

An airliner  
flies southward  
above David  
Caine's Lake  
Arrowhead  
residence.  
(Photo by  
David  
Caine)

## Air traffic above Lake Arrowhead returns

By **DOUGLAS W. MOTLEY**  
Senior Writer

Airliner and cargo plane traffic above Lake Arrowhead has returned to the area over the past several months. This despite the Federal Aviation Administration's announcement last November of a new flight path that, beginning Dec. 5, was to have rerouted air traffic over the less populated Heaps Peak area.

This major concession by the FAA came as a result of pressure brought by local environmental groups, as well as Quiet Skies Lake Arrowhead and Friends of Lake Arrowhead.

That the FAA reneged on its promise has infuriated local residents, who complain of dangerously low-flying aircraft, loud noise and lost sleep.

"They come in from north to south very low over Cedar Ridge at, I would estimate, about 1,000 feet above the lake. They are very noisy and they wake me up at night," Cedar Glen resident John Matthews told *The Alpine Mountaineer* last Friday.

The battle between Lake Arrowhead residents and the FAA had its genesis in the spring of 2017, when a series of community meetings were held in Blue Jay to discuss how the community could best persuade the FAA to discontinue its disruptive flight path above Lake Arrowhead. As more and more people showed up at these meetings, expressing their anguish, the meetings were shifted in the spring of 2018 to a larger venue at the Lake Arrowhead Resort, where representatives from the FAA were invited to express their side of the ongoing conflict.

Some 300 Lake Arrowhead area residents, weary from the 24-hour-a-day procession of cargo jets and airliners flying at near treetop level above their community, were not pleased when they heard FAA Regional Director Dennis Roberts' proposal to shift the UPS cargo plane landing path to Ontario International Airport (ONT) 2.1 miles east of Lake Arrowhead between the hours of 11 p.m. and

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## A distance learning alternative: Rim unveils Home Choice

By **ZEV BLUMENFELD**  
Staff Writer

The first month of the Rim of the World Unified School District's fall semester has concluded. For teachers, families and students, it's been a beginning marked by change, adaptation and sometimes frustration.

Webcam lessons and app-based learning have replaced in-person interaction and the nostalgic smell of dusty classrooms. Some parents blame distance learning for their kids' unmanageable workloads and excess time in front of the computer screen.

But, for other parents, the 2020-2021 school year signifies an even greater change — a stronger involvement in their child's education.

While most Rim of the World students are enrolled in distance learning, some families opted to participate in a new program known as Home Choice —

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Zoey and Jacob make shapes and 3D objects. (Photo courtesy of Erica Griffith)

## The Treasure Box celebrates new location

By **RHEA-FRANCES TETLEY**  
Staff Writer

The 5 p.m. ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new location of The Treasure Box & Co. on the Friday evening of Labor Day weekend was very successful with several members of the Crestline-Lake Gregory Chamber of Commerce in attendance, including Chamber President Louis Boehle, Espie Murray, John Short and others.

The evening saw over 100 people visit the new location at 23621 Manzanita Drive in Crestline during the evening festivities highlighted with music by The By-Products playing until 8:30 p.m. in the playground area.



Gary Lopez and his mother cut the ribbon for the relocation grand opening of The Treasure Box last Friday evening, which was followed by a socially distanced concert in the playground by The By-Products.



A wide variety of antiques and other useful items can be found at the recently reopened Treasure Box in Crestline. (Photos by Rhea-Frances Tetley)

The Treasure Box has an outside community garden area where many concessionaires showcase their products. The Treasure Box has basic living essentials, gifts, clothing, rocks and minerals and cottage-made items like jams, jellies, pickles and beef jerky, plus a whole room of games, toys and educational items for children, antiques, almost antiques and much more. Each concessionaire has different items.

This month, Linda Nies has loaned some local items for a showcase of Crestline historical items that are fascinating to explore. The Treasure Box has opened in the former Crestline Presbyterian Church's preschool building that looks like a castle, which has been used to advertise Crestline Village since Charles

S. Mann built it in the 1930s.

The Treasure Box was in the process of relocating when the COVID-19 lockdown was announced and this older building, which has been vacant for many years, needed a lot of rehabilitation, so it took extra time for the building to be able to reopen.

"I am honored so many came to the grand opening, joined in the toast and hopefully will support the many vendors who sell their items in The Treasure Box," said owner Gary Lopez. "I am grateful I can offer them a storefront where they can sell their wares and grow their plants in the community garden. I believe and hope others do, too, and I believe that this is a worthy repurposing of this historical Crestline building."



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a homeschool program managed by the school district.

Unlike distance learning, the 2020-2021 implementation of Home Choice was planned long before the COVID-19 shutdown occurred, according to the Rim of the World Unified School District 2020-2021 school year strategic plan.

David Nygren, the district’s coordinator of alternative programs and principal at Mountain High School, said Home Choice had been developing since the 2018-2019 school year. Administrators sought to offer an alternative schooling method after they noticed many families switching to a homeschool curriculum.

Nygren said he initially expected an enrollment of 20 students. At press time, 95 children in grades kindergarten through sixth are partaking in the trial run.

*The Alpine Mountaineer* interviewed three families in the spring semester to understand the benefits and challenges of distance learning, and learn how they were coping with the sudden changes due to COVID-19. Two of these families are now participating in Home Choice.

**PARENTS BECOME TEACHERS**

“I need you guys to, please, independently work in your room and I will come check on you when I’m done,” parent Stephanie Kritz said to her children. A chorus of “Yes, mom,” came from the background.



The whole pod - Jacob and Zoey, Alexis and Leo, Oakleigh and Brioney - doing their work under the guidance of parents Robert Campos and Lauryl Lane.

Lexi and Jacob Kritz, first-grade and transitional kindergarten students enrolled at Valley of Enchantment Elementary School (VOE), are two of the students learning through Home Choice.

“Aye-yai-yai,” she said, returning to the phone call. “Every time I get on the phone, they want to be on the phone with me,” she continued, laughing.

The scenario is not uncommon nowadays as families spend more time together. This is especially true for those participating in Home Choice as parents handle the daily teaching and students meet with a certified teacher only once per week.

Despite the extra responsibilities of being both a teacher and a mother, Kritz said Home Choice was the obvious decision over distance learning.

But, with the added demand parents face, why have they elected to try a new program instead of the teacher-led distance learning?

Kritz experienced trepidation toward distance learning watching the district’s planning over the summer.

“As much as they tried to do their best, it was very disorganized,” she said. “They should have been planning for distance learning instead of planning to open.”

To gauge the likelihood of parents sending their kids to school, the district sent surveys to families in May. They reported over 55 percent of families requested in-person learning come the fall semester.

While Kritz said the district’s efforts of seeking community feedback were commendable, she felt it stymied the process of a smooth distance learning rollout.

“I know they like to have community involvement but I think planning to open 100 percent based on the survey they had mailed — with no communication with the state about the waiver they had submitted — was kind of like wishing on hopes and dreams,” Kritz said.

On July 17, a state mandate thwarted any potential of in-person schooling within the Rim of the World Unified School District. The district automatically placed families who had not enrolled in Home Choice into distance learning.

“We had virtually two weeks to come up with the distance learning program,” Nygren said. “We had a contingency plan, but we didn’t put teeth into it.”

After the school year began on Aug. 12, complaints about the rollout began spreading over community social media pages. Some of these included faulty Zoom meeting IDs which resulted in kids missing entire lessons, faulty Chromebooks and slow Internet. Parents also voiced concern about the long amounts of screen time their kids were exposed to each day.

“A lot of what I’m seeing on Facebook and the other families that I heard from were very frustrated because we didn’t have information, teachers [weren’t assigned] and we didn’t have schedules up until a day or two before school was actually supposed to start,” Kritz said.

Distance learning students must adhere to a schedule much like they would during a regular school year — attending daily lessons. Home Choice participants meet with a designated teacher once per week, affording parents and students greater schedule flexibility.

“The benefit to the parent is they get to teach it on their own time. If they want to teach Monday through Friday, if they want to do it on the weekend, they have the freedom to do that,” Nygren said.

Jeffery Yoder, a sixth-grade student enrolled at Mary Putnam Henck Intermediate School, has also transitioned from distance learning during the spring to Home Choice.

“On Thursdays, he meets with his teacher, he does his assessment, and she grades his work,” said Jeffery’s mother, Sommer Yoder. “I just have to make sure he does his work and I help him as needed.”

Jeffery accesses his assignments through Google Classroom and uses various textbooks and online content. Jeffery’s father, Jeff, said a typical weekly workload may include doing 20 pages of history and math homework, reading one middle-grade novel and writing a book report, and other language arts. Physical education is also required.

Jeffery is honing his self-defense skills in jujitsu. Jeff said he and Jeffery often spar together and learned pressure points and tactical grabs.

Like Kritz, Sommer found the flexibility of Home Choice appealing.

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Sommer trains managers for a living, and said she found her skills transferable to teaching Jeffery. Though she said she’s been working virtually, she works full-time. Therefore, distance learning was an inadequate option.

“I work at home throughout the day, and I couldn’t afford to take that time to make sure Jeffery’s sitting in his class,” Sommer said.

The flexibility also means more time is allocated to enrichment activities that they began in the spring. The Yoders have continued their daily family reading, and Jeffery has tagged along with his dad on jobs.

## A TEACHER’S PERSPECTIVE

But families are not the only ones benefiting. Karla Lewis is one of the three teachers managing Home Choice. She said she’s already noticed children excelling

academically and parents taking more ownership in their children’s education.

Her week consists of creating lesson plans for multiple grade levels and teaching tips for the parents. For parents having difficulty navigating Google Classroom, Lewis said she writes the entire lesson plan. And for those without printers, she prints hard copies.

“Being a classroom teacher of 24 years, I wasn’t completely sure about this program. But I’m in love with it. I have more personal relationships with my parents and students,” Lewis said.

Though she admitted there has been a lot of work, she mentioned cherishing the enhanced teacher-parent dynamic of Home Choice.

“It’s a team effort now,” she continued. “These parents are working harder than I’ve ever seen them work.”

## POD LEARNING

One potential issue Home Choice presents is the blurring role of parent and teacher. Erica Griffith, mother of first-grader Leo and kindergartner Zoey, recalled an exchange with her son.

“He said to me, ‘Can’t you just be my mom again?’” Griffith said.

Kritz and Griffith brainstormed a method to compartmentalize learning from home life. Using Kritz’s mother’s

home, Leo and Zoey join Lexi, Jacob and one other family to form a learning group known as a “pod.”

The six parents perform teaching duties on a rotating basis. This allows the other parents to focus on their work obligations or take a momentary reprieve from parenting. But, as Griffith discovered, it also eases the parent-child relationship. Sometimes kids won’t listen to their parents. But Griffith said their pod has had luck with parents teaching kids from other families.

On Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays, Lexi and Jacob Kritz travel to their grandmother’s home where the pod meets. The class of six begins around 9:30 a.m. and usually lasts three to four hours.

Weekly meetings are held with a teacher through Zoom. All other correspondence is through Google Classroom and a platform called ClassDojo.

They have recess and lunchtime. The pod dedicates Thursdays to field trips and activities, like their most recent “Weather in a Jar” project. Friday is often a day off. Most days two parents teach — one for the kindergarteners and one for the first graders.

“I think it’s important for the kids to have a neutral learning environment,” Kritz said. “At home, we have so many different distractions. They know when they go over there it’s school time. When they come home, they can have fun.”

The parent teaching group has made



Leo and Alexis give a thumbs-up while working on math.  
*(All photos courtesy of Erica Griffith)*

it easier for the kids as well. The pod has created friendly competition between the kids participating. Griffith said she likes this aspect.

## LOOKING AHEAD

The district plans to continue Home Choice for the foreseeable future. Nygren said the Home Choice curriculum is virtually the same as distance learning. Both learning methods use the same books and computer programs.

Nygren noted that, if in-person learning becomes possible, those enrolled in Home Choice would be able to participate in activities beyond the core curriculum, like music and art.


In addition, Nygren said, they hope to open a few more Home Choice sections to meet the growing demand. However, this will depend upon the district moving teachers from other grades into Home Choice.

“I was anticipating a lot of hang-ups, but so far everything has been really positive,” Nygren said. “We’re feeling great about the program.”




A Home Choice learning pod makes rain clouds in a jar as they learn about weather. From bottom left, clockwise: Zoey, Oakleigh, Jacob, Brioney, Alexis and Leo.

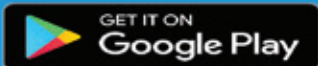
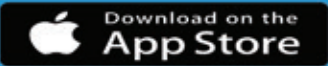
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