EDC sex offender guilty on 16 felony counts

A jury on Nov. 8 found an El Dorado County man guilty of 16 felony sex crimes.

Robert Lee Edmonds, 24, of Cameron Park committed sex crimes against five children under the age of 14, provided controlled substances to a minor, possessed child pornography, and made criminal threats.



Robert Edmonds

The crimes were committed over a two-year period, beginning in 2014 and ending when Edmonds was arrested in 2016.

“Sexual assault against children has become an all too common crime,” District Attorney Vern Pierson said in a press release. “In El Dorado County, we continue to aggressively pursue these cases and seek the maximum punishment under the law against these predators, seeking justice on behalf of these most vulnerable victims.”

According to the El Dorado County District Attorney’s Office, Edmonds befriended his intended victims and then used that relationship to take advantage of them sexually.

Edmonds is scheduled to be sentenced Jan. 22. He faces a maximum sentence of 106 years to life in state prison.

Edmonds is in custody in the Placerville jail.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Study: Weed can be worse for forests than logging



Tree leaves and needles are removed because they block sunlight needed for marijuana crops. Photo/USFS

By Kaleigh Rogers, Motherboard

From guzzling water to pesticide pollution, it's been long established that growing weed—legally or not—isn't great for the environment. But a recent study published in the journal "Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment" shows that, at least by some measures, it can be even worse for the environment than logging.

By comparing GIS data in Northern California from 2000 to 2013, researchers found that while logging has a greater impact overall, weed can be even more destructive on a per-

unit-area basis. That’s because illegal cannabis grow ops are typically buried deep in the woods, are irregular in size and shape, and are scattered around randomly.

Compared to logging, which typically occurs in large, clear-cut swaths at the edge of the forest, this can have a serious impact on what should be the most protected part of the forest: its core.

Read the whole story

Nevada flag maker struggles to meet demand

By KOLO-TV

Scott Stites is the founder and owner of Sparks Metalcrafters. He says he can’t make U.S. flags and other products fast enough. The wait time for a product can last months.

Sparks Metalcrafters doesn’t use polyester, nylon or cotton to make the U.S. Flag. It uses metal.

“I’m not afraid to spend money on the best components,” Stites said.

He also uses some of the best equipment to craft his flags and other emblems. He purchased a CNC Plasma Cutter to produce the designs he created on his computer.

Read the whole story

Nev. health insurance outreach aims to bridge fed cuts

By Yvonne Gonzalez, Las Vegas Sun

A huge federal cut to health insurance outreach is spurring awareness efforts, with minority and rural communities considered some of the most at risk of missing the message.

Open enrollment on the Silver State Health Exchange runs through Dec. 15. Heather Korbulic, executive director of the exchange, said an estimated 11 percent of Nevada residents remain uninsured and about 43,000 consumers are eligible for subsidies but not accessing them, either purchasing private plans off the exchange or just remaining uninsured.

Meanwhile, the federal government has cut 90 percent from marketing and advertising for the Affordable Care Act, and implemented a 40 percent drop in outreach funding.

Read the whole story

K’s Kitchen: Family-style shepherd’s pie

By Kathryn Reed

It’s the season for comfort food. This completely fits that description.

Shepherd’s pie is something I don’t order at restaurants because it’s usually made with meat. Like a lot of recipes, mushrooms are a good way to make a dish vegetarian friendly.

I made this recipe last weekend with the help of my mom and two of my sisters. While I have a small kitchen, it was fun to have three sous chefs. It’s not that this recipe needed four people, but it did speed up the chopping, helped with taste testing (aka seasoning), and meant I didn’t have to make the mashed potatoes.

It didn’t surprise me that the flavors melded overnight to make for an even more delightful lunch. I love leftovers.

Consider making this after Thanksgiving and using the leftover mashed potatoes for this.



Portabella Shepherd’s Pie

3 C mashed potatoes
3 T olive oil
8 large portabella mushroom caps, gills removed, halved and cut into slices
2¾ C yellow onion, chopped
2 C carrots, peeled and chopped
2 T fresh rosemary, chopped
2 tsp kosher salt
1 tsp freshly ground pepper

5 garlic cloves, chopped
½ C dry white wine
3 T flour
1½ C vegetable broth
Finely chopped flat-leaf parsley

If starting potatoes from scratch, start cooking them so they will be ready to be mashed when the vegetable concoction is done.

Heat oil in large pan over medium-high. Cook mushrooms until softened and liquid has mostly evaporated. Add onion, carrots, rosemary, salt, and pepper; cook until onions and carrots are tender. Stir in garlic. Add wine and cook until completely evaporated. Sprinkle vegetables with flour; stirring constantly. Gradually add broth. Cook until thick.

Pour vegetables into 9 x 13 pan. Spread mashed potatoes over vegetables.

Broil until lightly browned. Sprinkle with parsley.

Ballot proposal would obliterate VHRs in SLT

By Kathryn Reed

From 1,400 vacation rentals to zero is what a group of South Lake Tahoe residents would like to see happen.

Dan Browne and Ken Weitzman are the two who have signed the paperwork to bring the initiative to the ballot in November 2018. Peggy Bourland, they both said, is the other key player behind the movement. (She chose not to speak to *Lake Tahoe*

News.)

Browne and Weitzman say hundreds of residents have said they support the cause.

Weitzman told *Lake Tahoe News* the reason for the measure "is because the city has not done anything to alleviate the problems create by vacation rentals in neighborhood. There are so many people who are tormented weekend and week out."

They say residences are being turned into hotels. Noise is a predominant issue. And no one at the city, they contend, is doing anything to curtail the problems. They are fed up, don't believe the council is listening and want the people of South Lake Tahoe to take control.

Their proposal would take the 1,400 VHRS that are permitted outside the tourist core area and eliminate them all within a year of the initiative's passage.

According to City Manager Nancy Kerry, "Many of those homes would likely be placed on the market to sell, which would flood the market immediately, reducing property values. As you know from the Great Recession, as home prices were rapidly falling, the problem was exacerbated as people flooded the real estate market by adding their home for sale to the mix. Consider that if even if just 10 to 20 percent of the 1,400 VHRs (140-280 homes) were added to the for-sale market overnight due to the ban, the competition for buyers would drive prices down, reducing property values, which in turn reduces income for homeowners and all the residual financial impacts. If the percentage of VHR owners who put their home on the market was more than 20 percent, the financial impacts to the real estate market would be significant."



The Gondola Vista condo project near the state line could provide more vacation rentals in the tourist core. Photo/LTN

It's a lengthy process to get the proposal on the ballot, and then people must vote for it. If approved, there is always the threat of a lawsuit to challenge its legitimacy. Plus, there is talk of a counter-measure that would further muddy the waters.

Proponents have 180 days from Nov. 8 to get signatures from 10 percent of the registered voters in the city based on the last General Election, so just more than 1,100 people. Those will then be verified by the county elections officials. Other paperwork is required as well.

"We are willing to roll the dice. If people in South Lake Tahoe want an unlimited number of vacation rentals, so be it," Browne told *Lake Tahoe News*. "We tried to bring this to the attention of the City Council and work with them as much as we could and they gave us a deaf ear."

Weitzman said, "We are willing to sit down and talk. The city has neglected us. We have to somehow make them understand us. I want to have a nice, congenial, pleasant town."

While both say a compromise is possible, neither would say what it would take to get them to drop the ballot proposal.

Vacation home rentals in the city – and throughout the state and elsewhere – have become more contentious as residents grow frustrated with lack of enforcement and locals can't find a place to live.

The city has had dozens of meetings, revised the ordinance multiple times since it was first approved in 2003, commissioned an economic study, formed a subcommittee of two councilmembers, and has met with various interested parties.

The ballot group wants the real estate community to come to the table and propose a number. It has yet to do so as a group.

The South Tahoe Association of Realtors provided the following statement to *Lake Tahoe News*, ""Representatives from the South Tahoe Association of Realtors met with members of the group pursuing a ballot measure to ban VHRs outside of the tourist core area, and sincerely engaged in dialogue in an effort to come to better understanding of issues and concerns about VHRs. Our intention is to work with all interested parties to find a mutually acceptable solution. Given the size of our diverse membership of 300-plus Realtors and 500-plus MLS participants, we need time to reach out to them before we can take a position. We do agree that robust enforcement is key to making any option work."

Austin Sass, whose tenure as mayor will be over Dec. 12, has taken it upon himself to meet with various groups under the guise of representing the entire council. However, his colleagues gave him no direction to do so, nor did he have the power to make promises. He and Councilwoman Wendy David were the council's VHR subcommittee, but she was not invited to all of the powwows.

The city is going forward with its business, including looking

for a company to provide assistance with monitoring VHRs and providing enforcement help. Bids are being taken until Nov. 20, with the expectation the council will vote on a firm at its December meeting. At the Nov. 21 meeting the second reading of the latest VHR ordinance is expected to be voted on. This is what limits the number of VHRs to 1,400.

Regarding the ballot proposal, the city plans to analyze the financial impact.

“If it were to pass, as I wrote in the last staff report to council, something that drastic could very likely create a similar impact of a recession,” Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News.* “The loss of 1,400 vacation home rentals would result in a substantial loss in transient occupancy taxes for the city.”

The city receives approximately $2.8 million in TOT from VHRs – which is citywide. The ballot initiative would not affect the tourist core, which has a few hundred units.

Browne was asked if the economic impact weighed on his decision to go forward. It’s “not a concern,” he said.

Weitzman, though, disagrees with his compatriot. “Yes, that does concern me because I love this local town.” What he wants is for people in VHRs to use the empty hotel rooms so the economic impact is not as severe.

Here is the ballot title and summary as prepared by law by the city’s attorney.

Opinion: Religious roots of

America’s love for camping

By Terence Young

Summer 1868 passed as an unremarkable season at Saranac Lake in New York’s Adirondack Mountains. The weather was fine, the scenery delightful, and the usual array of 200 to 300 recreational hunters and anglers passed through the small settlement on their way into the wild lands beyond. The summers of 1869 and 1870, however, were an altogether different story.

The weather was more or less the same, and the scenery continued to entrance, but instead of a handful of sportsmen came a multitude of men and women from points east and south to enjoy America’s newest recreation—camping.

Almost to a person, they had been inspired by what today, at the beginning of the 21st Century, we recognize as the watershed book in the history of American camping: The first comprehensive “how-to-camp” guidebook, “Adventures in the Wilderness; or, Camp-Life in the Adirondacks,” which had been written in April 1869 by a young minister named William H.H. Murray. Promoting a powerful combination of nature as spiritual and physical cure, and camping as an open and equal activity, Murray’s book took a previously quiet region and transformed it into a nationwide destination, and gave Americans a new, reassuring form of leisure.

William Henry Harrison Murray was born in 1840 to a modest New England family whose ancestors had been among the first settlers of his hometown, Guilford, Conn. His boyhood was an enthusiastic mixture of study, farm work, and outdoor recreation. Bill, as he was generally known, learned to shoot, hunt and fish, even as he developed a voracious reading habit and a taste for literature. Gregarious and energetic, Murray entered Yale College in fall 1858, and upon graduating

immediately married Isadora Hull, who also loved the out of doors.

Determined to become a minister, Murray entered the Congregationalist East Windsor Seminary near Hartford, Conn., where he finished his theological studies in 1864. He then served in a succession of increasingly prosperous and prestigious churches in Connecticut and Massachusetts, most famously at the Park Street Church in Boston. During these years Murray earned a reputation as a church leader and as an eloquent, engaging speaker, but he also gained notoriety for enjoying such outdoor recreations as hunting and fishing, which congregationalists generally discouraged because they viewed these sports as undermining pastoral zeal.

Murray took his first camping vacation in the Adirondacks in summer 1864 and returned annually for many years. He canoed and hiked widely; his favorite campsite was on Osprey Island at Raquette Lake. Occasionally Murray brought parties with him, which could include not only his friends, but his wife and his friends' wives. Smitten by the Adirondacks' beauty and the leisure time he enjoyed there, Murray started writing about his trips in a series of lively, often humorous "narrative exercises." Such compositions were common among ministers who worked on animated, cheerful essays to improve their ability to devise engaging sermons. In Murray's case, the subjects included canoeing, hunting, fishing, and the powerful beauty of nature. The voice was steadily self-deprecating and ironic.

Murray never intended his "narrative exercises" for publication—but when a good friend encouraged him in 1869 to publish a book on any subject with the prestigious Boston publisher of Osgood, Fields, and Company, Murray, who liked the idea but did not have a manuscript, bundled the exercises with an introductory chapter and submitted them. Initially publisher James T. Fields declined Murray's manuscript, but not wanting to embarrass the minister, he reluctantly agreed

to read the submission. Two days later, he called Murray to his office with exciting news: he wanted to publish Murray's book that spring. "Your method of interpreting nature and your humor are unlike anything that we have ever seen," Fields said. "This little book, I am confident, is destined to a great career."

"Adventures in the Wilderness" was met with mixed reviews. The *Overland Monthly* dismissed Murray's writing as "gorgeous French, badly translated" while the *Nation* found his practical advice to be "sensible and worth taking." Nonetheless, the book was immediately popular with the public and a tremendous commercial success, making Murray both famous and wealthy by June. We do not know exactly how many copies were sold, but the numbers probably rose into the tens, and perhaps hundreds, of thousands. The book was in its tenth printing by July 7. Years later, Murray recalled that for a long time "Adventures" had sold at a rate of approximately 500 per week.

Within months of the book's release, the sleepy Adirondack region was transformed, as an unprecedented horde of 2,000 to 3,000 recreational campers, hunters, and anglers arrived from New York, Boston, Hartford, Philadelphia and other cities. According to a reporter on the 1870 scene, "Mr. Murray's book … drew a throng of pleasure-seekers into the lake region. It was amusing to see the omnipresence of this book. It seemed to be everywhere. Hawked through the cars; placarded in the steamers; for sale in the most unlooked-for places; by every carpet-bag and bundle lay a tourist's edition of Murray."

The stampede of visitors, which continued unabated through the summers of 1869 and 1870, came to be called "Murray's Rush" and its instigator gained a nickname: "Adirondack" Murray. By July 1869, demand for "Adventures" was so great that unscrupulous publishers began to produce a knock-off "Tourist's Edition" with 12 pages of railroad timetables and a map in the back pocket. Railroads began to offer a free copy with each round-trip ticket to the Adirondacks to generate

more riders. Soon, it seemed that everyone traveling to the Adirondacks owned “a copy of Murray.”

“Adventures” produced its remarkable effect for several reasons. The Adirondacks were more accessible than ever, as railroads and a telegraph line reached the region’s margin in 1868. The post-Civil War economy was booming, which increased middle-class wealth and made it possible for more people to buy Murray’s book and act on his advice. Finally, Murray’s book had substance. Adirondack travel literature published prior to “Adventures” had offered readers little useful information, but the long introductory chapter in Murray’s book offered a great deal of practical advice. Murray explained how to get to the Adirondacks, how to avoid pesky insects, where to buy equipment, which qualities to value in a guide, a few names of local guides, and what accommodations were available. He told nascent campers what gear to bring, and what to leave at home.

Furthermore, “Adventures” produced its dramatic popular response because Murray was the first writer to present camping as pilgrimage. In its simplest form, a pilgrim is someone who leaves home, journeys to a sacred place as an act of devotion, and returns home changed; personal motivations vary, but pilgrims typically seek escape from the routine and restrictions of ordinary life in order to find spiritual satisfaction and comfort, as well as other desired objectives like wealth, longevity or happiness.

Pilgrims need not be religiously oriented, and in the United States they have tended not to be. American pilgrims frequently headed out of cities to rural and wildland areas for family reunions, revivals, and the like even before “Adventures” appeared. Murray, unlike his literary predecessors, placed camping within this American pilgrimage pattern. He held out the Adirondacks as a sacred place that could act as a balm to everyday iniquities. American life had changed rapidly after the Civil War, which had spurred

widespread industrialization and urbanization. Growing cities offered enhanced employment options, improved amenities, and a host of other attractions, but also assaulted their residents. Smoke, noise and crowding; shifting gender, class, ethnic and other social relations; increased social diversity and stratification; production schedules and pervasive regulation, and other rapid changes left many city dwellers confused, alienated, and with their sense of identity unmoored and adrift.

Yearning for a sense of belonging and connection, they heard Murray's call to the wild. The minister explicitly blamed urban life for his readers' yearnings and aches, and prescribed camping as cure. "Adventures," he declared, was written for those "who, put up in narrow offices and narrower studies, weary of the city's din, long for a breath of mountain air and the free life by field and flood." These lost ideals, he assured his readers, could be found on a camping trip. Murray repeatedly detailed how one's physical health benefited from an Adirondack outing and, being a minister, argued that camping was essential for one's spiritual vitality. "If a person would know how sensitive his nature is," Murray declared, "he must leave the haunts of men, where every sight and sound distracts his attention … and amid the silence of the woods, hold communion with his Maker."

Pilgrimage often involves some equalizing of the social divisions that occur in everyday life. Murray broke the gender barrier by insisting that camping was "delightful to ladies. There is nothing in the trip which the most delicate and fragile need fear. And it is safe to say, that, of all who go into the woods, none enjoy the experiences more than ladies, and certain it is that none are more benefited by it." To cement women's interest, his book detailed the components for a "Ladies Outfit," including gloves with "armlets," a felt hat, a "flannel change throughout," waterproof footwear, and a "short walking-dress, with Turkish drawers fastened with a

band tightly at the ankle.” No woman, in Murray’s opinion, was to avoid camping because she feared for her health or safety.

With Murray as its suddenly famous proselytizer, camping exploded onto the American scene—for men and women, young and old. “Adventures” was a well-written and practical book, but more than that, the public was ready for its message. The Adirondack summers of 1871 and afterward were never again as wild as those of 1869 and 1870, but that was only because Saranac Lake’s facilities expanded, and an ever-increasing number of campers spread out to surrounding regions. When William H.H. Murray told America’s growing middle classes that their cities were profane and that pollution, regulation, and crowding was destroying their sense of belonging, they agreed—more than anyone, even Murray, had suspected was possible.

Terence Young is professor emeritus of geography at the California State Polytechnic University, Pomona. He has written numerous books and articles on the American love affair with the natural environment and is the author of “Heading Out: A History of American Camping.”

Barton Foundation provides grants to area nonprofits

The Barton Foundation this month gave out $53,000 to local nonprofits to boost services and programs focused on mental health, substance abuse, and access to care.

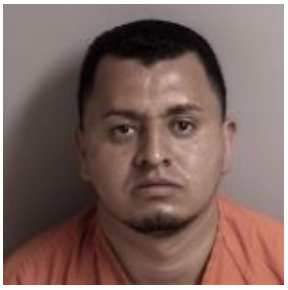
These were the top three areas of need identified by the 2015 Community Health Needs Assessment completed by Barton Health.

The recipients include:

- Boys & Girls Club of Lake Tahoe, supporting social and emotional growth camps for at risk children.
- Live Violence Free, providing funds for child advocacy and youth therapy services.
- Lake Tahoe Unified School District ALLY Club, to educate those working with LGBTQ youth and other under-served populations.
- LTUSD Dental Hygiene Program, for K-8 grade dental care and high school dental education.
- National Alliance of Mental Illness (NAMI) El Dorado County Chapter, supporting the Brain Health Leadership Club at South Tahoe High School.
- Police Activities League, support for at-risk youth.
- SOS Outreach, for healthy living workshops and leadership development programs serving at risk youth.
- South Lake Tahoe Cancer League, supporting community members fighting cancer with transportation to receive care.
- Tahoe Coalition for the Homeless, for temporary shelter services and equipment.
- Tahoe Magic, for Young Tahoe Smiles program funding with dentist Mireya Ortega. Dental care for area youth that are uninsured.
- Tahoe Senior Plaza, to provide hygiene products, transportation, health and wellness programs for low-income seniors.
- Tahoe Transportation District, support for transportation programs focused on seniors, veterans and the disabled.
- Tahoe Turning Point, for the foster youth placed in residential group homes.
- Tahoe Youth & Family Services, for providing free youth mental health and substance abuse counseling services.

SLT man faces possible life sentence for sex crimes

A former maintenance worker at a South Lake Tahoe hotel was convicted on seven felony counts, including kidnapping for the purpose of committing a sexual assault, as well as six additional counts and numerous special allegations relating to the subsequent sexual assault of the victim.



Manuel Ramos-Munoz

Manuel Ovidio Ramos-Munoz, 32, could face life in prison. Sentencing is scheduled for Jan. 19. He has been taken into custody without bail.

According to the El Dorado County District Attorney's Office, "On June 11, 2015, the 22-year-old victim had recently arrived from Macedonia to work for the summer as an exchange student when she was taken at knife point by Ramos-Munoz from the steps of her hotel room. Ramos-Munoz forced the victim into the dark, secluded parking lot adjacent to her hotel and repeatedly sexually and physically assaulted her, resulting in numerous injuries to the young victim."

Ramos-Munoz had been a maintenance worker and resident at the Big Pines Mountain House of Tahoe for four years prior to the

incident,

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Celebrity golf tourney helps Tahoe nonprofits

Thirty South Shore nonprofits were beneficiaries Nov. 9 of this summer's American Century Championship golf tournament.

Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority officials distributed the $51,000 at the board meeting Thursday.

Grants ranging from $500 – $5,000 were distributed to: American Youth Soccer Organization, Barton Foundation, Boys & Girls Club of Lake Tahoe, Bread & Broth 4 Kids, Bringing Art to Schools, Christmas Cheer All Year, El Dorado County Habitat for Humanity, El Dorado County Search and Rescue, Juvenile Service Council of El Dorado County, Kahle Community Center, Kelly Ridge, Kiwanis Community Organization Inc. (Coats for Kids), Lake Tahoe Bicycle Coalition, Lake Tahoe Community College Foundation, Lake Tahoe Educational Fund, Lake Tahoe Environmental Science Magnet School, Lake Tahoe Epic Curling, Lake Tahoe Unified School District, Live Violence Free, Saint Joseph Community Land Trust, Soroptimist International of Tahoe Sierra, South Lake Tahoe Cancer League, South Tahoe Vikings Booster Club, Tahoe Arts Project, Tahoe Coalition for the Homeless, Tahoe Magic, Tahoe Regional Young Professionals, Tahoe Senior Plaza, Tahoe Turning Point, Tahoe Youth & Family Services, and Whittell High School Booster Club.

Since its inception in 1990, the tournament has donated more than $4.5 million to local and national nonprofits.