

For tech elite a second home is the norm

By Richard Scheinin, Mercury News

CARMEL — The minute Diane Flynn leaves her Menlo Park driveway, the vacation begins. She listens to TED Talks and music, calls her daughters, and arrives in about two hours at Santa Lucia Preserve, driving up, up and up the twisting roadway, passing through stands of valley oak and coastal redwood as the vistas open up in front of her — pristine green canyons, rolling for miles — before she finally pulls into the driveway of her second home.

Santa Lucia Preserve is a gated community that doubles as a wilderness preserve on 20,000 acres adjacent to Carmel Valley and Pebble Beach. With custom homes selling for between \$3.6 million and \$11.8 million, it also is one of the many getaways — from the Central Coast up through Napa Valley, Sonoma County and Lake Tahoe — that lure affluent Silicon Valley families looking for summers and weekends away from the brutal work routines of the tech economy.

The National Association of Realtors reports record sales of vacation and second homes across the U.S.: roughly 21 percent of all homes sold in 2014 fell into that category. In California, where real estate prices are through the roof, second homes accounted for only 5.3 percent of all home sales in 2015, according to the California Association of Realtors. That still translates into substantial numbers in Northern California: more than \$1 billion in residential home sales last year in North Lake Tahoe alone.

Read the whole story

Teen hurt in crash on Mt. Rose Highway

A 17-year-old was seriously injured this morning in a single-vehicle accident on Mount Rose Highway.

According to the Nevada Highway Patrol, the teen's pickup was airborne for about 100 feet before hitting a tree. He was taken to Renown Medical Center in Reno with serious injuries.

The accident occurred about 8:40am April 4 near Joy Lake Road.

The cause of the crash is under investigation.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Workshop to focus on preparing for the end

Lake Tahoe Presbyterian Church is hosting an end of life matters seminar.

It will be April 30 from 9am-1:30pm in the family room of the South Lake Tahoe church.

This seminar focuses on the preparation and resources available to create a satisfying final chapter in one's life. Topics will include:

- Facing mortality with courage and hope. Distinguishing the possible line between an abundant life and prolonging life.
- Understanding wills, trusts, health care directives, power of attorney and other crucial documents.
- Examining healthcare realities that impact end of life, including medical provisions and the new death with dignity legislation.
- Considering loved ones, and the possible burden of care giving and decision-making.
- Leaving behind a legacy through example, wisdom and opportunity.

A light lunch will be served. For reservations, call 775.392.1715.

High school students sought for art contest

The Western Governors' Association is sponsoring the Celebrate the West regional art competition for high school students.

Entrants must create original two-dimensional artwork inspired by their state or informed by living in the West. Students may draw ideas from a variety of sources, including state history, landmarks, natural resources, national parks and monuments, people, communities, and culture.

Winning artists will receive cash prizes and their works will be displayed at an upcoming WGA Governors' meeting, as well as on the WGA website.

Students will submit a digital copy of their entry via email

by April 30. The rules are **online**.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



. The May issue of *Bike* magazine has a multi-page story about mountain biking in the Carson City area.

- Grand Sierra in Reno is the first casino in Northern Nevada to debut the "House of Cards" slot machines.
 - Nevada Department of Wildlife officials at the end of March stocked the Truckee River with about 6,000 rainbow trout.
 - Here are the El Dorado-Tahoe and Sierra roadwork schedules from Caltrans for the week.
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Henley to make stop in Stateline

Don Henley will be returning to Lake Tahoe this summer – this time as a solo act.

Known mostly as one of the lead singers for the Eagles as well as the drummer for the band, Henley has been on his own for years. The band has sporadically gotten back together, with the last stop **in Tahoe in 2014**. With the passing of Glenn Frey this year, even if there were another reunion, it won't ever be the same Eagles.

Henley will take the stage at Harveys Outdoor Concert Series on July 24.

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Spike



Trinity

Spike and Trinity are 7-year-old siblings who are looking for a new home together. Both have declawed front paws, and they have lived with dogs. They are both friendly cats with beautiful fur. Their adoption fee has been paid by a kind donor.

Spike and Trinity are spayed/neutered, microchipped, tested for FIV, and vaccinated. They are at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many other dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes. Go to the Tahoe animal shelter's Facebook page to see photos and descriptions of all pets at the shelter.

Call 530.573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet.

For spay-neuter assistance for South Tahoe residents, go **online**.

– Karen Kuentz

Age not a detractor for 90-

year-old SLT resident



Ken Myron does not let age dictate what he does.
Photo/Jessie Marchesseau

By Jessie Marchesseau

Skiing isn't necessarily for the young, just the young at heart. And at 90 years old, South Lake Tahoe resident Ken Myron still qualifies.

Though we had never met in person, when I saw the small-framed man at the bottom of Heavenly's tram with bright orange skis and a patch on his jacket reading "90+ Ski Club," I knew I had found my ski buddy for the day.

On the ride up, Myron explained that he didn't even take up skiing until he moved to Lake Tahoe from San Diego in 1989. He was 64.

"My wife thought I was crazy," he recalled. But that didn't

stop him.

At the age of 73 he skied Gunbarrel 20 times nonstop. At 75, he skied more than a million vertical feet at Sierra, an accomplishment for which, as only the third person to do it that season, he was awarded a free plane ticket to anywhere in the U.S. He continued to rack up about 40 ski days a year until, at 87, injuries started to put a damper on his ski time.

"I think anything he does, he does according to his personality," said Vince Lancey, a friend and ski partner of Myron for more than 25 years. "He does it to the Nth degree. Just 110 percent."

We picked a sunny spring day to explore the mountain together, taking several hours to do what I like to call the Heavenly lift tour. Making our way from California to Nevada, we skied Powderbowl, Canyon, Sky, Comet, Dipper and back again.

Myron was happy to act as tour guide, leading us down mostly groomers. He stopped skiing trees and bumps 13 years ago, he explained, after going blind in his right eye. That seemed like a good idea to me, and I was more than happy to stick to the main runs.

On the lift rides, Myron shared stories about his life, his family, skiing and weight lifting. All are obvious passions of his.

He still remembers his first day skiing. He went to Kirkwood with two of his sons who promptly took him up Chair 11 and over to a black diamond run with the theory that he was a good water-skier, so he would surely be good at this, too. The elder Myron stubbornly removed his skis and walked most of the way down. However, he was not deterred. Once at the bottom, he got on an easier chair where he met a very nice, and experienced, 6-year-old (he'd been skiing since he was 3 and was quite confident in his abilities). The boy became Myron's

first ski instructor. They met up each morning for the next four days. He would follow the boy around the mountain, attempting to emulate his every move.

This style of learning became a habit for Myron. Even today he likes to pick out good skiers on the hill and follow them, trying to ski how they ski. He is especially keen on following ski patrollers.

Lancey said they would frequently watch skilled skiers from the chairlift and analyze their techniques. Both being beginners at the same time, Myron and Lancey were constantly looking to improve their skills, often taking turns following each other down whatever line their partner chose.

"He is fearless. Still is that way," Lancey said. "What he attempts to do even now is amazing to me."

Lancey attributes some of his own skiing abilities to following his fearless friend around the mountain.

Myron still displays that same old fearlessness and drive to improve. Twice during our ski day, he found himself on the snow. He just got back up again, brushed off the snow, laughed and kept on going.

"I didn't plan on going on my butt," he said on the final chair ride of the afternoon. "But it reminded me: don't lean back, gotta lean forward."

He's had some dramatic crashes over the years, suffering a couple of concussions and partially tearing his ACL. Once he was hit from the side and completely knocked out at Sierra, only to wake up later in the hospital with a \$43,000 bill and a story about a helicopter.



Staying active is important is important to Ken Myron. Photo/Jessie Marchesseau

But he has more good stories than bad. Like the time he was getting on the chair at Sierra and a “little cutie” rode up on her snowboard and gave him a high-five. He asked if she would like to ski with an “old guy” (he was maybe in his 70s at the time). The pair took a run after which she said to him with an air of surprise, “You ski fast!” After another run she invited him to join her in the halfpipe, an offer which he graciously declined, and the two parted ways. That “little cutie” was a young Jamie Anderson.

Myron has acquired plenty of ski buddies over the years, some close to his own age, others younger. He sometimes skis with his daughter, Sandy, who also lives in South Lake, or his three sons or grandchildren when they come to visit. He also spends plenty of time skiing on his own, enjoying the fresh air, the scenery and the general physical exertion of the sport.

“Being active has kept me alive,” he said.

And skiing is only part of his workout regime. In the summer,

you'll find him swinging away at Bijou Golf Course. He also lifts weights at Sierra Athletic club three to four times a week, and is adamant that it's an important part of a healthy lifestyle for anyone. He could leg press 950 pounds until he was 78, and can still curl 70 pounds "no problem."

He often takes his wife, Irene, to the gym with him, too. The couple will be celebrating their 70th wedding anniversary this May. She has been with him from their native Canada, down to Southern California and up to Tahoe. They still reside in the house their sons built for them 20 years ago.

His sons, daughter and grandchildren are the only thing Myron likes to talk about more than sports and fitness. He exudes a genuine pride in his family and their respective accomplishments, careers and successes.

We ended our day on the mountain as many ski buddies do: rehashing the day's adventures and telling stories over pizza and sodas, agreeing to do it again soon.

"I don't think I've ever known anyone quite like him," Lancey said.

Neither have I.

Opinion: EDC wants spin doctor to tell its 'truth'

By Larry Weitzman

County government is not on sale like a gallon of milk at the local grocery, although many residents think if you have enough money, then maybe it is. In the past few years' things

haven't been going well in El Dorado County government.

Our county has had many problems, especially in the hiring of some high level management people, the failure to do serious background checks, the public's distaste for the recent 15 percent raise, unnecessary additional hiring, and the failure of the county administration to do its job in a timely manner, such as the utter and complete failure to transfer property tax revenues during fire department annexations and its most blatant failure, the inability to timely file Mitigation Fee Act five-year Nexus studies thereby jeopardizing more than \$30 million of EDC money. A lawsuit is currently in progress regarding the MFA failures. These are only a few county failures.



Larry Weitzman

Larry Combs, the interim CAO, has a solution. He wants to hire a "spin doctor," otherwise known as a public information officer. A PIO becomes a buffer between the public inquiries and direct communications between county officials and the public, like a lawyer protecting his client from direct communications, or a press secretary protecting a politician. Ex-CAO Terry Daly tried this once before about two years ago when she hired a public relations firm to protect her and the BOS when Daly had the BOS issue a public relations statement prepared by the PR firm. The 900-word press release tried to tell the public how great a job the CAO and BOS were doing in a series of half-truths. That was a complete waste of a \$25,000 contract. Daly soon become an embarrassment and was let go a few months later.

Now with the roads of our county failing apart, the BOS last month on a 3-2 vote stopped general fund road maintenance with Brian Veerkamp, Sue Novasel and Mike Ranalli voting no against a Shiva Frentzen motion to reinstate such general fund road funding (for a second time). The same gang of three supervisors also voted down (again for the second time) the policy of requiring of the CAO to prepare five-year budget projections.

But that gang of three (minus one) Supervisors (Veerkamp, Novasel and Ron Mikulaco) in a more recent vote on March 22 voted 3-2 to raise county fees (taxes) by about a million dollars annually (Frentzen and Ranalli voted no). However, after the vote, Mikulaco claims he voted "no" on the fees and the resolution and minutes have yet to be signed by the chairman of the BOS who happens to be Mikulaco. The clerk of the BOS says he watched the video over and over again and says it sure looks like it was a 3-2 vote for increasing the fees. I agree as I watched the video several times. There will be more to come on this.

While salaries and benefits have increased by a total of at least \$77 million in the last three years because of 15 percent salary raises, increasing benefits costs and new hiring, the excuse you will hear from EDC officials is that we haven't raised county fees in six years. But the real reason is the EDC BOS has created a situation of continuous deficits in that with longevity raises and the skyrocketing expense of benefits, revenues will never catch up. It's in the mid-year budget report. CAO Combs says we have no general fund money for road maintenance, EDC's No. 2 priority.

Something has gotta' give and that's your wallets. But that's not all. Residents are complaining about road maintenance and one of the responses demonstrates why EDC needs a spokesperson after I excerpt the email of EDC's director of transportation in response to an inquiry on why our road maintenance is not getting done (think of the tax hike above). "Road maintenance

is accomplished using road fund which is funded through gasoline taxes and while the cost of gasoline being low is good for the consumer, the amounting of funding for road maintenance within the county has fallen substantially."

Doesn't this high level guy know that state gasoline taxes are a fixed amount per gallon (about 41 cents)? Gasoline use is down slightly because of more economical cars, but gas prices have almost nothing to do with gasoline taxes, but it could have an effect on sales taxes, which are not gasoline taxes. The fed charges a flat 18.4 cents per gallon as well.

Then he goes on to say, "One alternative that you may consider is having your neighbors ban together and create a special assessment district to maintain the neighborhood's roadway infrastructure." In other words, he is telling the concerned taxpayer he can raise his own and his neighbors' taxes to do something the county is already obligated to do. While the director didn't know his subject very well (understandable as he was hired by another incompetent, Kim Kerr, with no significant background checks), a PIO would have never told the truth that you should raise your own taxes (because the county is using all its money to pay for me and the rest of the county employees. If you don't believe how well we are paid, just check it out on transparentcalifornia.com). This is the same department that messed up the purchase of two \$430K snowplows two years ago and now wants to raise the taxes of the residents in Lake Tahoe.

For the cost of a \$150,000 plus PIO, we could hire two road maintenance workers, put them in one of our many maintenance trucks, and send them out every day to fill potholes. But those guys wouldn't be able to cover up EDC incompetence, which is the purpose of a PIO.

We talk of accountability and transparency, which needs to be complete. A PIO is nothing more than a shield whose sole purpose is to hide the truth or spins it for public

consumption and more important adds a layer of opaque glass between county officials and the public. The county is full of corruption and misdeeds and that's why they need a PIO, it's to protect themselves, not help county residents. If the county were doing a good job, which many of the rank and file employees try to do every day, they wouldn't need a spin doctor to tell us how things are wonderful and rosy. Next thing you know is that they will hire an ad agency. Our county needs a PIO like we need another Larry Combs, Terri Daly and Kim Kerr and/or the gang of three. And this list could go on.

Larry Weitzman is a resident of Rescue.

Resolution in FBI-Apple case prolongs larger legal battle

By Brandon Bailey, AP

SAN FRANCISCO – The FBI's victory in breaking into a San Bernardino killer's iPhone without Apple's help merely prolongs a battle over how far the government can go to examine private messages, photos and other files.

"There's a clash of values and interests that I think will continue," said Ed Black, head of Computer and Communications Industry Association, a trade group whose members include Google, Facebook and Microsoft.

Federal prosecutors have appealed a court ruling that said Apple doesn't have to help them extract data from another iPhone in a New York drug case. Speaking in general, the Justice Department said it will continue seeking digital

evidence, “either with cooperation from relevant parties or through the court system when cooperation fails.”

After finding its own way to access files on the San Bernardino iPhone, the Justice Department said it no longer needs a court order to force Apple to remove safeguards against guessing that iPhone’s passcode. That means Magistrate Sheri Pym won’t be ruling on whether a centuries-old law, known as the All Writs Act, provided legal authority for compelling Apple’s assistance.

Some in the tech industry worry that authorities will now try to pursue a smaller company – one without the financial and legal resources that Apple had – to win a favorable legal precedent that authorities could then use to pressure other firms – including heavyweights like Apple.

“When you’re a company of five people, you don’t have a general counsel’s office. You have a card table that everyone sits and codes at,” said Morgan Reed, executive director of a tech industry group known as ACT, which represents software application developers.

Although the Justice Department repeatedly insisted that its request for Apple’s help applied only to the San Bernardino iPhone, Apple said having to rewrite its iPhone software would make all phones less secure and open the door to more demands from government authorities, both in the United States and other countries.

Tech companies say they turn over the customer data they have, when faced with a legal court order. But many companies are increasingly using encryption and other safeguards that put at least some customer data out of their reach. Companies say they’re determined to protect customers’ privacy against unwarranted intrusion.

On the flip side, today’s popular smartphones contain a wealth of information about their users – who they talk to, where

they travel, what they view online – which authorities can use to prosecute suspects, unravel plots and identify accomplices.

“Every case is now a cyber investigation,” said Ed McAndrew, a former federal cybercrimes prosecutor now in private practice. “You’re going to have electronic devices and technology and online storage in virtually every case.”

State and federal authorities in several jurisdictions have confirmed they would like to get access to encrypted smartphones seized in a variety of criminal investigations. In at least a dozen pending cases, the government has cited the same All Writs Act as legal authority to compel Apple’s cooperation.

The FBI might be able to apply the same forensic technique it used with the San Bernardino iPhone, but it’s not clear if that will work with newer iPhones that have added security features, said Jonathan Zdziarski, an independent computer forensics expert. The San Bernardino iPhone was a 5C model, which largely had 2012 hardware, although it had a recent version of the iPhone software.

Late Wednesday, the FBI agreed to help an Arkansas prosecutor unlock an iPhone and iPod belonging to two teenagers accused of killing a couple. What is unclear is whether the FBI – which already had the ability to get data from some phones – is using the same techniques as in San Bernardino.

Meanwhile, the government’s authority under the All Writs Act remains in dispute. Any decision in the pending New York case will likely be appealed again, said Fred Cate, a law professor and fellow at the Indiana University Center for Applied Cybersecurity Research. “There’s no question that will be up in the air until the Supreme Court rules on it,” he added.

In the San Bernardino case, most of Apple’s biggest competitors – including Google, Facebook and Microsoft – filed court briefs on Apple’s behalf. Representatives from those

companies didn't respond to requests for comment this week. But Black, the trade group head, said companies recognize the importance access to information is to law enforcement and national security.

But he said many in the tech industry believe authorities went too far by trying to force Apple to write software that would override the security features of its own products.

Members of Congress have discussed legislation on both ends of the spectrum – either to require tech companies' cooperation or to limit law enforcement authority to compel companies' help. The latest case could spur Congress to act, though Black and others don't believe that likely given legislative gridlock on other issues.

That means these battles are likely to recur in court instead.

In a statement this week, the Justice Department said, "It remains a priority for the government to ensure that law enforcement can obtain crucial digital information to protect national security and public safety."

Apple responded by saying it will assist law enforcement in at least some ways as it has in the past. But the company added, "we will continue to increase the security of our products as the threats and attacks on our data become more frequent and more sophisticated."