage company picks up trash. I was wishing I had borrowed my friend's Fit-Bit so I'd know how many steps this entailed.

Suffice it to say it was not a good day; it was not a productive day. I was hot, sweaty and barely made a dent into the project. Suddenly, 804-square-feet felt like it might as

well have been AT&T ballpark. I was striking out.

I already had about the most ugly front yard on the street. I didn’t realize splotchy lines of dirt could make it look even worse.

Stakes mark where the sprinklers are. Spray paint outlined where I wanted the path.

I had tried sketching what I wanted. That didn’t go so well either. I can’t even draw stick figures so there was no way this part was going to resemble something comprehensible. I’ll need to try again because of the requirements with the South Tahoe Public Utility District turf buyback program is to provide a drawing.

The best part of this endeavor was meeting Brian Hirdman on Friday afternoon at the rental place. (We’d actually met before for a story but at the time I couldn’t recall how I knew him.) He was there renting a sod cutter, too. He asked what I was doing, and said he did sod removal and landscaping for a living. I gave him my card and said if he was serious about helping, to call.

He called ….

Free landscaping workshops in Lake Tahoe

South Tahoe PUD and the Tahoe Resource Conservation District are hosting several free landscaping workshops over the coming weeks. All workshops are open to the public.

RSVP to jcressy@tahoercd.org or 530.543.1501, ext. 107.

The workshops are:

- Irrigation Controllers: Timing is Everything
  July 28, 5:30-7:30pm at the South Lake Tahoe Library, 1000 Rufus Allen Blvd., South Lake Tahoe
- IrrigationControllers: Timing is Everything
  July 29, 5:30-7:30 pm, Tahoe City PUD, 221 Fairway Drive, Tahoe City
- Understanding & Implementing Micro-irrigation
  Aug. 4, 5:30-7:30pm, South Tahoe PUD, 1275 Meadow Crest Drive, South Lake Tahoe
- Understanding & Implementing Micro-irrigation
  Aug. 5, 5:30-7:30 pm,North Tahoe Event Center, 8318 N. Lake Blvd., Kings Beach
- Native and ClimateAppropriate Plants for the Lands
  Aug. 22, 9am-noon, Lake Tahoe Community College, Room B103, South Lake Tahoe
- Tree Care in Time of Drought
  Sept. 1, 5:30-7:30pm, South Lake Tahoe Library
- Converting Lawn to a Water Wise Landscape the Easy Way
  Sept. 12, 9am-1pm, Lake Tahoe Community College.

Meteor shower event at Lake Tahoe’s Ritz

Tahoe Star Tours will host a special mountainside star gazing event that corresponds with the Perseid meteor shower on Aug. 14.

The Perseid, a prolific meteor shower associated with the comet Swift-Tuttle, are visible from mid-July each year, with the peak in activity happening between Aug. 9-14. During the peak, the rate of meteors reaches 60 or more per hour.

While viewing the constellations and meteor shower through a high-powered Celestron telescopes, guests will also be treated to a special live concert performance by Accent, a Reno-based chamber music ensemble. The event will also include cheese and dessert stations, wine and Champagne.

The event is at the Ritz-Carlton, Lake Tahoe from 8:15-10:30pm. Go **online** to buy tickets.

U.S. volleyball team represented by STHS student

Kaitlynn Watson, a senior at South Tahoe High School, participated as the starting libero of the U.S. Westside California 17 and under team in the 11th annual European Global Challenge Volleyball tournament in Pula, Croatia.

The team, made up of players under the age of 17 from California, placed seventh in the challenge tournament. The California squad played several teams from Europe, including the Italian and Croatian national champions between July 8-18.



Kaitlynn Watson of South Lake Tahoe played on a U.S.

volleyball in Europe this month. Photo/Provided

The U.S. was also represented by teams from the Midwest, South and a second team from California.

The tournament also featured under 22-year-old teams, including the United States Junior National team and the Mountain West All Star team (including Lyndsey Anderson from UNR). The U.S. Junior Nationals won the U22 division, defeating the Italian Junior National team 3-2.

“It was an honor to be selected for the team, and then participate against some of the best teams in Europe,” Watson said in a statement. “To be able to represent not only South Tahoe, but the United States, is mind-blowing.”

Rugged El Dorado County 4WD trail opens

The Barrett four-wheel drive trail, a rugged 6 mile off-highway route from Wright’s Lake to Barrett Lake, just west of Desolation Wilderness, is open.

Three segments of the trail were reconstructed to protect sensitive meadows.

The Barrett 4WD Trail has been used by recreationists since the 1960s and offers one of the most challenging off-highway vehicle experiences in the Sierra Nevada. The trail has a high rating for difficulty and is only recommended for very experienced OHV users prepared for remote travel over large rocks.

The Barrett 4WD Trail was identified as one of 18 routes in the Eldorado National Forest travel system which needed corrections to comply with the environmental protection guidelines in the Sierra Nevada Plan.

The work was funded by the Forest Service with assistance from a California Department of Parks and Recreation, Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division Ground Operations grant and a Secure Rural Schools Title II grant through the El Dorado County Resource Advisory Committee. The project was implemented by the Forest Service together with two contractors, a Student Conservation Association Leader Crew and volunteers from the Hi-Landers 4WD Club.

Ex-NFL’er to teach youth clinic in SLT

Former New York Jets wide receiver Jo-Jo Townsell will host a USA Football FUNdamentals clinic for children ages 8-18 in South Lake Tahoe.

The Aug. 1-5 camp (9am-4pm each day) will be at South Tahoe Middle School. The free clinics are designed to introduce children to football by teaching basic skills.

The clinics incorporate a series of drills to teach passing, catching and running skills in a non-contact setting. All skills and drills selected are based on USA Football’s Player Progression Development Model, ensuring children are learning

in an age-appropriate manner, based on their cognitive and physical maturity.

Registration is available **online**.

Adventurer wants Tahoe canoe speed record



Grant Korgan wants to set a canoe record on Lake Tahoe. Photo/High Fives Foundation

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

Paddling a canoe around Lake Tahoe would be quite an accomplishment for most people.

Grant Korgan isn’t most people. He wants more.

The relentlessly positive Korgan wants to make the trip in fewer than 16 hours, which would be a world record.

The 38-year-old from Incline Village is making the attempt as he continues to recover from a severe spinal cord injury

suffered in a snowmobile accident in 2010 that left him paralyzed from the waist down.

Read the whole story

Camp Rich campground, bike path work to begin

Work begins this week on the U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit's plans to improve the Camp Richardson area.

The first phase of the Campground and Vehicle Circulation Best Management Practices Retrofit is designed to meet current standards for water quality protection and universal accessibility. About 250 trees in the campground on the north side of Highway 89 will be removed.

Campsites and roads will be moved from sensitive stream environment zone areas. A portion of the Pope-Baldwin Bike Path (locally known as the Camp Rich bike path) will be moved from the highway shoulder. A new campground entrance will also be created.

The first phase of the project is expected to be complete by October. Phase two on the south side of Highway 89 is anticipated to begin in September 2015 and be finished by June 2016.

For more information, go online.

TRTA offers backcountry camp for youngsters

The Tahoe Rim Trail Association, Tahoe Institute for Natural Science, and city of South Lake Tahoe are partnering for a three-day program that will introduce teens (ages 12-14) to a wildlife survivor’s state of mind.

The youth backcountry camp has teens unplugging and gaining a greater awareness of Tahoe’s natural inhabitants.

Participants will learn about wilderness survival, navigation (map/compass and GPS), leave no trace wilderness ethics, local ecology and geology, and backcountry cooking and nutrition. Participants will backpack approximately three miles per day and develop crucial backcountry skills while out on the Tahoe Rim Trail.

The Aug. 1-3 camp costs $295.

Gear, food and transportation will be provided for all participants. All programs are instructed by experienced and well-trained staff from the TRTA, TINS and the city.

Registration is available online.

Beach-wrestling tournament in South Lake Tahoe

The inaugural beach-wrestling tournament at El Dorado Beach is July 25 starting at 11am.

There will be kids as young as 5 competing, as well as high school students, an open division and a women’s event.

People younger than 18 compete for free. Open division wrestlers pay $5 each, with the winner getting half the purse.

For more info about the South Lake Tahoe contest, contact Ryan Wallace at email sltwrestling@yahoo.com or 530.318.9112.