

2 South Lake Tahoe men randomly attacked

Three men are wanted in connection with an assault on two South Lake Tahoe men on Wednesday night.

The victims were just outside the Bottle Shop on Lake Tahoe Boulevard on Feb. 25 when they told police they were rushed in an unprovoked attack. One of the victims, a 36-year-old man, sustained significant head injuries, including lacerations to his face after having been beaten by the three suspects with fists. He was transported to Renown Medical Center in Reno.

"The victim is doing well at this time," officers said in a press release.

The description of the three attackers is limited because of the second 50-year-old uninjured victim's state of intoxication at the time of the investigation, police said. The suspects may be European; they were described as white males 6-feet-2-inches, the third spoke Italian. They had black hair, one was wearing a white jacket, and another was wearing a blue jacket.

Anyone who has information is asked to call police at 530.542.6110 or South Lake Tahoe Secret Witness at 530.541.6800.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Gaming revenue up in Nev., down at Stateline

While the state gaming win was up in January, it was down at the Stateline casinos.

Throughout Nevada casinos brought in \$952.7 million, an increase of 7.75 percent from January 2014. The state Gaming Control Board released the numbers Friday.

Stateline casinos dropped 3.80 percent year-over-year, bringing in \$14,139,520. Lake Tahoe Hard Rock was open only three days, and then, not even three full days.

Revenue increases of 14.2 percent were recorded by Reno casinos and 25.8 percent at North Shore casinos.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Health care costs becoming more transparent

By Jason Millman, Washington Post

The obscure, seemingly random universe of health-care pricing is getting a little less opaque today. Some of the country's largest health insurers are coming together to reveal the prices they pay for dozens of medical services across the country in an effort to help consumers become savvier shoppers.

All the information can be found at Guroo.com, a site launched Wednesday morning that was built by a health-care nonprofit group with information from United Healthcare, Humana, Aetna and Assurant Health. The transparency effort is a nod to the growing trend of patients being asked to pay more out of their own pockets, as insurers try to manage their costs and steer customers toward preferred health-care providers.

“The rise in health-care spending underscores the need to make it more transparent and help consumers make more informed decisions regarding their care,” said David Newman, executive director of the Health Care Cost Institute, which built the Web site.

Guroo’s initial rollout will let patients compare costs for more than 70 common services, which includes things as simple as a doctor’s visit, or something more complex like a knee surgery. These are prices for health-care services that patients may shop for ahead of time, as opposed to the cost of emergency room care.

Read the whole story

LTCC-county working to bring UCD to area

By Kathryn Reed

The University of California, Davis at South Lake Tahoe? It’s being talked about.

El Dorado County wants a branch campus of UC Davis to possibly be located on the West Slope near the county line with

Sacramento, or on Lake Tahoe Community College's campus, or both.

The Board of Supervisors on March 10 will be asked to approve staff time to pursue the campus. On Feb. 24, the LTCC board of trustees gave consent for President Kindred Murillo to work on such an endeavor.

"The No. 1 reason is that I think it would be wonderful for our students to go to a four-year college close by ... someplace where perhaps they could live at home," C.L. (Cherie) Raffety, county treasurer-tax collector, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "I would just like it to be here in El Dorado County because in addition to being an outstanding education opportunity for our students, it also would contribute to the sustainable economic well being."

The advantage to having the campus in South Lake Tahoe is that LTCC has the land, expects to complete the university center in 2018 and has been making in-roads to offering a four-year degree.

"It could be a couple extension programs; maybe start with a few staff members here. I don't see it starting really big because you need to have students," Murillo told *Lake Tahoe News*. "It is something I could see easing into gradually, especially if you create a pathway from the high school, to the college into Davis. That would be my dream."

A branch campus could start at LTCC and evolve into a separate campus. UC Davis was once a branch campus of UC Berkeley. It started strictly as agriculture when Davis was a dot on a map, and then evolved into the institution that it is today.

That ag component, though, is something Raffety believes the county could tap into – especially viticulture.

UCD is also known for its veterinary program. And with *Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care* in the process of building a permanent

facility practically across the street from LTCC, this could be natural tie-in.

Davis already has a huge presence at Sierra Nevada College in Incline Village, so the draw to Tahoe is already established. LTCC already has meetings with UCD scheduled for March to talk about being part of the university center.

With environmental studies being an important aspect of the curriculum at UCD and it being of utmost concern in Tahoe, Murillo foresees this being a natural fit.

Raffety said with this being the inaugural stage, it's important to get feedback from the public about their opinions. She welcomes county residents reaching out to supervisors and calling her – 530. 621.5803. If the supes see value in pursuing this idea, then UCD would convene a professor committee that would analyze the pros and cons. It's likely to be a slow, methodical process.

"It would happen as fast as UC Davis wants it," Raffety said. El Dorado came up with the idea through the economic development committee. Raffety, who is a former board member of the Los Rios Community College district, is a huge advocate of public education and of offering students as many options as possible.

Editorial: U.S. needs to rework food safety system

Publisher's note: *This editorial is from the Feb. 24, 2015, Los Angeles Times.*

The job of keeping our food wholesome has become more difficult as food itself has become more complicated. Because processed foods include ingredients from many sources, it is hard to trace the origin of pathogens. A package of ground beef, for instance, is no longer put together by a butcher pushing a single hunk of meat through a grinder; these days it includes trimmings from many cattle and multiple slaughterhouses. That means even a small quantity of meat contaminated with E. coli has the potential to taint tremendous amounts of hamburger meat sent out across the country.

Then again, if anything is more complicated than our food, it's our byzantine system for checking its safety. At least 15 agencies are involved, but sorting out the responsibilities of just the two main ones – the Food and Drug Administration and the Department of Agriculture – is hard enough. Consider a frozen pizza: The cheese is inspected by the USDA, the other ingredients and toppings by the FDA. (Though if you buy your pepperoni separately, it is the USDA's job.) The FDA regulates produce, but the USDA oversees the agreements under which growers police.

Read the whole story

Tahoe research provides insights on global change

By Science Daily

Scripps Institution of Oceanography-led study on how natural

and human-made sources of nitrogen are recycled through the Lake Tahoe ecosystem provides new information on how global change may affect the iconic blue lake.

“High-elevation lakes, such as Lake Tahoe, are sentinels of climate change,” said Lihini Aluwihare, associate professor of geosciences at Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego. “Small changes in the lake’s chemistry can have big impacts on the entire ecosystem.”

Lake Tahoe’s nitrogen concentration is one of several factors that helps maintain its crystal clear waters. To keep Tahoe blue in the future, the researchers say it’s important to keep a close eye on the nitrogen balance in the ecosystem over time.

The study, published in the Feb. 23 issue of the journal Nature Communications, tracked nitrogen, including that produced from the burning of fossil fuels, in the Lake Tahoe ecosystem. Nitrogen can affect both the productivity of lake food webs and the composition of the microbes that support nutrition for those food webs.

Read the whole story

Tahoe Nordic community remembers Murnane

By Melissa Siig, Moonshine Ink

The North Shore Nordic community is reeling after the death of Kevin Murnane, the general manager of the Tahoe Cross Country Ski Area and a fixture in the Tahoe City community. He died

Feb. 24 on the trails of the Nordic center, a place that he helped build into a world-class cross-country ski destination and a community gathering place that was central to both his life and the entire North Shore. Murnane was 44 years old.

“He was the glue for the Nordic community in a lot of ways,” said Brendan Madigan, owner of Alpenglow Sports and a close friend of Murnane’s. “He created a meeting point for the community at large. His influence will always guide that in how it moves forward.”

The Placer County Sheriff’s Office received a call about 5:30pm Feb. 24 from Murnane’s wife of 18 years, Valli, who said that he had not been seen since she left for work that morning and he left for a walk near their home on the Nordic trails. A neighbor had reported that the dogs were out, which raised alarm bells for Valli. The Tahoe Nordic Search & Rescue Team was brought in, and more than 30 people set out on foot, bike, motorcycle, and ATV to search for Murnane.

Read the whole story

Placer County buys South Lake Tahoe hotel

There may soon be more open space in South Lake Tahoe along Highway 50. This is because on Feb. 24 the Placer County Board of Supervisors voted to buy the A&A Lake Tahoe Inn for approximately \$1.4 million.

The South Lake Tahoe hotel is one of many the city would like bulldozed because they add to an overabundance of hotel rooms, many of which are not being used as traditional hotels but

instead as non-conforming residential units.

Placer crossed county lines for this purchase so it could obtain the tourist accommodation units from the site. By leveling the structure the county can obtain a 3-to-1 bonus on TAUs per the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's Region Plan because it is in a stream environmental zone.

TAUs are a commodity the TRPA created to regulate growth. Many now say this commodity, as well as commercial floor area, hinder redevelopment by placing value on items that in many ways are artificial and are certainly not the norm in the construction world.

It's possible the California Tahoe Conservancy and Placer County would enter a land swap or purchase down the road involving this site.

The 34-unit hotel is at 3520 Lake Tahoe Blvd.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Landmark Calif. plastic bag ban on hold

By Lydia O'Connor, Huffington Post

The nation's first statewide ban on single-use plastic bags will not go into effect this summer after all. The California secretary of state's office announced Tuesday that a referendum to overturn the measure has qualified for the November 2016 ballot.

The state confirmed that the trade group American Progressive Bag Alliance submitted at least 110 percent of the 504,760 verified signatures it needed to qualify its measure to overturn the plastic bag ban, the Los Angeles Times reported. As such, the landmark law is now on hold until California voters weigh in next year.

Approved by California Governor Jerry Brown last September and originally slated to go into effect this July, the ban would require grocers to charge at least 10 cents for each recycled paper bag or reusable bag given to consumers. The law also provides \$2 million in competitive loans to help plastic bag manufacturers convert their businesses to manufacture reusable bags.

Read the whole story

Nev. represents both sides of the immigration debate

By Ana Ley, Las Vegas Sun

Nevada represented both sides of the country's immigration debate on Wednesday at separate events discussing President Obama's stalled immigration deal.

In Washington, D.C., Attorney General Adam Laxalt spoke before the House Judiciary Committee to defend his controversial decision to bring Nevada into a lawsuit against the president's executive action granting deportation relief to millions living in the country illegally.

Meanwhile in Miami, Las Vegas activist Astrid Silva attended a

town hall where Obama vowed to do everything in his power to overhaul the nation's immigration system.

Read the whole story