

Uproar proves importance of Hot August Nights to the region

Publisher's note: *This editorial first appeared in Reno Gazette-Journal on Aug. 5, 2010.*

We love Hot August Nights. We're glad it's here again. We hope it will be around for many years to come.

That's the message that officials of the annual celebration of classic cars and rock 'n' roll should take from the uproar in Reno that interrupted their preparations for this year's event, now under way at a variety of locations around the Truckee Meadows.

The anger that followed an interview with executive director Bruce Walter published in the Los Angeles Business Journal, in which Walter was quoted as saying the event would be held exclusively in Long Beach, Calif., in 2012, surely was difficult, even painful, for everyone associated with the event.

But it was an indication of just how important the event has become to the community in which it was founded a quarter-century ago, how much it has become a part of the fabric of life in the Truckee Meadows and how protective the community is of an event that they feel belongs to everyone here, not just those who work in Hot August Nights' headquarters.

Read the whole story

Correct times for Relay for Life events

Dear Friends and Neighbors and Relayers,

The survivor invitations went out with the wrong times on them. The Relay for Life on Aug. 7 at Kahle Park opens at 4pm with the opening ceremonies, the survivor and then the caregiver laps and so on. The Survivor Dinner is at 5 until 6pm and the luminaria ceremony with a survivor speaker is at 9pm.

Please invite your friends and other survivors to attend the relay, especially the opening ceremonies and the luminaria lighting.

Hope to see you there.

Maryon Tilley, Relay for Life volunteer

Opinion: Increased water storage is California's solution

By Charlie Barra, San Jose Mercury News

If California does not provide an adequate water supply at reasonable cost to its agricultural industry, competition from globalization will soon turn the state into a Third World country.

Most of the people working to find a solution to California water problems seem to have a hard time understanding the economic impact that the lack of water at reasonable prices has on the economy and how this directly affects working families and the state's tax base.

Additionally, this great state has been able to export food products, within the United States and internationally, at reasonable prices. That, in effect, has raised the standard of living for all those consumers. We must have a reliable source of water to be able to continue growing these much-needed commodities at fair prices.

Read the whole story

Friends of Hope Valley sue for access to land

To the community,

A lawsuit has been filed in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of California on behalf of the Friends of Hope Valley in an effort to reassert the public's right to access Pleasant Valley in Alpine County. Past trail users are being sought to appear as witnesses in the case against private landowners who closed access to the Pleasant Valley trails in 1999.

Pleasant Valley is a beautiful meadow south of Lake Tahoe that for more than 100 years had served as a primary access point into Alpine County's high country, including the Pacific Crest Trail and the Mokelumne Wilderness Area. Access to Pleasant Valley was gated shut in 1999 by the Dressler family, private

land owners who no longer wished to have hikers, anglers, and other recreationalists cross their land in order to reach the federal public lands beyond.

In the years that followed, Friends of Hope Valley worked to persuade the Dresslers to voluntarily reopen access to the Pleasant Valley trails for public use, but despite years of attempts to find a resolution, this gateway to public lands remains closed. With no other corrective recourse available, the FOHV has engaged San Francisco law firms Shute, Mihaly & Weinberger LLP and Kerr & Wagstaffe LLP and has filed a lawsuit to reopen the trail.

Says Matthew Zinn of Shute, Mihaly and Weinberger, "This case represents a clear violation of the public's right to have access to trails where there is a long history of use by the public."

The public's right to access public trails, even where they pass through otherwise private land, is firmly established in California state law. Any land in California that was open to public access for five continuous years before 1972 cannot lawfully be closed to public access. There is ample evidence demonstrating many decades of public use of the trails, according to the Friends of Hope Valley.

"We know fisherman, hikers and native Americans have used this private property access corridor for over one hundred years to reach the high country, including the Pacific Crest Trail and the Mokelumne Wilderness Area," says Debbi Waldear, board member and president of Friends of Hope Valley. "We are calling on the area's residents and visitors to come forward and tell us about their Pleasant Valley trail use prior to the 1980s so the public can once again enjoy this area."

Community members who used the Pleasant Valley trails at any time before the 1980s are asked to contact Friends of Hope Valley by emailing info@hopevalleyca.com or to call FOHV's

lawyer, Matthew Zinn of Shute, Mihaly and Weinberger LLP, at (415) 552.7272 as soon as possible. Potential witnesses will be interviewed by FOHV's legal team, possibly deposed by the defendant's lawyers, and may be asked to testify in court in Sacramento. The deadline to discover witnesses is approaching and is essential to building the case for the trail's historic use.

For more information about the Friends of Hope Valley lawsuit, [click here](#).

Severn Williams, Friends of Hope Valley

Opinion: The goodness of Kenny Guinn

By Jon Ralston, Las Vegas Sun

I have told the story before, but now seems an appropriate time to relate my favorite Kenny Guinn vignette:

It was late in the second excruciating special session of 2003. Gov. Guinn had proposed a billion-dollar tax increase he argued was necessary to keep the state afloat, a painful choice for an exemplar of the GOP establishment. Fifteen Assembly Republicans, led by Bob Beers, had refused to go along, creating a bitter, elongated stalemate that would define Carson City politics thereafter.

Late one night, Guinn and his bodyguard/driver ran into Beers at Gleneagles, a capital watering hole. The governor refused to shake the hand of his prime antagonist.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Water bond language is what state needs

By Lester Snow, Sacramento Bee

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg have asked the Legislature to move California's water bond, Proposition 18, from the November 2010 ballot to the November 2012 ballot.

This move was a matter of setting near-term legislative priorities and ensuring that California's budget and economic recovery are first and foremost on the decision-making agenda. It was a tough decision, but it is the right thing to do.

While there has been strong support for delaying the water bond until 2012, The Bee and a few others have taken the opportunity to pick apart the bond and suggest that it is filled with funding for unnecessary projects.

Read the whole story

Suggestions for what to do with kids in summer

By Vicki Barber

Yes, summer is almost over and this is often the toughest time

for families, especially kids. There's no longer quite enough to do to keep them busy and they've run out of the entertaining fun. Now what?

Well, there's always TV and video games, but you've really tried to stay away from them. We all know that doesn't seem like the best use of time. So let's come up with some other activities that would help make the end of summer fun, yet not become too taxing for anyone.



Vicki Barber

Games are great fun and great learning tools for those of us who would like to see a little learning going on as well as enjoyment. When was the last time you played Monopoly? How about Yahtzee or Scrabble? All three games are fun and Monopoly's definitely a great escape from the vagaries of the current economy. Just think, you can own houses and hotels and have a bank full of money – at least for a few hours. It's a great learning experience for kids, too. Yahtzee is great for math skills and Scrabble is fun for spelling and vocabulary, sandwiched in between the laughter of challenges that go awry. If your children are still on the younger side, try Chutes and Ladders. There's no reading required, but there's a lot of counting going on.

Cribbage, chess, checkers, and Chinese checkers are fun too. Some games are more involved than others, so matching the game with the skill level of the child helps. I'm not advocating "letting" kids win. I've known too many children who can beat me at just about any game they learn how to play. Given a

little time and practice, they become good in a relatively short period of time.

Trivial Pursuit comes in all shapes and questions these days. Mancala is fun too. One requires knowledge of a wide variety of subjects. The other requires strategy and perception; great skills for everyone.

If you're not into board games, card games work well, too. Gin Rummy, Hearts, Canasta, War, or Solitaire all have possibilities. Also, there are some games that require special decks of cards like Pinochle, Skip-Bo, or Crazy Eights. Often we have those decks lying around the house in some corner drawer. If not, the Dollar Stores may carry them.

Outside games are fun, too, whether playing or watching. From Little League to a pick-up game in the backyard, baseball/softball is still a great tradition. A little time on the basketball court is great for older ones, and there are little hoops now for the littler ones. Soccer is fun, especially after all the coverage the World Cup has gotten in the last few weeks.

Those all seem like they're organized and a team is necessary. Games like tag or hopscotch are just as much fun, and sometimes easier for the little ones to play.

Games are about fun and laughter, and they're also about enjoying each other, being close, and learning skills. Summer's almost over, but the enjoyment doesn't have to be. So let the games begin.

Vicki Barber is superintendent of education for El Dorado County

EDAWN working on stimulating N. Nevada economy

By Chuck Alvey, Reno Gazette-Journal

The Economic Development Authority of Western Nevada reports annually on the companies it assists in relocation to and expansion in the Reno-Tahoe region. The economic diversification process involves close collaboration with many regional partners.

In fiscal year 2009-2010, the report included 11 companies assisted and represented 513 new jobs. That is down from the 17 companies and 743 jobs a year ago.

While this might not be surprising given the national economic crisis and shortage of previously plentiful capital and financial resources, it is little consolation for a region trying to rebound.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Thinning project looks more like logging operation

Publisher's note: *This letter was read to the California Tahoe Conservancy board on July 15 by the writer. Lake Tahoe News asked for a copy from the writer, which arrived this week and is printed below.*

Dear Tahoe Conservancy,

My name is Amber. I was born and raised in South Lake Tahoe and am currently a full-time resident. I am writing because I am very, very concerned about the integrity and professionalism of the Meyers fire protection district.

I have been witnessing it firsthand in the Apache neighborhood. I see harvesting of very big healthy trees going on. Little spindly unhealthy trees are being left, along with big road-like cuts causing erosion through places our wildlife once found refuge. Now it is covered with huge piles of slash, which is more of a fire danger. Some of the trees are left with unhealthy scars and breakage.

My understanding of fire thinning is the cutting of small, dead, or diseased trees, removing the dead underbranches, and the removal of dried underbrush, pine needles and pinecones. This is not what is going on. Honestly, I smell greed as I see logging trucks pulling out with big healthy trees. I am very worried corruption is tainting the need and importance of the Conservancy and Forest Service.

Regulation and respect have gone out the window. I have heard sawing for long periods of time with huge crashes indicating large trees, followed by hooting and hollering by the men. This is very offensive and very, very unprofessional. This morning [July 15] in my neighbor's yard – who is currently out of town – there is a huge long stump left along with a big mess. This tree was on private property and of no apparent fire danger. This butchering and unskilled cutting can lead to more diseased trees in the future when insects begin to make these unsightly stumps their home, creating an even bigger fire danger.

I have spoken with many of the neighbors and they, too, are very concerned. We feel helpless and this is why we are turning to you for help. There are not very many old trees

left in the Tahoe basin. We lost so many during the fire ... it is a deep shame to now cut so many more in the disguise of fire fear when it's obvious someone is benefitting from the lumber.

Tahoe is a place where residents and tourists from all over the world come to enjoy the serenity and purity of our forests and lakes. Please do something to help protect our old trees before it's too late. Thinning is not harvesting big trees for profit. Please send out trained foresters to assess and regulate the situation, ones who are respectful of the health of the forest, wildlife, and residents. Not these untrained disrespectful loggers. There is terrible harm being done to our forest. We again are turning to you for help as people of Tahoe, along with the trees, and wildlife who can't speak out or protect themselves.

Thank you for you time and attention.

Sincerely,

Amber LaPointe, Meyers

Opinion: Water bond isn't about pork in the Sierra

By Bob Kirkwood and Jim Branham, San Jose Mercury News

As we head into the heat of summer, the politics of water will once again warm up as well.

Last year a water bond was passed by the Legislature and signed by the governor, placing it on this November's ballot. However, due to current economic factors, the governor has

proposed removing it from the ballot, indicating this is not the time for a vote on such a measure. The Legislature is considering the governor's call, ultimately deciding the fate of the current bond proposal.

Some, including the *Mercury News* editorial writers, have suggested that the measure is full of pork-barrel spending. Apparently they believe huge sums of money are going to areas that have nothing to do with providing clean water for our homes, farms and environment. The Sierra Nevada region does not fit that picture.

We all have our definition of "pork," but to suggest that the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's share (less than 1 percent) of the bond is wasteful, inappropriate spending misses the mark.

Read the whole story