

Mark MacKay Band to play at Stateline

Mark MacKay Band headlines the March 17 FNCTN show at Lakeview Loft (above Dart Liquor) in Stateline. He is one part blues rocker and one part country picker.

The Roemers, the West Shore family band, will kick off the music with original blues and funk along with classic rock covers.

A special guest disc jockey to keep the dance moves going until 4am

Doors open at 8pm, with music beginning at 9m. Admission is \$10 in advance and \$15 at the door. Tickets may be purchased at Tahoe Hemp Company or **online**.

Ganong in top 10 in downhill

By USSA

KVITFJELL, Norway – After a short delay, the fog cleared in Norway to leave a bluebird sky and perfect track for Steven Nyman (Sundance, Utah) to take his third Audi FIS Ski World Cup downhill podium in three races, finishing third.

“I skied really well and I’m happy with how I’m feeling on my skis and my movement and the continued podiums,” said Nyman after the race. “Three in a row, that’s kind of cool!”

Even with a bobble at the top, Nyman quickly made up time, nailing an aggressive line to take first from the early leader

Canadian Manuel Osborne-Paradis. But it wasn't quite enough to keep the lead, with Dominik Paris of Italy squeaking out his second downhill win in two races and 24-year-old Frenchman Valentin Giraud Moine surprising the fans to take second.

"It's funny. Every race day I've been really nervous. I have to settle myself down and focus on the necessities," said Nyman. "I know everything is working right—I know my body is right; I just have to perform."

Behind Nyman, Travis Ganong (Squaw Valley) cracked the top 10 in his first race back after taking a few weeks off to nurse a nagging knee injury from earlier this season, taking eighth. Marco Sullivan (Squaw Valley) started his 105 World Cup downhill to take 18th. Andrew Weibrecht (Lake Placid, N.Y.) was 20th and Tommy Biesemeyer (Keene, N.Y.) 36th.

Get ready to spring forward 1 hour

Before going to bed tonight, remember to turn the clocks forward one hour.

Daylight-saving times begins March 13 at 2am.

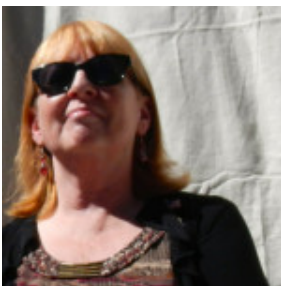
This means the evenings will be lighter longer.

State complaint filed against SLT councilwoman

By Kathryn Reed

A formal complaint has been filed with the Fair Political Practices Commission against South Lake Tahoe City Councilwoman JoAnn Conner.

The allegation stems from Conner's participation in the city's **parade policy discussion** at the last council meeting because her business is a beneficiary of that policy.



JoAnn Conner

Conner at the March 1 meeting referenced a letter from the FPPC that said there was no conflict.

That letter dated Dec. 12, 2012, was sent to then City Attorney Patrick Enright from Jack Woodside, FPPC senior counsel. Enright had inquired about Conner's potential conflict to produce a parade in the city while being on the council, as well if there would be a conflict with her obtaining the necessary permits from the city. The advice was that those things did not present a conflict.

The letter, though, goes on to say, "A conflict of interest may exist only if an official will make, participate in making, or influence a government decision. (Section 87100; Regulation 18700(b)(2).)"

Making a decision includes voting, which is what happened last meeting. Until that meeting it did not appear Conner violated the FPPC conflict of interest law.

Conner did not return a phone call.

Brooke Laine filed the complaint against Conner. The two at one time were on the council together.

"This is the most egregious violation of the law that I have seen in my 20 years of being involved in politics," Laine told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Laine is adamant public policy is created for the betterment of the community, not for elected officials to profit by, whether that is financially or in some other way.

Conner earlier this month said her business does not profit from the parades, but that she puts them on for charities. However, in documentation Laine filed with the FPPC Conner multiple times on Facebook states how if she were not able to put on the Fourth of July parade, this would hurt her business.

Council members receive regular training in ethics and the Brown Act – California's open meeting law, so it's not like any member could say they were unaware of the law or potential conflicts.

"Her breach of all of those laws and her minimizing those laws is atrocious," Laine said.

The FPPC letter went on to say, "In addition to the prohibition against making or participating in making a governmental decision, the conflict-of-interest provisions of the Act also prohibit a public official from influencing a governmental decision when the decision will have a reasonably foreseeable material financial effect on the official's economic interests."

It will be up to the FPPC's enforcement division to review the complaint and make a finding. If the FPPC determines wrongdoing did occur, then disciplinary action would be handed down.

"Things range from an advisory letter, which says we don't have sufficient evidence to prove a violation, but we advise you to be careful about this type of situation, here are the laws, facts, etc. The second next step up would be a warning letter, which is a finding of a violation but is not considered serious enough to warrant a fine. A warning letter is, however, considered a prior if there are future violations, and will be a factor in future penalties," Jay Wierenga with the FPPC told *Lake Tahoe News*. "Then you get into the level of fines ... usually ranging from a start in the low hundreds up to the \$5,000 per (violation). Penalties are based on a number of factors, including complexity of the case, seriousness of the violation, harm to the public like was vital information withheld right before an election that could've affected the outcome."

Opinion: A better plan for the Stateline area

Publisher's note: *This first ran in the March 2016 issue of the Tahoe Mountain News and is reprinted with permission.*

By Taylor Flynn

I'll come right out and say it. I'm opposed to the loop road.

But it's not because I'm a naysayer – it's because I'm an optimist.



Taylor Flynn

It's because I think there are better solutions for our community and for Lake Tahoe.

But before I get to the answers, let me first hit on a few points where I believe the loop road proposal falls short.

For one, I don't think the Powers That Be are being forthcoming about development plans involving open space tied to the loop road, especially the Edgewood Mountain property that I discussed last month.

Another is that the loop road would essentially barricade the mountain from the town with a fast-moving, noisy, four-lane freeway. This, at a time when we are trying to enhance recreation and connect our town to the outdoors with the Van Sickle Campground, hiking trails and other recreational activities up on Heavenly.

Third, as we all know, there are huge obstacles and problems associated with putting a freeway through a residential neighborhood: lost housing, lost property tax revenue, eminent domain, traffic impacts to Pioneer Trail and negative impacts to the remaining neighborhood.

Fourth, loop roads tend to work in directing traffic around aesthetically pleasing, mostly older, charming and often historic downtowns like Livermore. Frankly, I don't see the Stateline casino corridor ever being, well... charming. Rather, I see a narrow wind tunnel surrounded by concrete and glass high rises. Not exactly our best asset.

Most importantly, the loop road proposal is not something that comes from the heart of our town. It did not come about as a collaborative effort with our community rising up and saying, "This is what we want and need." Rather, it's a "top down" idea that was sprung on us and was almost a done deal, back-door style, when the Mountain News blew the whistle on that process back in 2012.

OK, now the good stuff. Here are my solutions to all things loop road.

"Lake Tahoe Village"

One of the main problems with the South Shore is the major lack of public access to Lake Tahoe.

So, as long as we're going to dream about a tourist core that's truly walkable and bikable to the lake, why not do it right and put it closer to the lake?

Let's establish a "village" centered around that totally underutilized block of turf right across the street from Lake Tahoe along Lakeshore Drive.

We could maintain the open space as the village plaza, and have a retail and restaurant district right on the lake.

Whereas Heavenly Village is a retail center tied to the gondola and the mountain, this would provide a second village tied to the lake.

There's got to be a way to take down the stupid fence along the beach and open up the waterfront to the public. We could even revamp the playground into something wonderful and attractive for families. If you've ever been to Dennis the Menace Park in Monterey, you will understand what dreaming is really about.

What's cool is that this "in-fill development" would be totally within the confines of the already established urban

boundary and would instantly revitalize the “quad” motel district back there – perhaps Tahoe’s most blighted area.

And while you might have to remove a handful of old motels, it would be far better than using eminent domain to take over upwards of nearly 100 homes under the loop road proposal.

Housing

One of the elements of the loop road proposal that the Tahoe Regional Young Professionals say they are most attracted to is the prospect of affordable housing. The Tahoe Prosperity Center has also identified the affordable housing problem, but is groping for answers.

The TTD admits that it has no funding for this in the loop road proposal, and the affordable housing they allude to is big, developer-built and government-subsidized apartment complexes. Not exactly the American Dream.

Here’s a better solution that communities elsewhere have used to satisfy their low-income housing needs while also benefitting the middle class.

Allow single family homes in Tahoe to establish “granny units.” What this would do is basically allow legal duplexes on single-family lots that have enough land coverage.

With the prospect of added rental income, buying a home in Tahoe would become much more affordable for families who want stay and live here.

Meanwhile, the “granny units” would act as affordable housing units for ski resort employees, college students, service industry workers and others (including grandmothers!).

The coolest part about this is that it would act as a kind of immersion program (think Bijou School) to bring otherwise transient or culturally isolated residents into the fold of Tahoe’s middle class neighborhoods.

To me, this is much better than cordoning off poor people into institutional housing projects where kids are forced to play along busy roads, or worse, along four-lane highways.

Marketing

This winter, we have all dealt with the frustration of heavy skier traffic leaving on Sunday afternoons.

The problem, of course, is that there is just too much volume at pinch points in Meyers, Pioneer Trail and along Highway 50 over the mountains.

But rather than view this as a transportation problem, a better solution is to view it as marketing opportunity.

The Stateline casinos and Heavenly, in particular, could benefit while also improving their guest experience, by marketing to folks coming from the east rather than the west.

Think about it.

To the west, we have two-lane roads over the Sierra Nevada crest, but to the east, Highway 50 offers four lanes all the way to Carson City. And, with the new freeway currently under construction, there will soon be four lanes all the way to Reno.

As we know, Reno and the surrounding area is growing by leaps and bounds, what with the coming of the Tesla Factory, Apple and more; plus, we now have easier access to the Reno-Tahoe International Airport. Rather than view Reno as competition, we need to see Nevada's newfound affluence as an opportunity – as part of our customer base.

The idea is to trade some of our California visitors for those coming in from Nevada to create a better experience for all (including our own residents).

Transportation

To me, Highway 50 through the casino corridor is exactly where it belongs – in a bustling urban environment.

Many businesses even use the roadway to their advantage, like Stateline Brewery where patrons – who want to see and be seen – dine outside along the road's edge.

I personally think a much better use of federal highway funds would be to improve pedestrian safety in the existing casino core. Rather than build a four-lane freeway between us and the mountain, and then have to build bridges over the freeway, we could simply use the money to construct pedestrian bridges over the existing roadway.

Truly, a better solution for all.

Well, there you have it. Those are my answers that I suspect will generate all kinds of naysaying from the very people who accuse others of being naysayers with no answers.

But if you notice, my answers are not about paving over paradise with a parking lot – or a freeway – but turning an existing parking lot into paradise.

Taylor Flynn is publisher of the Tahoe Mountain News.

Scientists disagree whether salt is killing us

By Peter Whoriskey, New York Times

The debate over the perils of salty diets may be one of the most polarized in all of science.

On one side, scientists warn ominously that most Americans are killing themselves with salt. On the other, scientists insist most Americans are fine.

The inability to resolve this question may seem puzzling. It is a question with deadly consequences, at least potentially. How much salt is healthy? Given the marvels of technology, it seems like that ought to be an easy one.

Now a review of hundreds of papers on the topic indicates that the inability to reach a consensus stems at least partially from the fact that the two groups of scientists operate, in essence, in parallel scientific universes.

Read the whole story

Facebook Reactions a gift to advertisers, cops

By Ali Winston, Reveal

Facebook's new "Reactions" – a thumbs-up, a heart and four faces with expressions ranging from mirth to shock, sadness and anger – are intended to help users better express their responses to posts. As *Wired* reported last week, advertisers are salivating at the prospect of additional data about consumer preferences and trends.

In the same way that Gmail and other Google services scrape the content of user emails and search results to generate targeted advertisements, the emojis will provide a new method to produce more detailed analyses of individual sentiments and preferences.

Law enforcement and intelligence agencies also will revel in the new trove of open source intelligence delivered by Facebook's new feature, which they will be able to mine for sentiment analysis of criminal and terrorism suspects.

A number of social media-scraping software programs used by federal and local law enforcement already mine Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and other social media to determine networks of association, centers of influence and potential signs of radicalization. Two platforms –SocioSpyder and Dunami – are used by the FBI and U.S. Customs and Border Protection, respectively. These platforms use advanced text analytics tools to gauge potential conflicts and interpersonal or intergroup relations.

Think of each of the Facebook Reactions as a column in a spreadsheet that corresponds to emotion. Previously, open source intelligence-gathering programs would have to search and interpret large chunks of text for sentiment and account for nuance and context. With the six new icons, determining emotion and sentiment through Facebook could now be exponentially simpler. Emojis already have found their way into the courts. Last year, a Brooklyn, New York, grand jury rejected charges against a teenage boy accused of threatening police with emojis he posted on Facebook.

For months, federal law enforcement has sought additional cooperation from Silicon Valley tech companies to help counter the use of social media by violent extremists such as the Islamic State group, which relies heavily on Twitter and other services to spread its message and recruit new followers. Earlier this week, federal officials met in San Jose with representatives from Google, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Tumblr and Microsoft to discuss how private firms can assist with the U.S. government's counterterrorism efforts.

The Obama administration's outreach to Silicon Valley comes at

a time of tension, with the Department of Justice locked in a full-blown court battle with Apple over the FBI's demand to unlock an encrypted iPhone 5c that belonged to Syed Rizwan Farook, one of the San Bernardino shooters. While Facebook will submit a legal writ supporting Apple's stance, the company is far more receptive to assisting law enforcement than its peers in Cupertino. The new set of emojis were not developed for the sole purpose of aiding authorities, but they will be a welcome development to police and intelligence analysts alike.

Caregiver classes available in South Tahoe

El Dorado County Health and Human Services Agency, Family Caregiver Support Program is offering a free Aging & Caregiver educational series in South Lake Tahoe.

The six-week educational series will be on Mondays beginning April 18, from 1-3pm at the Lake Tahoe Resort Hotel, 4130 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe. The series will provide instruction and support for people who care for or plan to care for a family member or friend aged 60 years or older.

The series topics will include the following:

- **April 18 – Legal Rights/Responsibilities of Caregiving: How to Stay Out of Trouble:** Legal and ethical duties and decisions will be discussed including other responsibilities associated to the health and well-being of your loved one.
- **April 25, – Understanding & Responding to Dementia Related Behavior:** A four step model to address

behavioral aspects of dementia.

- **May 2, – Grief, Loss and Healing through Art:** Creative expression can help lift one's spirit and help the griever deal with emotions they may face.
- **May 9, – Maximizing Your Golden Years:** Discussion on how to maintain your physical health safely as you age and how age progression affects mobility and physical function.
- **May 16, – Transitioning from Hospital to Home:** Returning home from a hospital stay can result in unexpected challenges for many seniors. Learn tips and discuss the process of transitioning home safely.
- **May 23, – The Ins and Outs of Rehabilitation:** Staff from Barton Home Health Rehabilitation will discuss physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy.

The educational series will be presented by local experts in their respected fields. Participants may attend one or all of the classes. The classes are free, although donations are accepted. Advanced registration is requested, but not required, by calling 530.621-6151.

El Niño's winter storms no cure-all for drought

By Michael Doyle, McClatchy Washington Bureau

The El Niño storms drenching California won't suffice to solve the state's drought and won't permanently save the Central Valley's vulnerable salmon, federal scientists are cautioning.

In an apolitical assessment that comes amid a highly political time, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration experts

stress that this year's El Niño bounty is both useful and limited. It might well be followed, moreover, by a swing back to a different kind of weather complication called La Niña.

"Not all water demands are going to be met, 100 percent, by the recovery we're seeing relative to the last four years," NOAA research meteorologist Martin Hoerling said Wednesday in a news briefing. "There are systemic issues with water supply that go beyond precipitation in any given year."

In particular, Hoerling cited a "drawdown in groundwater in many places in the state that's not sustainable" and must be addressed "as a long-term policy issue."

Read the whole story

Drought taking toll on Calif. wildlife

Amphibian, reptile, bird and mammal populations that depend on freshwater marsh, streamside habitat and wet meadows are struggling because of the drought, according to an assessment released Thursday by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Biologists ranked the vulnerability of the state's terrestrial species and gave top priority for additional monitoring and assistance to 48 species. The greatest concentrations of these high-risk populations are found in Southern California coastal, mountain and valley regions, the Sierra Nevada, Mojave Desert, Central Valley and the southern Cascade mountain range.

Researchers analyzed and assessed the vulnerability of more than 358 land species. Scientists then classified them into Priority I (most vulnerable) and Priority II (less vulnerable) categories. All of the species evaluated were threatened, endangered or were otherwise considered species of special concern before the drought impacted them.

In the Sierra Nevada and Northern California mountain ranges, amphibians such as yellow-legged frogs, Yosemite toads and Cascades frogs are struggling. Some species' tadpoles require multiple years to develop into juveniles and lack of suitable habitat has eliminated several years of breeding effort at once. Removal of non-native predatory fish from select areas as well as assistance with disease intervention, translocations and reintroductions are underway to improve their chances of long-term survival.