

How the Browns have ruled California

By Adam Nagourney, New York Times

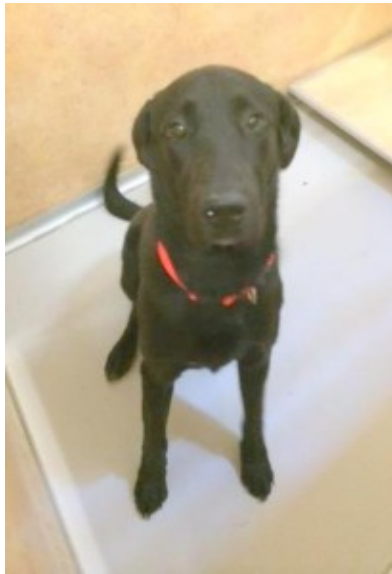
LOS ANGELES — When Edmund G. Brown Sr. was governor of California, people were moving in at a pace of 1,000 a day. With a jubilant Brown officiating, California commemorated the moment it became the nation's largest state, in 1962, with a church-bell-ringing, four-day celebration. He was the boom-boom governor for a boom-boom time: championing highways, universities and, most consequential, a sprawling water network to feed the explosion of agriculture and development in the dry reaches of central and Southern California.

Nearly 50 years later, it has fallen to Brown's only son, Gov. Jerry Brown, to manage the modern-day California that his father helped to create. The state is prospering, with a population of more than double the 15.5 million it had when Brown, known as Pat, became governor in 1959. But California, the seventh-largest economy in the world, is confronting fundamental questions about its limits and growth, fed by the collision of the severe drought dominating Jerry Brown's final years as governor and the water and energy demands — from homes, industries and farms, not to mention pools, gardens and golf courses — driven by the aggressive growth policies advocated by his father during his two terms in office.

The stark challenge that confronts this state is putting a spotlight on a father and son who, as much as any two people, define modern-day California. They are strikingly different symbols of different eras, with divergent styles and distinct views of government, growth and the nature of California itself.

Read the whole story

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Tucker

Tucker is a young retriever mix who's had it rough in the first few months of his life. He was found running loose in a busy part of town, and was very scared and super skinny. Now he's safe at the animal shelter, eating good food and getting used to nice people.

Tucker is about 10 months old and very sweet once he gets to know you. With lots of attention, training, and affection, he will become the great pet we know he can be.

Tucker is neutered, microchipped, tested for heart worm, and vaccinated. He is 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 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

Transportation officials interested in KMS site

By Kathryn Reed

Kingsbury Middle School may be turned into a transportation hub of sorts.

“For that location to work definitely the buildings would have to be modified,” Carl Hasty, executive director of Tahoe Transportation District, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “One thing we are getting into is some facilities planning for the bus yard. We want to know what options are out there.”

The fleet of 40 BlueGo buses that are all owned by TTD are stored on property that is rented from South Lake Tahoe in the industrial area. This location is too small to keep all the vehicles inside and it requires some upgrades, according to Hasty. The ventilation system needs to be revamped to handle the compressed natural gas vehicles (CMG), plus buses are getting taller. There is no fueling station at the city yard nor is there a bus washing facility.

TTD owns the CMG fueling station at Lake Tahoe Airport and then contracts for diesel service.

Talks are at the initial stages between TTD and Douglas County School District for a potential 30-year lease.

Douglas County School District in January 2012 voted to put the 10-acre school on the market with an asking price is \$4 million. To date no one has made a formal offer, though there have been multiple inquiries. The buildings encompass 36,000-square-feet.

The district consolidated its three lake schools into two starting with the 2008-09 school year because of declining enrollment. It has sat empty since then.

At the board's April meeting it was determined that renting the site could be an option instead of only selling it. For what price remains a huge unknown. Tenant improvements would be part of the equation.

TTD is hoping to have its facilities plan done by the end of the year. What is likely to be a document that looks at needs for the next 20 years will be designed to address at short- and long-term issues. Until that time, Hasty said it would be premature to enter an agreement with DCSD.

Hasty said facilities dollars are hard to find, but it's easier to do so with a plan in hand.

Part of the equation is if the basin goes to a regional transportation system, what would that look like. The East Shore Express based in Incline Village is growing in popularity and may become permanent. That would make having a transportation site there be logical as well. TART is the North Shore transit agency. That entire fleet is CMG. The facility is at Cabin Creek on Highway 89 outside of the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Another component is that TTD offices are currently inside of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency offices in Stateline. If the bus garage were to move down the road to the KMS site, so

could the employees.

Opinion: Tangled web of political musical chairs

By Larry Weitzman

Patrick Blacklock is the current CAO of Yolo County. It would take some explaining to understand that his influence and impact on El Dorado County has been more significant than any of our current members of the Board of Supervisors. Blacklock started his employment by government bodies in May 2001 as the county administrator officer of Amador County.

As Amador CAO it was Blacklock who elevated Terri Daly from her position of manager of In-Home Supportive Services to assistant CAO of Amador County. After Blacklock left Amador, Daly became CAO of Amador County. When Amador County refused her salary demand in 2010, Daly left to find a job as ACAO in EDC, later to become the CAO. It is unknown if there was an appropriate recruitment, and a quality and thorough background check performed.



Larry Weitzman

EDC recently has failed in performing background checks of many potential high-ranking employees.

How EDC hired our latest county counsel is also an interesting series of "coincidences." Robyn Drivon, 60, was essentially fired as Yolo County counsel when her contract was not renewed. In case you forgot, Patrick Blacklock is Yolo County CAO. Luckily for Blacklock an administrator he mentored, Terri Daly, was in need of a county counsel. In an abbreviated recruitment EDC miraculously ends up with Drivon, at the highest pay step no less, saving Yolo County from a potential age discrimination lawsuit. On top of that what kind of background check was performed? More on age discrimination later.

That leads us to the current interim CAO, Pamela Knorr, who is on a one-year agreement after the BOS terminated Daly, with the BOS paying Daly three times the amount of her contract requirement or about \$153,000 upon her firing. Supervisor Brian Veerkamp voted in favor of such severance pay, after knowing of the massive hiring of new EDC employees by Daly and her raise recommendations. (On Nov. 5, 2013, it was Knorr as then director of Human Resources who made the raise recommendation along with Daly at the BOS meeting when all BOS members – including Veerkamp, approved it). That one-two punch of mass hiring and 15 percent raises are the main cause of EDC's current fiscal problems. The county has bled \$25 million to \$30 million in cash over the last two years and it continues at the rate of about \$1.3 million a month. Starting on July 1, because of the final 5 percent of the raise package becoming effective, the bleed could increase to about \$1.7 million a month.

Knorr's recent history is worth a look. Knorr, 44, claims to have 28 years of public administration experience. Her definition of what is public administration experience would be interestingly to learn, especially her public administration experience when she was 16 years old. Knorr's

last three jobs were in Texas as an administrator for the Attorney General's Office, child support division (2007-08), as the first CAO of Alpine County (2008-13) and HR director of EDC starting in September 2013, about a month after her termination from Alpine, and then as the interim CAO after Terri Daly was fired in last November.

Where is Blacklock in Alpine County? Nowhere, except whom do you think did Alpine County hired as a consultant to help with their new CAO position? You guessed it, a Blacklock, but in this case it was John Blacklock, Patrick's father. It was John Blacklock who participated in the background check and provided Alpine County a recommendation and guess who the recommendation was from? According to Skip Veatch, retired Alpine sheriff and Alpine County BOS member, he remembers a recommendation from Patrick Blacklock. In a phone conversation with Patrick Blacklock he denies making any recommendation of Pamela Knorr to Alpine County and further stated he barely knows Knorr, maybe meeting her once at a California State Association of Counties event.

As for EDC doing a background check on Knorr, it appears nothing significant was done and that would have told a story. Knorr's termination from Alpine County is even more interesting. In my investigation, and via the California Public Records Act, I acquired most relevant documents concerning Knorr's employment and termination including Knorr's severance document with Alpine, her last employment contract and a tort claim for harassment against Alpine. However, when inquiring of her employment file regarding letters of recommendation and background checks, I was advised in a phone conversation that the file seems to be strangely missing from county records. However, when confirming this fact about a week later by email this reply was received: "No, no missing. Just not available to the public. I have a copies of the applications and recruitment materials from all of the applicants but again, it is not a public record. I was not

working in Personnel at the time of the recruitment so I cannot absolutely verify that this is all of the information that the board received at the time; however, I have no reason to believe there was more. Sorry if that was misunderstood."

Knorr's employment contract with Alpine dated July 3, 2012, and her tort claim against the county filed April 11, 2013, raises a huge question. Knorr executed an employment contract with Alpine County dated July 3, 2012, with an effective date of June 2, 2012, to June 30, 2017. It was an at-will contract on 120 days notice that paid \$11,757 a month plus \$400 for a car allowance and a credit card for business expenses.

In a claim for damages filed under penalty of perjury by Knorr on April 11, 2013, Knorr alleged that since April 16, 2012, she was harassed, intimidated, retaliated against by Sheriff John Crawford, causing fear, emotional distress and harassment and that this started on April 16, 2012, and was ongoing. Knorr claimed such damaging behavior or actions also against several other high-ranking Alpine County officials, including the undersheriff, a BOS member, the county auditor and county counsel. According to the claim, there was another specific act of retaliation and harassment that occurred on June 18, 2012. In fact, Knorr even attached an alleged email of resignation on that same April 16, 2012, where she said, "I can no longer work under these conditions." In addition it was signed as "Former County Administrative Officer." From the email you can see an implication that these conditions were ongoing before April 16, 2012, as that was the date of the email. It is unknown if said email was actually sent to its intended recipients, BOS members and county counsel.

If this is a truthful depiction of Knorr's working conditions, then why would she sign a long-term employment contract? Sounds like a set up? You will understand more. One of the aforementioned contract provisions in the July 3, 2012, contract was, "In the event the County terminates without cause, County shall provide severance pay ... for 18 months.

This severance pay is conditioned upon ... receiving Employee's signed written liability release...." Instead of paying out \$211,626, Alpine County via a negotiated severance agreement paid her \$158,000 in two equal payments, one on execution Aug. 1, 2013, and a second on July 1, 2014. In addition, Alpine County was to provide Knorr with a positive letter of recommendation. Knorr was also paid \$10,000 from her tort claim for damages. One Alpine BOS member is sorry he agreed to the recommendation letter.

About a month later after collecting nearly \$170,000 in severance, Knorr was hired in at El Dorado County as HR director and Terri Daly actually gave Knorr a raise, from about \$141,000 a year (her Alpine salary) to about \$160,000, a new high salary for HR directors in EDC by about \$30,000 a year, a raise that was approved by the BOS. By the way, Daly's plan was to appoint Knorr as HR without any recruitment and background check.

It is not known yet if Blacklock played a role in Knorr's EDC hiring, but Blacklock seems to have a history with one or both women.

Larry Weitzman is a resident of Rescue.

Bill lifts winery ban in Nevada counties

By Associated Press

CARSON CITY – The Nevada Senate has passed a compromise bill that repeals the state's partial ban on wineries.

The Senate voted unanimously on Saturday to approve AB4. It already passed the Assembly.

The bill would repeal a state law prohibiting wineries in Clark and Washoe counties from importing wine from other states or serving alcoholic beverages on their premises.

A winery in Pahrump initially opposed the bill, saying that changing the law too quickly could harm the state's four existing wineries just as they're gaining strength.

The new version of the bill aims to ensure a significant portion of wine at newcomer wineries is made from Nevada-grown fruit. If a wine isn't made of at least 25 percent Nevada fruit, wineries are limited to serving 1,000 cases of it.

How to be fast after 50

By Bradley Stulberg, Outside

Fifty is America's favorite age. According to a recent Harris Interactive poll, if we could "skip time and live forever in good health at a particular age," Americans, on average, choose 50.

Athletes, however, might think differently: 50 isn't exactly associated with peak performance. But it's still a damn good age to be an athlete, says Joe Friel, one of the world's foremost experts on endurance sports. You can, in fact, be fast after 50. That happens to be the title of his latest book, "Fast After 50".

We had a chat with the endurance guru, who's now pushing 70 himself, to find out how athletes can thrive after hitting the half-century mark.

Read the whole story

Historian to talk about 1800 travels in Sierra

Sierra Nevada College historian and Sierra Nevada native Gary Noy on May 27 will present an illustrated lecture on unusual and lesser-known stories of Sierra Nevada history, with a special focus on the Lake Tahoe region.

The presentation is based upon material from his book “Sierra Stories: Tales of Dreamers, Schemers, Bigots and Rogues”, which will be available for sale and signing. Noy will recount the tales of two journeys – the 1844 journey of the Murphy-Townsend-Stephens Party from Iowa to California and the 1848 story of Melissa Coray and the Mormon Battalion traveling from California to Salt Lake City. The tales will touch on historical aspects of Lake Tahoe, Donner Pass, Truckee, Carson Pass, and Hope Valley.

History Happy Hour starts at 6pm in the Twain Room at the History Exhibit (in same building as Starbucks), 899 Tahoe Blvd., Incline Village.

Cost is \$5.

The other Audubon: The one that allows golf courses to kill birds

By Rachael Bale and Tom Knudson, Reveal

The long, emerald-green fairways of the Dairy Creek Golf Course double as a serene nature haven where birds are celebrated and protected. The course, in the California coastal town of San Luis Obispo, even has the credentials to prove it: Audubon International has certified it as a sanctuary.

But golfers and bird-watchers beware: It's not what you think. When American coots do the things American coots do, like pull up grass and poop, they get shot and killed.

Data from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service show that Dairy Creek Golf Course has intentionally killed more than 1,000 of the small, black duck-like birds over the past three years, making it one of the most deadly golf courses for birds in the country.

And Audubon International, as it turns out, is not affiliated with the venerable, bird-friendly National Audubon Society. It is something else entirely – a third-party certification organization funded by the entities it certifies: golf courses.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service data show that Dairy Creek Golf Course in San Luis Obispo has intentionally killed hundreds of migratory birds over the past three years. Credit: Stuart Palley for Reveal

Audubon International has certified as environmentally friendly more than a dozen golf courses that have killed nuisance birds. Those golf courses, mostly in California, have killed nearly 4,000 birds from 2011 through 2013, according to data from the Fish and Wildlife Service.

In all, more than 30,000 birds – most of them coots and Canada geese, but a handful of double-crested cormorants, too – were killed on golf courses during that time.

While that's no threat to coot, goose or cormorant populations, killing birds is only supposed to be a short-term, last-ditch option for golf courses under an international treaty designed to protect migratory birds.

But the data show that many golf courses rely on lethal methods year after year. In addition, some biologists say the killing doesn't accomplish anything because more birds will rush in to occupy real estate – full of big open spaces and ponds – that's perfect for birds.

"You're not reducing the population. You're just moving them temporarily," said Brooke Maslo, a wildlife specialist at Rutgers University's Cooperative Extension program.

More than a dozen golf courses – certified as environmentally friendly by Audubon International – killed nearly 4,000 nuisance birds, including American coots, from 2011 through 2013. Credit: Tom Knudson/Reveal

For years, the National Audubon Society and its local chapters have been fighting against the confusion the Audubon International name causes. Often, they say, they oppose the very developments that the golf course group blesses.

"Audubon International is one of the worst examples of somebody trading on a name that is disingenuous," said Bob Sallinger of the Audubon Society of Portland. "From my perspective, it's a golf course industry front organization to some degree."

Much of Audubon International's financial support does come from the golf industry. Funders include the U.S. Golf Association as well as turf, irrigation and landscaping companies, according to their online list of sponsors. But most of the funding comes from the golf courses themselves – they pay anywhere from a few hundred dollars for an annual membership to upwards of \$7,000 to get certified.

Audubon International was founded in 1987 by Ronald Dodson, a former regional vice president of the National Audubon Society in the 1980s. After he was laid off at the National Audubon Society, he launched Audubon International and its programs for golf courses.

In 1991, the National Audubon Society sued Audubon International over the name. Audubon International often certifies golf developments the National Audubon Society opposes, and the similar names cause confusion. The National Audubon Society's suit was not successful.

Audubon International's stated mission is promoting good stewardship of the environment. It requires golf courses to implement plans for water and chemical use as well as for biodiversity. This includes encouraging courses not to irrigate in the middle of the day when water can be lost to evaporation, limiting pesticide use and landscaping low-traffic areas with native plants to create wildlife habitat.

To award the highest level of certification, known as a Signature Sanctuary, the organization sends a representative to survey the golf course. For the Cooperative Sanctuary level, it relies on the course's word.

One of the main elements of its certification process is helping golf courses create good habitats for wildlife. But when those habitats attract wildlife the golf courses don't want, Audubon International doesn't require them to have a plan.

In fact, asking about nuisance wildlife management isn't part of the certification or recertification process at all, said Audubon International's Tara Pepperman, who runs the Cooperative Sanctuaries program for golf courses.

"We don't really touch that topic," Pepperman said.

Audubon International's executive director, Doug Bechtel, said the organization does have educational materials on how to deal with nuisance wildlife but that the final decision on how to handle problem birds to protect their property is up to the golf courses.

"If they need to protect that investment," Bechtel said, "it's not our best interest as a third-party independent organization to deny them their private property decisions."

The killings are sanctioned by the federal government. The 96-year-old Migratory Bird Treaty Act, a landmark international agreement that prohibited killing many species of native migratory birds, allows birds to be intentionally killed under certain circumstances. If those birds are damaging property or pose a threat to human safety, anyone from a golf course to a vineyard to an airport can get a depredation permit to kill the birds.

More than a dozen golf courses – certified as environmentally friendly by Audubon International – killed nearly 4,000 nuisance birds, including Canadian geese, from 2011 through 2013. Credit: Tom Knudson/Reveal

More than 1.6 million native migratory birds have been killed under depredation permits from 2011 through 2013, a Reveal analysis of Fish and Wildlife Service permit data found. Conservationists and some biologists have criticized the permit system for allowing needless killing of migratory birds and weak enforcement of Fish and Wildlife Service's own policies to ensure lethal methods aren't overused.

Dairy Creek Golf Course's superintendent, Josh Heptig, said

shooting the birds is a last resort. His course has tried remote-controlled boats, laser pointers, dogs and fences. But the course is on a migration path. And there are ponds next to the course that it doesn't own, so there are always coots around.

Heptig said the coots do up to \$10,000 in damage to the grass and expose more than 50,000 golfers to feces annually. Bird feces can carry certain infectious diseases, but public health experts say the risk to golfers isn't great.

"The hypothetical risk is there, but we've never documented that it's a major problem," said Dr. Kirk Smith, a public health expert and veterinarian who co-chaired a 2013 project about preventing human-transmittable diseases from animals in public places.

Still, the economic damage and health concerns have allowed Dairy Creek to continue renewing their permit to shoot coots.

Heptig acknowledged that the lethal method doesn't solve the problem, either. When the shots ring out, Heptig said, many of the coots temporarily relocate to other ponds. Once it quiets down, they return.

The coot killings at Dairy Creek Golf Course came as a surprise to Michael Stiles, the outgoing president of the nearby Morro Coast Audubon Society. Stiles said the golf course attracts them.

"They put ponds in. They have green open space," he said. "They attract the birds and then (kill) them. It's not good."

Collette Adkins, a biologist and lawyer with the Center for Biological Diversity, said it's great that the golf courses set up an environment that attracts wildlife, but that doesn't mean they're environmentally friendly.

"Use of nonlethal methods of controlling nuisance birds – and

showing some tolerance – would reflect a true commitment to the environment,” she said.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



- Comments on the draft environmental impact report for the Squaw Valley Specific Plan are being taken until July 17. The document is available online.
- The Douglas County Public Library in Minden will be closed May 25 for Memorial Day.
- Big Brothers Big Sisters of El Dorado County has entered into a contract with El Dorado County Health and Human Services to provide mentors for children as young as 3 years old in South Lake Tahoe. For more information about the South Lake Tahoe program, contact Brenda at 530.626.1222 or brenda@bbbs-edc.org.
- Leadership Lake Tahoe applications are due June 12. For more info about the Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce program, go online.
- Christopher Cruz, 50, of El Dorado Hills has been appointed chief deputy director of operations at the California Department of Technology.
- Elena Duarte, 49, of El Dorado Hills, has been appointed to the California Commission on Uniform State Laws.

Calif. Senate approves vaccination bill

By Alexei Koseff, Sacramento Bee

After a lengthy and contentious debate, the California Senate on Thursday approved a controversial proposal requiring vaccinations for nearly all California schoolchildren.

Senate Bill 277, which would make California only the third state in the country without religious and personal belief exemptions from vaccinations, passed 25-10. The vote followed mostly partisan lines, with the majority of support coming from Democrats. It now heads to a new round of hearings in the Assembly.

“Together we are turning the tide to stop communicable diseases before any more families are hurt,” Sen. Richard Pan, D-Sacramento, said after the vote. “By passing this bill, the Senate, in a bipartisan manner, has sent a strong message: Vaccines save lives. Every child has a right to a safe school.”

[Read the whole story](#)