

Fire ravishes in Tahoe

by Lark Breen

World Editor

Smoke rose into the skies above El Dorado County on Sept. 13 due to a fire that started on a slope above Pollock Pines, California. The smoke thickened and spanned a large area as the fire raged through the mountainous terrain, endangering wildlife, property, and the health of people in the Tahoe area.

Wayne Huntsman has been arrested for starting the fire. Huntsman has been charged for other crimes in the past, including assault, theft, vehicle theft, and receiving stolen property. Huntsman was charged with arson on Sept. 19 his bail is set at \$10 million.

The fire has destroyed more than 97,000 acres of land and about 80 buildings. About 2,000 firemen were fighting the fire on Oct. 1, far fewer than the 8,000 working the previous week. The effort to suppress the fire has cost more than 53 million dollars.

Besides the damage done by the actual flames, the smoke has also affected a significant number of people. School districts in the areas affected by the smoke, including the Truckee Tahoe Unified School District, (TTUSD), have considered cancelling school due to harmful air quality.

TTUSD has been releasing day by day reports of air quality with the concern that most of their schools do not have air conditioning or good air circulation. The school district declined to cancel school over the weeks that the fire has raged, but many students attending the schools, including Truckee High School sophomore Sara Grahn-Nilsson, believe that "they should have."

The air in the Tahoe area has been so polluted by the smoke that many events have been canceled. Most notable of these is the Ironman Lake Tahoe, a 140 mile triathlon that was called off only two minutes prior to the start due to poor air quality.

Recent rains have helped contain and suppress the fire significantly but also bring the danger of mud slides. So far, flooding and mudslides have not caused any damage, and the rain has allowed firefighters to contain 94 percent of the fire. Evacuations are being lifted, the smoke has nearly disappeared, and fire fighters and citizens are optimistic about the end of the fire.

One benefit of a fire this big is the sunlight at dawn and dusk. The smoke in the air refracts the light, making the sky a vibrant, fiery color at sunrise and sunset. Though the people in the Tahoe area have been choking on the smoke for the past few weeks, they also got to appreciate some truly astonishing sunsets.

(Sources: LA Times, Sacramento Bee, Tahoe Daily Tribune, Cal Fire)



courtesy wikimedia commons

BURNING DOWN TIMBER: The King fire burns up acreage in the Tahoe Basin area and creates tons of smoke.

Netflix makes large alterations

by Hyunate Byun

World Editor

Development has begun on Albright Business Park, a proposed complex of four large office buildings and the planned future site of Netflix's expansion. The construction site is located across Highway 85 and is adjacent to both the Winchester Boulevard Netflix campus and Bay Club Courtside.

The site, which was home to a combined 250,000 square feet of office space, housed ten buildings prior to the current construction. The current project, which is being headed by developer John R. Shenk, hopes to double that number to about 550,000 square feet within four large office buildings, as well as a parking garage.

Development of the site began following several years of planning. The Los Gatos Town Council initially approved the plan in 2011. However, opponents of the plan sued the developer, prompting a detailed environmental impact report.

The Los Gatos Town Council voted last April to reject the initial plan, and it wasn't until November that a compromise was finally made. The compromise limits the height of at least two of the buildings to 50 feet, places a size restriction on the complex to 485,000 feet, and mandates that the parking garage not exceed a height of 25 feet.

Netflix has signed a 10-year lease on two of the planned buildings, or about 242,500 square feet of office space, to be used for future expansion and growth. Currently, Netflix occupies 160,000 square feet of space in its headquarters owned by the Sobrato Organization, as well as 90,000 square feet in various buildings in the general vicinity.



GROWING PAINS: Netflix has outgrown its first campus and is expanding.



photos courtesy wikimedia commons

A LOVELY CAMPUS: Netflix's current campus will soon be left for a new one.

As Netflix expands in subscribers and furthers its technical reach, it has required more and more office space. In the past, its expansion problems were momentarily halted when it moved into its current office space. Even so, Netflix moved into Winchester using 95% of the building's capacity and found itself quickly needing additional space. A few months after moving into Winchester, Netflix began taking out leases on nearby buildings.

To address traffic concerns brought up by the nearby Charter Oaks neighborhood, Netflix has promised to operate a fleet of shuttles and bring lunch to employees in order to cut down on car use.

Netflix is currently among the largest taxpayers in Los Gatos and estimates that employees invest more than \$3 million annually by patronizing local businesses.

(Sources: SJ Mercury News, Los Gatos PatchSources: LA Times, Sacramento Bee, Tahoe Daily Tribune, Cal Fire)

Teachers learn at LG

by Elizabeth Monsef

News Editor

On Oct. 6, LGHS teachers participated in the third annual "Festival of Learning." This event takes place the first Monday of October each year and teachers choose three out of the two dozen professional development sessions offered. All district teachers are required to attend, but other staff members are invited or selected to participate also. Teachers attend three sessions of their choice to learn new ideas and tactics for teaching their students.

The sessions began at 8:30 after a breakfast held here at LGHS. Each session was thirty minutes long. The second session began at 9:25 and was followed by a short break time. The final session started at 10:40 and was followed by lunch. After lunch, teachers had time to reflect on what they learned and plan how they will implement some new teaching strategies into their daily class routine.

The District Technology Committee runs the "Festival of Learning," and Dan Burns, a physics teacher here at LGHS, is the chair of the committee. He runs and organizes this event and receives help from the Administration staff, The Technology Committee members, and the District Office Staff.

According to Burns, "Most of the presentations are by district teachers. We also have presentations by staff from the Santa Clara County Office of Education, San Jose State, and other experts on learning such as Caitlin Tucker." Teachers enjoy and look forward to the annual "Festival of Learning."

Burns said, "The teachers also like the idea that students get a day off between Labor Day and Thanksgiving, you have earned it!" The feedback from this event is "generally very positive" Burns says. In general, session topics include: helpful teaching ideas, how to incorporate technology into the classroom, and strategies to involve students.

This annual event encourages teachers and staff to collaborate and gives them the opportunity to work on different elements of teaching. Los Gatos also meets with Saratoga to work with teachers who teach similar classes. The "Festival of Learning" is a fantastic event at LGHS that teachers and staff hope to expand and continue as time passes.



courtesy D. Burns

STAFF SCHOOL DAY : LGHS staff learned new skills.

Hillbrook wants more students

by Rowyn van Miltenburg

National Editor

In 2012, Hillbrook School applied to the Town of Los Gatos to modify their current conditional use permit, or CUP, by increasing their current enrollment cap by 99 students. On Wed., Sept. 24 and Tues., Sept. 30, the Town held public hearings on the matter. Because both meetings were full of public comment, they had to schedule an additional meeting to come to a final decision. The final hearing was on Monday Oct. 6, where the Town decided... (I'll update this after they finally decide)

Hillbrook is a small independent private school nestled in Los Gatos' residential Marchmont neighborhood. Their current CUP caps the enrollment at 315 students, and they wish to increase this enrollment to "creating a better educational environment."

There has been much opposition to Hillbrook's proposition to modify their CUP because of the heavy traffic that Hillbrook creates in the neighborhood. Hillbrook has only one entrance, and it requires families to drive through a residential neighborhood. With 99 more students, the neighbors fear that traffic will increase.

In response to the traffic complaints, Hillbrook introduced

a bus system to trim down the number of cars going to and from the school. The school also highly encourages families to carpool, walk, and bike to school. However, even with these attempts to cut down on the amount of traffic, neighbors say there is still too much congestion.

Hillbrook also argues that an increase in enrollment will not only foster a better environment on their campus, but it will also benefit Los Gatos as a whole. The Los Gatos Public schools have recently seen a rise in student population due to new housing developments. Hillbrook claims they have space on their campus for kids in the Los Gatos area, but they have had to turn potential students down because of their current enrollment cap.

Many in opposition to Hillbrook's expansion do not believe that an increase in students would benefit Los Gatos because many Hillbrook students reside in other towns and cities. They believe that students driving from outside of Los Gatos increases the already growing traffic caused by the rise in housing developments.

Hillbrook principal Mark Silver believes that Hillbrook's proposal "represents a long-term solution that will be good for the neighborhood, the Town of Los Gatos, and the school." (Sources: hillbrook.org, Los Gatos Town Council)



AN INCREASE IN POPULATION: Hillbrook Elementary school held a meeting where they urged the town of Los Gatos to allow larger classes at the local school.

V. Wallerstein