

# Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- Moe's Original BBQ is moving to the Tahoe City Marina because the kitchen is five times larger.
  - Joe Arpaio, former Arizona sheriff and current Senate candidate, will be the keynote speaker at the Douglas County Central Committee's annual Lincoln-Reagan Dinner on Feb. 18 at 5:30pm at the Carson Valley Inn in Minden. Go **online** for tickets.
  - Bank of America is closing its Tahoe City branch at the end of March.
  - "The Bachelor" episode shot at Lake Tahoe airs next Monday at 8pm on ABC.
  - South Lake Tahoe's Ryan Wallace is filling in for his friend Chris Cocores in the WFC Championships at MontBleu on Feb. 24. Cocores is still recovering from a devastating car crash.
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## 'Trying it is believing,' Sandoval says of self-driving vehicles

By Mick Akers, Las Vegas Sun

Touting the success of the autonomous shuttle operating in downtown Las Vegas, Gov. Brian Sandoval says the future is now in Nevada.

Sandoval spoke Friday to more than 20 governors during the National Governors Association's Transportation Innovation Summit at the Hilton Lake Las Vegas Resort in Henderson.

The driverless shuttle began in November in the Innovation District in downtown Las Vegas. It has already transported more than 10,000 passengers on the 0.6-mile fixed route. An estimated 100,000 passengers are expected to ride on the shuttle during the yearlong pilot program, Sandoval said.

**Read the whole story**

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## **Free tax preparation for South Shore residents**

Through the AARP Tax-Aide Program, California and Nevada taxpayers of all ages with low-to-moderate incomes may receive free tax return preparation.

There is no appointment necessary.

Bring your Social Security card, photo ID, 2017 tax return documents, and a copy of your 2016 tax return. All tax returns are prepared and filed on site with no cost to the taxpayer.

The last client is taken 30 minutes before closing. The service is available Feb. 8-April 14 on Thursdays from 10am-3pm, Fridays 9am-2pm, and Saturdays 9am-2pm at the South Lake Tahoe Senior Center, 3050 Lake Tahoe Blvd.

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# What would a pot shutdown look like in Nev?

By Chris Kudialis, Las Vegas Sun

U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions wasn't joking when he said he believed marijuana use in the U.S. "should be minimized."

On Jan. 4, the Department of Justice head rescinded Obama-era guidelines – most notably the Cole and Wilkinson memorandums – that provided marijuana-legal states an opportunity to operate their respective industries without federal interference as long as the state's industries abided by certain rules, like keeping cannabis out of the hands of children, gangs and motor vehicle drivers.

Without those memos – which were not legal documents, but rather internal guidance policies for Justice officials in enforcing federal laws – marijuana-legal states are vulnerable to being shut down by the feds, experts and industry members said.

But what would a federal crackdown on cannabis look like? In Nevada, it would mean the loss of as many as 7,000 jobs and more than \$5 million in monthly state tax revenue, said Riana Durrett of the Nevada Dispensary Association.

**Read the whole story**

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## Impact of new tax law on

# education in Nevada

By Amelia Pak-Harvey, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Two hundred and fifty dollars.

That figure – the amount that teachers can deduct from their taxes for classroom expenses – drew lots of attention in late 2017 when one of two dueling federal tax bills threatened to eliminate it. Ultimately the tax bill signed into law by President Donald Trump in December spared the deduction.

But there's more to the new tax code that impacts education – both the good and the bad.

For one, families can now use 529 plans to pay for private K-12 tuition. Those plans, originally only for college expenses, allow parents to save money in an investment account where earnings are tax-free.

**Read the whole story**

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## Bowman stars in milk ads for Olympics

By Karlene Lukovitz, Marketing Daily

Gold medalist Maddie Bowman's awesome freestyle skiing skills are on display in two new TV spots for Milk Life's 2018 Winter Olympics campaign.

This is the second Team USA outing for Milk Life – the tagline for The Milk Processor Education Program's umbrella marketing

campaign since 2014 (when it replaced “Got Milk?”).

In the main national TV ad (30-second version below), Bowman’s mom is heard in a phone message, reminding her daughter that she’s been on skis longer than she can even remember, and that everything she needs to succeed is already insider her. Home movies of the Meyers skiing as a child, along with current-day action footage, back the conversation.

**Read the whole story**

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## **Genoa trail provides plenty of recreation sans snow**



Views into the farm lands of the Carson Valley dominate the trail. Photo/Kathryn Reed

**By Kathryn Reed**

GENOA – Layers were coming off relatively quickly – it was that warm. The ground was barren, even the higher elevations didn't have much white stuff. It's not supposed to still be hiking season.

Five us and that dog named AJ ushered out 2017 with a hike instead of a snowshoe. And today, the same trek would be possible. Things might be different later this week, but because the hike was outside the basin, odds are it will still be do-able this weekend and beyond.

With Mother Nature being spastic this winter, one has to climb a bit for snow, or drop in elevation to hike. We chose the latter on New Year's Eve.

The Eagle Ridge Loop (6.5 miles) is part of the larger Genoa Trail System. A number of options are available, including connecting to the Tahoe Rim Trail.



Barb gets a better view from the one rock outcropping along the way. Photo/Kathryn Reed

It's like a different world from Tahoe. Pine trees still dot

the landscape, but they are more dispersed and intermingled with other flora. The brown grasses provide their own beauty. With the expansive views, it's easy to see across the valley to the Pine Nuts.

Trail markers at key locations were welcome, especially since none of us had been there before. We also had **printed out a map**, which was good for deciding where to park, start and have our bearings on the trail.

Much of the route is single track, hardpack dirt. It's in great condition.

Mountain bikers are allowed here; a few were making their way up as we were descending. The climb (elevation gain is 1,775 feet) would have had me pushing the bike, and the narrowness of the trail at times would have made me uncomfortable. But mountain biking isn't my sport, either.

The one creek crossing quenched AJ's thirst, though bring water for your canine companions because they'll need it. A substantive wood bridge ensured us two-leggeds didn't have to get wet.

The only real downside to the hike is that it requires walking on pavement to get back to the car, including a stretch along Jacks Valley Road. Still, the shoulder is wide enough to feel safe.



A mountain biker makes his way up the Eagle Ridge Loop.  
Photo/Kathryn Reed

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### **Getting there:**

From South Lake Tahoe, take Highway 50 east to Stateline. Take Kingsbury Grade to the Carson Valley. Turn left on Foothill Road. Go through Genoa, then turn left on Centennial Drive. Park at the corner of Snowshoe Lane. The trailhead is at the end of the lane.

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# **Opinion: Facts prove VHRs are not a problem**

**By Brad Schiller**

An ongoing war is being waged against VHRs, fueled by a very

small minority of residents and even a smaller number of onerous VHR renters. It is time to take stock of the facts and consider the role that VHRs play in the local economy.

## **VHR opponents**

Those residents opposed to VHRs offer a litany of reasons for their opposition. The most common reason is noise: VHR renters allegedly come here to party and apparently do so all night. Residents also complain that VHR renters park too many cars, thereby depriving full-time residents of scarce parking space. Those same renters are blamed for traffic congestion, lengthening the time it takes full-time residents to get across town. Some opponents have also suggested in (opinion pieces) that the influx of VHR residents has increased area pollution. For these many reasons, opponents want to curtail and even ban VHRs in South Lake Tahoe.

## **Incidence of complaints**

Given the intensity of the VHR opposition, the actual number of complaints is surprisingly small. In the last calendar quarter for which official (South Lake Tahoe) data is available (July-September) there were only 206 complaints initiated by neighbors. If each of those complaints referred to a different VHR, that would represent 11 percent of all permitted VHRs. That would be the worst-case scenario for VHRs. But that statistic paints an overly pessimistic view of VHR behavior. First, only 63 violations were issued based on those complaints, representing less than 3.5 percent of permitted VHRs. Second, the city itself initiated 45 complaints, resulting in 14 violations for unpermitted VHRs and a handful of other transgressions. So, the number of neighbor-initiated violations was less than 50 over a three-month period. That is way less than one per day for the entire city. And 88 percent of those violations occurred in the “mega” VHRs that are permitted to have 10 or more occupants.

Despite the low incidence of actual violations, the City Council toughened VHR regulations, effective Dec. 22, 2017. In the first two weeks of the toughened enforcement how much changed? Not much. There were only 58 complaints in the period Dec. 20-Jan. 1, a period that encompassed not only New Year's but also SnowGlobe. Of those 58 complaints, only 23 were verified, of which 16 were for street parking. The three noise complaints (on New Year's) accounted for 0.016 percent of all permitted VHRs.

### **Concentration of complaints**

Even the absurdly low number of complaints overstates the true incidence of VHR problems. The reality is that a disproportionate percentage of these complaints come from only a handful of fierce VHR opponents. On Thanksgiving, for example, there were five citywide complaints. Four of them were lodged by the same individual. In my neighborhood, one resident has a large sign posted proclaiming that he will oppose all VHRs. He trolls outside his electrified fence looking for problems he can report. Enforcement officers almost always decide that the complaint was unjustified. City personnel are all too familiar with the half dozen residents who account for a large share of their responses.

### **Cost to the city**

Despite the extremely low incidence of VHR disturbances, the city has not only tightened regulations on VHR owners but chosen to spend a lot more money on code enforcement. In November, the City Council approved hiring three more enforcement officers, bringing the potential total to five. One of them is intended to be full time. Think about the benefit/cost ratio here. A force of five enforcement officers, plus regular police, to identify and cite an average of less than one VHR violation per day. Who can possibly justify that kind of budget? Especially in a city where voters rejected higher taxes to pay for road improvements.

Then there is the value of VHRs. VHRs are popular everywhere because they offer comfortable and private quarters that hotels and motels can't match. Contrary to what opponents allege, our VHRs are more attractive to families with children than to hard-core partiers. Partiers much prefer Opal, Peek, and partying with Arty over quiet neighborhoods. The families renting VHRs are a great source of income not only for the city, which collected over \$3 million in TOT revenues in the last fiscal year, but also to the entire gamut of businesses in South Lake – from McDonald's to Heavenly ski school. The visitors who stay in VHRs are a vital part of the local economy.

### **Unjust discrimination**

Economics aside, one might also consider the equity issue wrapped up in the VHR debate. Why is it considered illegal for a VHR renter to park on a public street that is open to everyone else? Why is the noise from a VHR party or hot tub any more onerous than the same nuisance from a permanent renter or owner? Why is the traffic congestion caused by VHR renters any different from the congestion caused by other residents or visitors? Do VHR renters create more litter or pollution than other visitors or residents? And then there is the issue of now mandatory bear boxes for VHRs. Most VHRs have a sequence of short-term renters and must clean the home and dispose of the garbage before the next visitor arrives. In the 30 years that I have owned VHRs in the city, we have never used the city's trash services. Yet, we have paid for that service every month. If we don't leave trash out for the city to pick up, why require a bear box? Are other VHRs more prone to "bear raids" than neighboring residences? Or is this just another mechanism to discourage VHRs? It's time for the city and the county to consider seriously the unjust discrimination they are imposing on people who own or rent VHRs in our community.

*Brad Schiller is a professor of economics and longtime VHR*

*owner in South Lake Tahoe.*

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# California legal pot to test supply pipeline

**By Michael R. Blood, AP**

Most Californians with an urge to smoke a joint will enter the state's legal marijuana marketplace through a single doorway – at a retail shop.

But out of view of those day-to-day sales, the state is ushering in a sprawling, untested system to move pot from place to place that will also serve as a collection point for taxes, a gateway for testing and a packaging center for the plant's fragrant buds.

The so-called marijuana distributor is a kind of skeleton connecting the state's emerging industry of growers, sellers and manufacturers. It's envisioned as a vast back office where the grunt work of keeping track of cannabis and getting it from farms to store shelves will take place.

**Read the whole story**

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## Cold,        snowy        conditions

# **predicted for this week**

The lake level may finally be kissed with measurable snow after weeks of Mother Nature flirting with winter.

The National Weather Service in Reno has issued a winter storm watch for the greater Lake Tahoe area for the 24-hour period starting Thursday afternoon.

The snow level is expected to drop to 4,500 feet, where up to 6 inches of snow is possible. Between 6 and 12 inches is expected above 6,500 feet, and 1 to 2 feet above that elevation.

The wind will be picking up, with ridge gusts potentially topping 100 mph.

The weather system will likely start with rain at the lake.

In addition to the moisture, the temperature will drop significantly. Thursday's high is expected to be 51 degrees in South Lake Tahoe, while Friday's could be 29 degrees. Overnight lows will dip into the teens.

*– Lake Tahoe News staff report*