

Visibility hampers King Fire, weather helps



Mount Tallac at 5pm Sept. 20 is not visible from South Lake Tahoe. Photo/Susan Wood

Updated 10:10pm:

Visibility grounded air resources fighting the King Fire that continues to burn out of control east of Pollock Pines. However, a low pressure system passed south of the incident Saturday, bringing clouds and increased humidity to moderate fire activity.

For the night of Sept. 20 officials anticipate the spread to be minimal. The higher humidity should moderate the fire behavior. The wild card are thunderstorms could impact the area by bringing outflow winds.

All helicopters left the French Meadows area Saturday afternoon when pilots could not see more than two mile. The air tankers had to stop flying before that.

The smell of smoke inundated the Y area of South Lake late Sept. 20, but was dissipating as the night went on. Smoke is billowing over Mount Tallac to the point it could not longer

be seen.

“There is no concern of the King Fire coming into the basin and (smoke) is a direct result of wind shift only. There is no reason for concern or to contact the local fire department,” South Lake Tahoe officials said.

The fire has burned 81,944 acres, with much of it in the Eldorado National Forest. However, it has moved into the Tahoe National Forest in Placer County. It remains at 10 percent containment.

The damage assessment team continued to work in the White Meadows area to assess the extent of damage to structures. That assessment should be completed Sunday. A handful of homes have been destroyed, possibly more.

The fire started Sept. 13 by an arsonist, according to officials. Wayne Allen Huntsman is in custody, having pleaded not guilty to arson charges.

Four firefighters have been injured, but the extent and severity has not been released.

More than 4,900 people are fighting the fire, with some coming from as far away as Florida.

Evacuation orders are still in effect for nearly 3,000 people, as 12,000 single residences and 9,000 other minor structures are threatened. The Sacramento Region Community Foundation is collecting monetary donations to assist people affected by the fire. Checks may be sent to 955 University Ave., Suite A, Sacramento, CA 95825. For more info, email tina@sacregcf.org.

Highway 50 is open, though westbound traffic is down to one lane. Click on the state icon on *Lake Tahoe News*' home page for real time road information.

It is costing \$5 million a day to fight the fire.

Financial advisors need to understand clients

By Rodger Alan Friedman

Shocking stats continue to make news regarding America's preparedness for retirement, including the fact that one of five citizens near retirement age have zero money put away for the golden years, according to statistics recently released from the Federal Reserve.

About 20 percent of pre-retirees have nothing stocked away, and 31 percent of the total population also has no money for retirement.

This issue is making news regularly, and financial planning for retirement advertisements have spiked in recent years, in case you haven't noticed.

If nothing else, I hope the increased focus is lighting a fire under those who are near retirement, and I hope future generations are taking notes.

Just as the average person needs to get real with their own finances, advisors also need to get real with their clients. That means having several traits.

- **Competence:** When advisors are unsure of themselves, it comes through. When presented with a set of facts, new advisors may not recognize what they are dealing with, or its importance. A seasoned advisor, on the other hand, has dealt with many clients with numerous problems several times over and knows

what it takes to solve a problem. That's why I feel that an experienced financial advisor is the best answer for someone in need of retirement income and financial planning. Also, financial advisors should be very well-read, with self-imposed reading requirements. Learning new ideas and revisiting old ones keeps veteran advisors fresh.

- **Empathy:** What is a client going through? Advisors must have their antennae up. Tears, anger, regrets and frustration are often bound with a person's finances. I have met very few 22-year-olds who can fully understand the struggles, worries and dreams most people experience throughout a lifetime. Advisors have to develop an approach that helps clients feel comfortable in discussing difficult matters. The client needs to understand that the advisor truly cares and is not there merely for a transaction.

- **Ability to listen:** "You have to have two ears and one mouth," my mother used to say; she made it clear that I should be listening twice as much as I was talking, and that advice has served me well in my life and career. Clients come to an advisor for professional expertise, but they don't want to be lectured. Advisors have to first listen to clients – their problems, needs and hopes – before offering a professional response. The conversation should flow easily both ways as an advisor and client get to the heart of matters in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

- **Perspective and insight:** Perspective and insight are like twins: wherever there is one, the other is not far behind. Planners gain perspective and insight through thousands of hours of listening, collaborating, advising and acting as a steward of the financial assets and dreams of the families they serve. You know when you're in the presence of these "twins;" it is often said that people with both see with their intellect – they possess vision. Clients should keep their antennae up for these traits when meeting a prospective advisor. Pay attention to how he or she may, as if without

effort, intelligently guide the two-way conversation.

Rodger Alan Friedman grew up working in his family's New York City laundry, where he learned a strong work ethic – and about the type of work he didn't want to do. After earning a degree in political science, he became a real-estate agent trainee, then performed compliance audits for a large Wall Street brokerage firm, eventually became a stock broker, and then financial advisor and wealth management professional.

King Fire cuts into Apple Hill traffic

By Richard Chang, Sacramento Bee

Business was slow at Apple Hill's famed orchards Saturday, as smoke from the King fire in El Dorado County discouraged people from visiting, owners said.

Apple farmers, bakers and craft vendors said foot traffic had dropped by at least 50 percent, marking a gloomy start to the high season that began Labor Day and ends in December. Thousands of tourists traditionally make the trip from across Northern California to the area for a chance to pick their own apples or indulge in apple pie.

"Let's put it this way: It's not good," said Paul Dozier, owner of Pine-0-Mine ranch in Placerville, when asked about the fire's impact on sales.

Dozier said conditions on Friday were "like walking through the fog."

On Saturday, however, only a slight tinge of smoke was in the

air, but not far off, a heavy haze hovered over the rolling hills. Dozier's 13-acre property was practically deserted, save for the occasional customer.

Read the whole story

King Fire uses record amount of retardant

By Raquel Maria Dillion and Gillian Flaccus, AP

Firefighters are dropping record-breaking amounts of retardants on the King Fire that is burning explosively because of the prolonged drought.

California firefighters and the U.S. Forest Service together had bombarded the conflagration with more than a half-million gallons of retardant, fire spokeswoman Lynne Tolmachoff said Friday. That included more than 203,000 gallons in a single day.

Retardant – a water-and-fertilizer mix colored with red dye – are used as an initial attack tool on wildfires to buy time for crews to get to the scene and dig fire lines.



A tanker drops a load of fire retardant on the King Fire. Photo/Rich Pedroncelli/AP

But the fire activity is so extreme it's pushing through their lines.

"They can slow it down a little bit. But they're not able to hold it long enough to get ground units in there to extinguish it before it burns through and continues its path," Tolmachoff said.

The King Fire, which authorities said was deliberately set, has chewed through nearly 120 square miles of timber and vegetation east of Pollock Pines.

The blaze in steep terrain forced the evacuation of 2,800 people and burned multiple structures in the White Meadows area of Pollock Pines. One resident who has been helping carve fire lines with his bulldozer told the *Sacramento Bee* he lost his home on White Meadows Road when he went to check on it Friday.

"My house got burned. My house is gone. My outbuildings are gone," Tom Boscow said. "I just wish I'd been here."

The fire is threatening a key UC Berkeley research station that is home to scores of experiments on trees, plants and other wildlife. It is also threatening hydroelectric facilities and power lines that deliver water and electricity to the Sacramento region and some treasured Sierra Nevada recreations areas, the *Bee* reported. Some power stations and lines either burned or were shut down as a precaution, cutting off energy from three utility agencies' hydroelectric reservoirs.

The man suspected of setting the fire, Wayne Allen Huntsman, 37, pleaded not guilty to an arson charge Friday in El Dorado

County Superior Court. He was being held on \$10 million bail.

Authorities have not said what evidence they have linking Huntsman to the fire, by far the largest of about a dozen fires burning statewide.

The record retardant drop occurred Wednesday, and Thursday was another heavy day. Authorities reduced drops on Friday because smoke affected visibility for pilots.

Firefighters have used retardant since the 1950s to slow the advance of wildfires, but the practice is controversial because of its potential effect on wildlife. The Forest Service recently adjusted its retardant rules after two lawsuits that alleged the drops were killing fish, damaging watersheds and harming endangered species.

The agency now can't drop retardant within 300 feet of bodies of water on federal forest land and can't dump the slurry in certain exclusion zones designed to protect endangered plant species. The only exception is if people are in immediate danger from flames.

Andy Stahl, executive director of Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics, said the intended purpose of retardant was to attack "very remote fire" until crews could get to the blaze.

"But now we're seeing a dramatic increase in the amount of retardant being dumped because we're not just using it in those remote wilderness areas, but we're using it on every fire, everywhere, and there are more fires," he said.

The Forest Service used 12 million gallons of retardant nationwide last year, and 60 percent of it was dumped on California fires, Stahl said.

The federal restrictions don't apply to California firefighters, and CalFire has increased the amount of

retardant during the past decade.

Tolmachoff, the state fire spokeswoman, didn't know how many gallons her agency dropped on fires last year. But she said retardant use was rising because of the addition of bigger DC-10 air tankers, expanding populations in fire-prone areas and the increasing size and frequency of fires caused by drought.

"Our main goal in California is to protect lives and the property and resources, and we put every effort we can into it," she said.

Ironman to impact Tahoe roads Sunday

Sections of highways 28, 89 and 267 will be closed Sunday as thousands of athletes compete in Ironman Lake Tahoe.

More than 2,500 athletes are registered to compete in the 2.4-mile swim, 112-mile bike ride and 26.2-mile run at more than 6,000 feet above sea level.

Race officials will decide that morning if the event is a-go based on the air quality from the King Fire.

Highway 28 is scheduled to be closed in both directions from Fox Street to the junction with Highway 267 from 5:30-9:30am.

Northbound Highway 89 will be closed from Fairway Drive in Tahoe City to Squaw Valley Road from 7am-5:30pm and southbound Highway 267 will be closed from Northstar Boulevard to Kingswood/Commonwealth Drive in Kings Beach from 7:30am-4pm.

The Interstate 80 eastbound off-ramp to Highway 89/267 (Exit 188B) and the Highway 89 on-ramp to westbound I-80 will be closed from 6:30am-3:30pm.

Several residential street intersections with highways 28 and 267 in Kings Beach also will be closed. The CHP will be conducting traffic control at all closure locations.

Workers needed for Truckee River Day

The 19th annual Truckee River Day is Oct. 19.

Volunteers have a choice of half or full day restoration projects with different levels of difficulty. There will be 12-15 projects, including restoration in Martis Valley near Elizabethtown Meadows, seeding and mulching at Prosser Lake, removing milfoil from the Truckee River, and revegetating a recently burned area near Boca Townsite. Projects start at 9 or 11am and finish between 2-3pm.

The River Fair will be from 1-4pm at Granite Flat Campground. The fair features environmental activities for kids and adults and the annual fish release at 3pm. Food will be provided by Northstar. Everyone is invited to the fair even if you're not involved in restoration projects.

To participate in this year's restoration projects, go online. The deadline for registration is Oct. 10.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



- The Virginia & Truckee Railroad will once again offer service to the North Pole onboard the Polar Express train starting Nov. 21. To purchase tickets, call 775.291.0208.

• Amarjeet Benipal is now director of Caltrans District 3, which covers Lake Tahoe.

• Granlibakken Resort in Tahoe City is hosting the annual Lake Tahoe Women's Wellness Weekend Nov. 8-9. For more info, email shawnalee@granlibakken.com.

• Hetch Hetchy restored? Is it possible? What are the obstacles and benefits? Robert Hanna, great-great-grandson of John Muir, and guests will discuss these topics Oct. 4 at 7pm. The free talk is sponsored by Lake of the Sky Outfitters and Tahoe Area Sierra Club. It will be at Unity at the Lake, 1195 Rufus Allen Blvd., South Lake Tahoe.

• High Fives Foundation hosted its 6th annual Bocce Tournament at the Truckee River Winery on Sept. 14 and raised approximately \$10,000.

West Shore Inn oozes

relaxation



No need to get out of bed to see the sunrise from the West Shore Inn. Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Susan Wood

HOMEWOOD – As active as I am, I never dreamed I'd look so forward to waking up early on vacation. I also never thought I'd go to a hotel and have sitting be my favorite activity.

But a couple days at the West Shore Café and Inn isn't just any experience – especially with a stay in the Marlette Peak suite.

This peak experience right on the lakefront starts with the sun rising. Views of Heavenly Mountain Resort runs remind us this waterfront experience is in our backyard. The many shades of pink and yellow of the shoreline seep through the morning clouds then changed in a matter of minutes, thus keeping me stationary for hours. Between the mesmerizing lapping of the waves only 20 feet out the window, a ski boat breaks the rhythm cutting across the shoreline with a water skier in tow.



Breakfast with a view.

If one wants to move around, there are two balconies – one with two cushy chairs and an end table for morning coffee, another with a bench. The best seated-view, though, is smack dab in front of the floor-to-ceiling living room window.

A throw blanket is carefully placed on one of the chairs in case the temperature dips. When it got nippy, we turned on either the gas fireplace in the living room or bedroom. When the sun was beating it, we'd open the two balcony doors.

The first morning, I got up to take in the different views and to await a breakfast tray of assorted muffins and orange juice that would soon arrive at the door. Coffee is made in the living room/office area.

The rooms, which are inviting all day and night, are a tastefully decorated with an alpine feel, along with beautiful walnut wood furnishings and finishing accents. Even the nightstands in the bedroom look as though someone attached a tree-round steppingstone to legs. Elegant touches may have guests never wanting to leave. Tile floors and a full-size tub add to the relaxing experience. (Suggestions: Fix the shower so it drains properly, and so water is not being wasted, and provide consistent quality towels.)



A view that never gets old.

Cushy robes let you lounge all day in comfort. The mini fridge filled with complimentary water and sodas is a nice touch, as was a tray of glasses for water, coffee and wine.

The wine glasses are Riedel, one of the finer things in life for wine enthusiasts. When Kae noticed what type of glass it was, she immediately took it off the balcony railing where she was snapping a photo.

Old black and white photos line the walls in the hallway outside the suite and continue to dot the walls inside. In the bathroom is one of Tahoe City, just five miles north on Highway 89 from the inn. The living room shows one of fishing on the East Shore.

Forget pulling the drapes, unless you totally want to sleep in or completely seclude yourself. For us, they were up and away the whole time. After all, the view is a huge reason to be here.

Even the large wedding on the deck below where the inn hosts dinner guests provided entertainment from one of our balconies that first evening.



The water taxi beats driving.

The West Shore Inn has the wedding thing down, hosting about 90 for the year. More than two-thirds of those are planned in the summer. Three fell on our recent fall weekend. (Note: Those who want access to the restaurant and quiet time at night may want to check this out ahead of time, as weddings can be quite festive into the wee hours.

Not having dinner there was no big deal on the first night. We simply added the North Lake Tahoe Express boat to our experience. In its third and final trial year, the shuttle runs from June 21 to Sept. 21 and can be used for pickups or drop-offs from five docks between Homewood and Carnelian Bay.

Through a recommendation of the West Shore Inn's concierge Bill Gaines, we opted for the five-minute walk south on Highway 89 to Obexer's marina to take it to Tahoe City for \$10 a person, where Moe's barbecue awaited. It's fun and exciting to be on a motorboat on the lake. What's nice about the shuttle is the plastic lining the bow to shield the wind – considering J.T., the skipper, cranks up the motor to travel 24 mph on the 25-minute excursion.

With his own personal experience to draw from, J.T. endorses the experience for those who simply don't want to drive or may

partake in too many cocktails. As one of the original drivers since its inception, J.T. has also done his civic duty on the water, having to rescue a stranded boater at Dollar Point.



Scallops at the West Shore Cafe.

Bikes are allowed on the boat, which can accommodate a dozen people. Crewmembers J.T. and Matt are pleasant, professional and admit they like their jobs being out on the water. This is even with a slight slowdown after Labor Day weekend and with the drought's impact of a low water level making docking a little bit more challenging. The shuttle service funded through Placer County's transient occupancy tax was forced to remove Captain John's as a drop off and pickup point.

If the boat shuttle doesn't work out for the return from Tahoe City to Homewood, there are a handful of various vehicle taxi services. After dinner, we hopped into a North Shore Checkered Taxi cab where our local driver was courteous.

When asked about the upcoming big plans from the West Shore Inn's owner JMA Ventures that is expected to change the face of Homewood, he said he liked the idea. In particular, the prospect of the West Shore's first major development seemed appealing to him because it would be good "for the local economy." He also backed the underground parking structure to deter the possible eyesore that goes with a major attraction

as a large hotel planned at the base of Homewood Mountain Resort.

The development planned across the street from the West Shore Café and Inn may alter the identity of the small boutique hotel, but its place under the cloak of an upcoming 180-room hotel remains to be seen.

West Shore Inn General Manager Jessica Barton said it's "tough to compete" with an upscale resort of that size, but it sounds like the West Shore Inn is holding its own in its own niche of weddings and group events. A few weeks ago, JMA – which has owned the 14-year-old inn for five years – bought two villas on the north side of the inn as additional lodging options. One is considered lakefront, the other serves up a mountain view.

"It's important to get something more to accommodate large groups," Barton told *Lake Tahoe News* of the popularity of retreat gatherings.



The full moon provided plenty of photo ops.

The inn is evolving. Barton said much of the focus in the West Shore's experience is on amenities. Guests can now enjoy complimentary access to paddleboards and kayaks off their dock. The inn also partnered with a motorboat vendor that will offer charters with a 10 percent discount to guests. There's a certain charm in being able to dock their boat or yours just steps from your room.

The second day of our stay, we hauled the 17-foot canoe down to the beach – with help Gaines had arranged as concierge extraordinaire. The paddling trip was both gorgeous and challenging, as our mid-morning jaunt to Sugar Pine Point was a little too late to avoid the headwind. Despite the workout, this activity is highly recommended.

Hugging the shoreline provides an interesting architectural tour, along with glimpses of residents' ensembles of various water toys. One home had a slide that could be attached to a boat. A few boaters cruised by, but for the most part, the trip was peaceful and quiet. One woman sitting at the end of her pier was knitting and smiled as we paddled by. This was the universal sign for, ah yes, the good life.



Water at Sugar Pine Point looks like the Caribbean.

Three miles down from the inn, the water got a little rougher with more exposure to the wind, and the shoreline looked more rugged. I knew we were entering Sugar Pine Point State Park. And because I was told by an inn worker that an eagle bird's nest is near the rock outcropping that we negotiated in the canoe, I found myself often looking overhead while trying to keep my eyes on where we were going.

We brought the canoe to the shore and walked down the beach to the large pier in front of a giant grassy area in front of the Hellman-Ehrman Mansion, a century-old-plus residence passed down from a San Francisco businessman. The California State Parks system, which bought it in 1965 from heirs, is maintained as a museum and an example of the opulence of

yesteryear.

From shore-to-shore, Tahoe pioneering families have shown through chronicled history how life at the lake can be good and fulfilling. Before dinner, I glanced at the nightstand where the classic Tahoe novel "Lake of the Sky" by George Wharton sits alongside historian Mark McLaughlin's popular "True Tales of Tahoe" series. I read all of Volume 1 while lounging at the end of the West Shore Inn pier, where a fire pit, stimulating conversation with other diners and a tray full of s'mores ingredients beckoned me on the second night of our stay.

Dinner at the West Shore Café is yet another example of the modern-day good life at Tahoe. The food is excellent, but the setting on the deck on the lakefront is untouchable. Add to that a full harvest moon and you get an experience as savory as my seared Maine scallops and Kae's perfectly seasoned pasta.

An eclectic wine list offers varietals from Oregon to Italy and Australia to Hungary. We went with the Oveja Negra Sauvignon Blanc from Chile.

Before the delivery of our entrees, Kae joined many diners away from the table to take photos of the moon rising above the East Shore ridge. It was a picture-perfect night.

And the service was exemplary. Hoke, our waiter from Scottsdale who works in Tahoe for the summer season, was excellent, noticing every slight detail. He even fixed an uneven table, which most waiters in Tahoe would have ignored.

The West Shore Café offers two-for-one entrees in September, a nice gesture for the shoulder season. (However, I found the 20 percent mandatory gratuity a bit presumptuous, though I would have gladly given Hoke that and told him so.)

The lemon tart with wafer and strawberry sorbet and rhubarb is

worth saving room for.

In the peak seasons, the West Shore Café is open for lunch and dinner, but is now open for dinners only through this month. In October, the inn is open without the restaurant. The first two weeks of November, JMA closes the whole operation for a major cleanup leading into the ski season.

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Notes:

- West Shore Café and Inn is located on Highway 89 across from Homewood Mountain Resort, five miles south of Tahoe City.
- Rooms in the fall range from \$199 to \$499 a night; in winter, they can run from \$399 to \$549.
- For more info, go online.

Court: Tax on strip clubs constitutional

By Associated Press

CARSON CITY – The Nevada Supreme Court has decided that a 10 percent tax on strip club admission doesn't violate exotic dancers' First Amendment rights of free expression.

All seven justices on Thursday sided with a lower court's ruling that upheld the Nevada Live Entertainment Tax.

Justices ruled it was constitutional to tax the clubs and other live entertainment because the tax is content-neutral, doesn't target a small group of people, and doesn't threaten

to suppress ideas or viewpoints.

The broad-based tax applies to many events but exempts some live entertainment, including boxing, NASCAR races and minor league baseball.

The clubs had argued that the tax's exemptions favor family-oriented entertainment and scrutinize adult businesses, but the justices countered that the tax applies to many family-oriented events, including circuses and concerts.

Soroptimist wine tasting tickets on sale

Soroptimist International of South Lake Tahoe's 44th annual food and wine tasting is Nov. 7 at Harrah's Lake Tahoe from 6-9:30pm.

About 25 wineries will be pouring, while approximately 20 South Shore restaurants will be serving food samples.

Money from the event goes back into the community through educational scholarships, youth activity sponsorships and grants to organizations such as the Live Violence Free, Tahoe Youth & Family Services and Lake Tahoe Boys & Girls Club.

Flamenco guitarist Julian Martin will be performing. There will also be a "dress to impress contest".

Tickets for the Food & Wine event are \$65 each and may be purchased from a SISLT member or online.