

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



- Active Times lists Lake Tahoe as one of the 10 most incredible places in the world to stand up paddleboard.

• TRYP's next professional development workshop is a kid-friendly presentation about the effects of climate change on Lake Tahoe. It is June 17 from 6-7pm at the Boys & Girls Club of Lake Tahoe (1100 Lyons Ave., South Lake Tahoe). The workshop is free for TRYP members and \$5 for non-members.

• FNCTN is partnering with Tahoe Blue Vodka and Steamers Bar & Grill to produce the Triple Crown of Bartending. This series will test the skills of Lake Tahoe's top bartenders while raising money for the League to Save Lake Tahoe. The first event is June 28 from noon-4pm with a bloody Mary competition featuring live music from Ike & Martin. It is free to attend, with drink specials including \$10 for 10 tastings.

• The Robert and Lois C. Braddock Charitable Foundation has given the League to Save Lake Tahoe \$10,000 to support its land-use planning program.

• Cristi Nelson is running for the California's 6th Assembly District. She wants to replace the termed-out Beth Gaines in the district that covers portions of El Dorado, Placer and Sacramento counties.

Youngsters pedal to school in bike challenge



Sierra House students ride to school June 3 on Black Bart Avenue with teacher Mandy Miller. Photo/Rebecca Bryson

Expect to see lots of young cyclists on the roads until the end of the school year.

All Lake Tahoe Unified School District elementary schools are participating in the Tahoe Bike Challenge. Businesses, agencies, kids and individuals are tabulating the number of miles pedaled between June 1-14. Plus, there are a number of events throughout the basin associated with the challenge.

Teachers and parents are riding with the youngsters to and from school. Expect to see lots of riders on Pioneer Trail, Black Bart, Glenwood, Tahoe Island, Sawmill Pond, North and

South Upper Truckee and Apache.

There will be a bike rodeo Thursday at 9:25am at the magnet school. It ends at 2pm.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Abundance of LTUSD employees calling it quits

By Kathryn Reed

When classes start Aug. 31 for the next school year, many familiar faces will no longer be roaming the halls of Lake Tahoe Unified School District. Many longtime employees are retiring.

More than 600 years worth of educational experience are walking out the door as the school year comes to an end next week. The changes are coming in the classroom, administration and elsewhere.

Steve Morales, facilities director, is one person whose presence in the district for the last 33 years has touched all the campuses and most components of the district.

He had worked in construction since he was 18, and then got an electrician's job with LTUSD when he was 29. By 30 he was in his current role. The difference is the job description has changed quite a bit in the intervening years.

"As the district continued to mature and grow, this position

did the same,” Morales told *Lake Tahoe News*. “It’ been continuously growing and challenging so it never became a stagnant position. There was never a time when I was bored with the work.”



Steve Morales is retiring after 33 years working for Lake Tahoe Unified School District. Photo/LTN file

When he started in the early 1980s the buildings had been neglected, landscaping near non-existent, the ball fields were not irrigated, and the schools looked run down with peeling paint. The superintendent at the time and board decided to turn things around.

The basic maintenance needs were addressed, including getting the mechanical and electrical systems working properly.

The state made some money available and local voters approved a bond in the early 1990s for facilities. This is when South Tahoe Middle School’s multipurpose room was built as well as the science-technology building at South Tahoe High School.

This was the first major construction in LTUSD since Sierra

House Elementary School was built in the mid-1970s.

Hiring skilled laborers like electricians and plumbers has helped to keep the facilities in better shape. Depending on the season 30 to 40 people work for Morales.

Each year the financial responsibility he has changes. It's fluctuated from a few million dollars to about \$40 million.

"What I'm most proud of in the facility improvement and expansion side of the coin is the fact that within months of passage of local bonds for school facility improvement the district was spending that money and the projects were started," Morales said. "By the time people saw these taxes on their tax bills typically we were already in construction. We were putting their money to work almost immediately."

Morales is also proud in all this time with well more than \$100 million of construction occurring under his watch that a project has never been stopped nor has there been the claim of a bid going awry.

He was essentially the project manager overseeing the work accomplished from the latest bond – \$64.5 million in local money, plus more than \$30 million in state matching dollars. The bulk of that work was at South Tahoe High School.

Superintendent Jim Tarwater calls the oversight of the 2009 bond and getting the work done by 2014 Morales' "legacy."

But all of Morales' work is not done. He will be overseeing the bleacher project at STHS, which starts next week.

"For a person who moved up through the ranks and has been part of all the construction and maintenance for a district in the mountains, that has a lot more challenges just because of the weather, and transportation, he has done an outstanding job," Tarwater told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Also part of Morales' job is to oversee transportation. The

fact there was never a major accident on his watch, is another thing Morales is proud of.

Initially, IT fell under Morales' purview.

"The original backbones of the computer and software systems came out of this department. We provided the infrastructure, the cabling," he said.

Morales, who turns 62 at the end of the month, will be back on a limited basis. Retirees are allowed to work for benefits.

What else he does in retirement remains to be seen. He has three kids and seven grandkids to help fill the time.

As for a replacement, Darryl Quandt who is a supervisor in the department will be interim director of facilities.

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Here are the others who are leaving LTUSD:

Classified retirees, with their last job listed:

- Eleanor Heckendorn – hired October 1984, instructional assistant
- Wilma Hoppe – hired April 1992, executive services specialist
- Angie Keil – hired May 1992, secretary
- Paul Mitchell – hired February 1998, custodian
- Darlene Morris – hired August 1987, accounting assistant
- Michael Kezer – hired December 2011, campus security assistant
- Nancy Tesh – hired September 1988, human resources analyst

- Debra Yates – hired July 2006, chief financial officer.

Certificated retirees:

- Betsy Benavides, teacher, 24 years in education
- Karen Boyer, speech therapist, 20 years in education
- Howard Coleman, teacher, 32 years in education
- Beth Delacour, principal, 32 years in education
- Madeline Fernald, teacher, 16 years in education
- Joann Hernandez, counselor, 15 years in education
- Deborah Kushner, teacher, 31 years in education
- Ivone Larson, assistant superintendent, 26 years in education
- Marie Meagher, director of special services, 36 years in education
- Carol Murdock, teacher, 36 years in education
- Elizabeth Roeser, teacher, 37 years in education
- Laretta Ross, teacher, 36 years in education
- Dennis Sarosik, assistant principal, 34 years in education
- Louise Ann Simon, teacher, 27 years in education
- Pamela Taylor, teacher, 30 years in education
- Susan Willmetts, teacher, 19 years in education.

Letter: Jenner is not news

To the community,

I have often said and written: We are a nation of litigation with a tabloid mentality. The land is filled with tort terrorists and scandal-mongers.

The latest big do about Bruce Jenner is beyond reason, particularly when it replaces so much news of substance and consequence. We are living in a cluttered catastrophe of a culture crisis. We have enemies in this world, but in this case I remember what Pogo said: "We have met the enemy and they is us."

Not being particularly religious. I do remember some significant words – *Jesus wept*.

Merlyn Karst, Denver

Volunteers sought for bike path cleanup

As part of the Tahoe Bike Challenge there will be a community bike path cleanup on June 13 from 10am-noon.

Volunteers may meet at one of four locations throughout South Lake Tahoe to pick up litter. Afterward volunteers will be treated to lunch League to Save Lake Tahoe office (2608 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe). All ages are welcome and all

supplies will be provided

RSVP by filling out this form.

Those who ride to the cleanup will be entered into a raffle.

How a curmudgeonly old reporter exposed the FIFA scandal

By Michael E. Miller, Washington Post

The biggest news story of the year was breaking, but the journalist responsible was fast asleep.

It was just after dawn on May 27 when Andrew Jennings's phone began ringing. Swiss police had just launched a startling raid on a luxury hotel in Zurich, arresting seven top FIFA officials and charging them and others with running a \$150 million racket. The world was stunned.

The waking world, that is. If Jennings had bothered to climb out of bed, he wouldn't have been surprised at the news. After all, he was the man who set the investigation in motion, with a book in 2006, "FOUL! The Secret World of FIFA: Bribes, Vote Rigging and Ticket Scandals," followed by an exposé aired on the BBC's "Panorama" program that same year, and then another book in 2014, called "Omerta: Sepp Blatter's FIFA Organised Crime Family."

"My phone started ringing at six in the morning," Jennings said Tuesday from his farm in the hilly north of England. "I turned it off actually to get some more sleep, because

whatever is happening at six in the morning is still going to be there at lunch time, isn't it?"

If you can't tell already, Jennings is an advocate of slow, methodical journalism. For half a century, the 71-year-old investigative reporter has been digging into complex, time-consuming stories about organized crime. In the 1980s, it was bad cops, the Thai heroin trade and the Italian mob. In the '90s, he turned to sports, exposing corruption with the International Olympic Committee.

For the past 15 years, Jennings has focused on the Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), international soccer's governing body. As other journalists were ball watching – reporting scorelines or writing player profiles – Jennings was digging into the dirty deals underpinning the world's most popular game.

Read the whole story

Soroptimist scholarships benefit Tahoe students

Soroptimist International of South Lake Tahoe on June 3 awarded \$21,500 in scholarships to local students.

The awards went to:

South Tahoe High School students, \$1,000 each:

Bailey Anderson, Catherine Baghdikian, Natasha Johnson, Rachael Lamore, Trinity Marino LaTella, Alexandria Marschak and Emma Sower.

South Tahoe High School, \$500 Vocational Scholarship:

Arielle Wiza.

STHS Ivone Larson AVID Awards, \$1,000 each:

Emily Aminian, Jade Child, Sarah Novak, Joemae Santos and Carli Valney.

Whittell High School, \$1,000 each:

Bryce Bronken and Sabrina Trachsel.

Lake Tahoe Community College, \$1,000 each:

Antonio Benitez, Aevind Burgess, Daniel Eames, Steven LaPointe, Tara Larson, Anna Mestre and Gina Niceforo.

Calif. won't ID who's draining the groundwater

By Lance Williams and Katharine Mieszkowski, *Reveal*

A new law that attempts to preserve California's precious groundwater comes with a catch: The state will hide the names of people draining this vast underground water source, *Reveal* has learned.

The secrecy provision could make it impossible for the public to identify water wasters and learn whether conservation efforts are taking hold, according to documents and interviews.

One of the law's authors, former Assemblyman Roger Dickinson, said farmers and private pumpers wanted confidentiality.

“In essence, this was a battle we didn’t think we could take on,” Dickinson said. “So we agreed to keep the confidentiality.”

At issue is little-noticed language in the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, a package of laws that for the first time sets rules on farmers’ use of groundwater, a vital but rapidly disappearing subterranean water supply for the Golden State.

California growers provide the country with almost half of its fruits, vegetables and nuts. In a normal year, they rely on groundwater for about one-third of their entire water supply. Years into a historic drought, it can account for more than half.

Meanwhile, groundwater management has been a free-for-all, with farmers drilling ever-deeper wells and pumping as much water as they want with little regulation or scrutiny.

The result: Some rural aquifers have been subject to such intense pumping that they are in danger of drying up. Some rural residents’ taps have gone dry, and growers have chopped down orchards fields and fallowed fields. In parts of the Central Valley, the earth has sunk as much as one foot per year as the water has been drained beneath it.

The Legislature tried for years to address the issues. The package of bills that finally passed – hailed as historic by Gov. Jerry Brown when he signed them in September – has a long lead time but ambitious goals.

The new laws require officials to identify regions in California where aquifers are in danger of drying up. It gives water officials the power to limit overdrafts.

And, for the first time, the laws require farmers and other well operators in affected regions to account for how much water they are drawing from the ground. The most-stressed

aquifers must be recharged and brought to sustainability by 2040.

For decades, water use data was a matter of public record in California – at least for residential and commercial customers of public utilities.

During the last drought, in 1991, news stories naming and shaming water wasters led to important reforms. But in 1997, in response to privacy concerns about Silicon Valley tech executives, the Legislature weakened the state Public Records Act to make water consumption information confidential.

In discussing the groundwater measures, water agencies wanted that same confidentiality provision applied to groundwater users.

Environmental groups, including Sierra Club California and Clean Water Action California, argued that the confidentiality language was too broad. They feared it could be used to hide not just the names of the pumpers, but also how much water was being pumped. They didn't get much traction.

James Wheaton, legal director of the Oakland-based Environmental Law Foundation, called the secrecy provision "jaw dropping." He said lawmakers are saying, "We're going to finally regulate and monitor groundwater, and we're going to keep it all secret."

The foundation is suing to open confidential records about groundwater contamination on the Central Coast, arguing that state secrecy violates a fundamental principle of democratic governance.

A cloak of secrecy already shrouds other important information about California's groundwater. Well logs, documents filed by well operators that could provide scientists with important information about the condition of aquifers, are secret in California, though they are public records in other Western

states.

Dickinson, a former Assembly Democrat from Sacramento and co-author of the groundwater legislation, said confidentiality became “a very sensitive subject” as the bills were being written.

Over the years, some agencies have made water-extraction data public, and others have refused, said Dickinson, now a lawyer in Sacramento. Farmers and private pumpers opposed making the information public, and in the end, proponents feared that a debate over confidentiality might kill the entire effort to regulate groundwater, he said.

He said he believes additional legislation likely will be necessary “somewhere down the road” to make more information about pumping public.

Dickinson’s co-author, Sen. Fran Pavley, D-Calabasas, has trumpeted the groundwater bills as a major legislative achievement. But she wasn’t interested in talking about the secrecy issue.

Through an aide, Pavley declined requests for an interview. At one point, the aide said Pavley was unavailable for a phone interview because she was on a plane to her district in Los Angeles County. Asked whether she could be interviewed after the plane landed, the aide said that wouldn’t be possible, either.

“We’re not going on the record on this,” the aide said.

Calif. water use fell 13.5% in April

By Associated Press

Ordered to use a fourth less water during this record drought, Californians managed to get about halfway to their goal in April, regulators announced Tuesday.

California residents reduced overall water usage by 13.5 percent compared to the same month in the benchmark year of 2013, water officials said.

That's the second-best conservation achievement since state officials started closely tracking water use more than a year ago, but falls short of the 25 percent cuts Gov. Jerry Brown that became mandatory for cities and towns on June 1.

"Local communities are stepping up in a way they weren't before, and I'm hoping that's why we are starting to see the uptick" in conservation, said Felicia Marcus, chairwoman of the state Water Resources Control Board, which compiles usage reports from more than 400 water agencies around California.

"The real challenge is, we really have to step it up for the summer months," Marcus said. "If we miss the summer, we are toast."

April's still-lackluster achievement could set off more alarm bells about the severity of California's drought and the need for much more conservation.

This year's snowpack in the Sierra Nevada is dismal, with surveyors on April 1 finding the lowest-ever water level up in the mountains. Brown used that grim news as a backdrop when he announced sweeping and unprecedented conservation measures.

Duckee Derbee benefits animals in Truckee-Tahoe

The Truckee River flow is not going to stop the 12th annual Truckee Duckee Derbee.

This fundraiser for the Humane Society of Truckee Tahoe is June 7 from 1-4pm at the River Ranch Lodge.

It is billed as the “most unpredictable two minutes in Tahoe.”

The afternoon’s festivities will include live music by the Serina Dawn Duo, an outdoor barbecue, drink specials, a raffle and a silent auction, Dogz in Dudz canine costume contest, and a Cool Catz in Hatz contest in which human contestants don crazy animal themed head gear. A new event, Chuck a Duck, will pit participants against each other to hit a target with a rubber duck for a cash prize.

Registration and pre-race party festivities begin at 1pm.

To buy a duck or for more information, go online or call 530.587.5948.