

Fallen Leaf Lake marina operation negotiations fall apart



Packed meetings, like the one earlier this month, are the norm these days at Fallen Leaf Lake. Photo/Susan Wood

By Susan Wood

At this point, Fallen Leaf Landing has no place to land given the current quagmire its manager and the community board overseeing the concessionaire operation are in.

No agreement was reached on a contract between the Fallen Leaf Lake Community Services District and John Rich, who has run the South Lake Tahoe area marina and general store for 14 years. The two sides gave each other until Sept. 19 to clear up differences that range from accounting practices to rent the CSD takes in to boat-washing activities to the occupation

of a second room above the store.

Negotiations fell apart when Mike Kraft, the board's vice president and one of two subcommittee members scheduled to meet with Rich, said he was approached and threatened in the last few weeks.

"Based on this threat and comments I received (at the picnic), I removed myself from the negotiations," Kraft said Tuesday. No one took his place.

"We didn't even get to the terms," Rich said Tuesday of the quasi contract.

Kraft has his share of critics because he wants to find the funding to have the district board run the dual marina-store operation with the help of an employed manager. Some in the usually tight-knit community who support the fourth-generation Rich accuse Kraft of operating behind closed doors.

Tempers have flared since the debate began in April, packing the Fallen Leaf Lake firehouse where the CSD board hosts its meetings. Some have suggested a recall may be in order if the popular Rich family is kicked out.

Rich added he still wants to run the store and marina because of the "phenomenal community support," but believes he's close to being ousted as a result of personal differences with the board.

Board President Dana Clark sent an email Tuesday declaring no changes to the last version of the Aug. 15 contract, which requires Rich to pay \$103,000 in rent.

"Without having an agreement in principle at this time, we will proceed with the steps necessary to execute the decision to have the CSD operate the store and marina for the 2010 season," the letter reads.

Clark admitted Tuesday it's unfortunate discussions didn't

resume between the board and Rich, especially since he “still has reservations” about the district taking over the operation. Nonetheless, the board is seeking a general manager and no other option has been placed on the table.

Rich cannot be dismissed without board approval. That could happen at the next meeting.

The district board will host a meeting in the coming weeks. Clark indicated the meeting should be scheduled between Oct. 10 and Nov. 7.

Susan Wood is a freelance writer based in South Lake Tahoe. She may be reached at copysue1@yahoo.com.

Sand Harbor victim from Fallon

The woman who died at Sand Harbor State Park has been identified as Marie Wolf of Fallon.

The 67-year-old Nevada resident collapsed Saturday on the shore of Lake Tahoe after completing a dive with an instructor and complaining of abdominal pain.

An autopsy was conducted Monday by the Washoe County coroner. Results could take months. No cause of death has been released.

Garrido's behavior once praised by authorities



Phillip
Garrido

By Sam Stanton and Denny Walsh, Sacramento Bee

Nearly eight years after Jaycee Lee Dugard was kidnapped, Phillip Garrido received a certificate from the U.S. Parole Commission lauding him for his behavior since his release from prison in 1988.

"You are hereby discharged from parole," the March 9, 1999, certificate read.

Read the whole story

Do It Center coming to South Tahoe



Do It Center
will soon
occupy the old
South Shore
Motors
building in
South Tahoe.

By Kathryn Reed

The Do It Center did it.

South Lake Tahoe officials issued the permit Monday for the old South Shore Motors building on Lake Tahoe Boulevard to become a general merchandise-nursery.

A special use permit is not required for this type of business.

In the permit it says, “A condition of approval is included that requires the DIY Center to maintain this variety of merchandise and not evolve over time in to a store that would be defined under a different use.”

Do It Center President Jess Ruf had wanted to be much more – just like his other locations scattered throughout California. Ruf was not available for comment Monday night.

Ruf signed a 10-year lease on the building in December.

Do It Center’s approval from the Planning Commission was appealed by Robert Cosmi, whose family has owned Scotty’s Hardware for 40 years. The council sided with Cosmi in June by

denying the special use permit that was required if Ruf were to carry the more extensive inventory. Since that time Ruf and his backers have been working to reconfigure the business model to fit the 18,792-square-foot site.

What neighboring businesses are upset about is oversaturating the market with the same type of merchandise. Besides Scotty's, Ace Hardware and Kmart's home center are within walking distance. There are myriad other businesses on the South Shore that carry similar stock that Do It Center is likely to have on its shelves.

Cosmi on Monday night said he wasn't surprised about the permit. Still, his intention is to file an appeal within the five-day window that he and anyone else has.

"What, they drop lumber and it becomes a totally different store?" Cosmi said. "Most of the gentleman's suppliers are mine."

Twenty-five to 30 percent of the store is expected to be devoted to nursery items and 10 to 15 percent will be seasonal items. The remaining categories include lighting-electrical, paint, hardware, plumbing, cleaning supplies, small appliances, storage-home decor, clothing, auto, pet, sundries, pool-spa supplies, and a display of large appliances that can be ordered.

Plans call for overhauling the outdated facade with a cleaner, more contemporary look. The parking lot will be reconfigured so traffic flow is better.

The permit says, "The applicant is proposing to remove existing windows and much of the glass on the front and sides of the building. The plan proposes to fill in the space for the windows and doors on the sides of the building with siding and CMU block wainscot to match the existing building."

Cosmi said he plans to talk to Nel's and Meeks today. He also

plans to contact the National Hardware Association.

1,546 pounds of trash found on South Shore



Residents
clear trash
from El Dorado
Beach on
Saturday.Â Â Â
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Photo/Clean
Tahoe

By Ellen Nunes

With Saturday marking the 25th anniversary of the California Coastal Cleanup Day, residents of the South Shore did their part to ensure Lake Tahoe and its tributaries are much cleaner.

Unseasonably warm weather was enjoyed by the 146 local volunteers who ranged in age from 18 months to 74 years. They helped to move 1,546 pounds of trash and 441 pounds of recyclables from the 15 locations chosen for the three-hour

cleanup.

Past Coastal Cleanup Day data tells us that the majority of what is picked up on the South Shore is thousands of cigarette butts, and this year was no exception. Volunteers voiced their disgust for those who carelessly left them behind. Micro trash continues to be epidemic in our beautiful mountain town.

In Blackwood Meadows, an environmentally sensitive area and a hot spot for illegal dumping, 720 pounds of debris were removed. Last year 1,230 pounds was extracted, so we are seeing some improvement in this location. Trash included couches, tires, wood scraps, mattresses, doors, a bike and a bong.

With 65 percent of the cleanup sites in California reporting to the Coastal Commission, the statewide count stands at 66,550 volunteers and is expected to reach the event goal of 70,000. Those volunteers picked up 819,394 pound of trash and an additional 89,899 pounds of recyclable materials for a total of 909,294 pounds. The Coastal Commission expects to exceed 1 million pounds of trash when all of the totals are in.

Coordinating staff from the Clean Tahoe Program would like to thank Cait and Kelly from the Stateline Starbucks, who not only brought the great java, but joined in the cleanup efforts with the other 144 volunteers. With many coming from out of town to join the locals in this statewide effort, it is a wonderful example of what can be accomplished when caring individuals come together for a cause.

Ellen Nunes runs Clean Tahoe in South Lake Tahoe. She may be reached at (530) 544.4210.

California readies for fires during heat wave

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger on Monday mobilized the California Emergency Management Agency (CalEMA) and CalFire to prepare for increased wildfire potential as unseasonably hot and dry conditions are forecast for much of California this week.

Additionally, the governor directed CalOSHA to carry out the largest heat enforcement effort in its history to protect California's workers from heat-related illness during this week's high temperatures.

The National Weather Service has issued several "Red Flag Warnings" and "Fire Weather Watches" for parts of Northern and Southern California this week, warning residents about the increased fire potential created by hot temperatures, low humidity and off-shore winds. Winds were forecast to occur late Monday night into this morning and again tonight into Wednesday morning with gusts up to 35mph in the passes and canyons and local gusts up to 45 mph.

As a result of the increased fire risk potential, CalEMA has coordinated with CalFire and local agencies to identify state, federal and local firefighting resources such as fire engines, water tenders, helicopters and air tankers available to be deployed from throughout the state.

Suspect in drug deal evades

Douglas deputies



Jamall
Mansoor
Eslami

On Monday at approximately 11:40 am, investigators from the Douglas County Sheriff's Office Street Enforcement Team (DCSET) were conducting a narcotics trafficking/sales investigation on Market Street in Stateline.

During the investigation, officers attempted to arrest the involved suspect, 27 year-old Jamall Mansoor Eslami, of South Lake Tahoe. Eslami fled in a green Cadillac Deville, ramming one of the DCSET vehicles. The officer inside the vehicle was not injured.

Eslami then sped away, driving in a reckless manner on crowded streets, ultimately fleeing into South Lake Tahoe, officers said.

Eslami's vehicle was found near the Royal Bahama Motel near Stateline Beach in South Lake Tahoe.

Eslami was still on the loose when this was posted

Eslami is described as: male, 27 years-old, appearing of Middle Eastern descent, approximately 6-foot-4, 210 pounds, black hair, brown eyes.

Eslami is wanted for trafficking in a controlled substance (methamphetamine), sales of a controlled substance, assault on

a peace officer, and felony reckless driving.

Anyone with information about the possible whereabouts of Eslami is asked to call (775) 782-9905 or Secret Witness at (775) 78-CRIME.

Woman dies at Sand Harbor

The Washoe County coroners office is scheduled to perform an autopsy today on a woman who died Saturday afternoon at Sand Harbor State Park at Lake Tahoe.

According to the Washoe County Sheriff's Department, the victim was diving with an instructor in the area. When she got out of the water she began complaining of abdominal pain. She collapsed on the beach at about 3:30pm. She was pronounced dead at 4:09pm.

Her identity is not being released until her family is notified.

Put the fleece away – it could be a record breaking week



Anderson's Bicycles is all geared up for a warm fall.

By Susan Wood

Don't put away the shorts, swimsuits, garden tools, bikes or appetites for an Indian summer.

The mercury in South Lake Tahoe is expected to rise this week and may even meet or surpass the record high for Sept. 25 of 81 degrees, the National Weather Service in Reno reported Sunday.

It will definitely feel more like summer, even though the first day of fall is Tuesday.

At the very least, Tahoe residents and visitors will see temperatures continuing to stay warmer than normal. Meteorologist Gina McGuire said the forecast for this week calls for highs 10 degrees above the normal 70-degree mark.

"We've been warm this month," she said. "And we'll probably tie the record this week."

"Bring it on," sums up the response from Doug Anderson, who owns Anderson Bicycle Rental on Highway 89. The South Lake Tahoe business has been around for 31 years, so it's witnessed the ebb and flow of Mother Nature's whims.

"I aim for Halloween weekend (to close), but in the last

three years, Iâ€™ve been open until Thanksgiving,â€” he said, grinning. â€œI like this time of year. I hope we have an Indian summer.â€”

Even when the Central Valley and San Francisco Bay Area types board up their Tahoe cabins and second homes and head home, Anderson said he enjoys sitting in the warm fall sun waiting for customers.

The Bay Area may see inland temperatures hit the century mark this week, so those residents may not be through with cooling off in Tahoe yet.

Still, most people in Tahoe would be advised to bundle up at night as the regional highs will be offset by an extreme temperature differential by as much as 50 degrees on some days this week. Overnight lows are predicted to drop to the mid-30s at night.

The warm September coincides with the latest prediction from the â€œ2010 Old Farmerâ€™s Almanacâ€”, which forecasts an Indian summer as late as early November for the Intermountain region, which includes the Central Sierra Nevada Mountain range. Tahoe, which sits on the triangular corner of this region with the Pacific Northwest and Northern California, may also see a winter characterized as mild and wet.

Extremes could be the name of the game this winter in Tahoe, according to the Almanac, which boasts an 80 percent accuracy rate. Novemberâ€™s unseasonable warm temperatures are predicted to give way to much shoveling in December and power outages in January. Look for an early February welcome mat to birds and an early thaw in March may launch spring and cut winter short, the publication claims.

Even the â€œAlmanacâ€” has something to say about climate-change debate.

â€œThe prolonged low level of sunspot and space weather

activity in the early stages of Solar Cycle 24 reinforces our belief that we are at the beginning of a period of significant change,â€” it reads under the General Weather Forecast and Report section. It explains the atmosphereâ€™s gradual cooling could be offset by â€œwarming caused by increased greenhouse gases.â€”

The â€œAlmanacâ€” agrees with other climate reports that the winter of 2009-10 will experience conditions of El Nino, a tropical weather phenomenon characterized by a warming of the Pacific Ocean off the coast of South America. However, a mild El Nino should be in store.

Skiers may rejoice at the prospect of the above normal snowfall prediction for the Intermountain region by the â€œAlmanacâ€”.

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Probyn speaks out at fundraiser for step-daughter

BY MARTHA BELLISLE, Reno Gazette-Journal

Carl Probyn, step-father of the South Lake Tahoe girl kidnapped in 1991, likened the law enforcement and parole officers who oversaw the man who allegedly abducted her to the “Keystone Kops” and blasted them for failing to see three young females living in his back yard.

“These guys should feel real guilty about taking a pay check, with what she went through for 18 years,” Probyn said today at

a fund-raiser for Jaycee Lee Dugard, 29.

Read the whole story