Ex-Heavenly worker admits to child porn charges



Stephan L. DeGraffenreid

By Marcella Corona, Reno Gazette-Journal

A former children's ski instructor at Heavenly Mountain Resort pleaded guilty to three felony child pornography charges.

Stephan DeGraffenreid, 26, pleaded to one count of sexual exploitation of a minor and two counts of attempted sexual exploitation. He faces a mandatory minimum sentence of 15 years in prison for each charge.

Acting U.S. Attorney Steven Myhre for the District of Nevada made the announcement of DeGraffenreid's guilty plea in a news release on Tuesday.

Read the whole story

Opinion: LTCC denounces DACA

decision

By Jeff DeFranco

Lake Tahoe Community College joins the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office and Chancellor Eloy Ortiz Oakley in denouncing the White House's action on Tuesday to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.



Jeff DeFranco

The program protects 800,000 immigrant youth who were brought to the United States by their parents from deportation, and gives them the freedom to work, learn, and live their lives. These young people attend high schools and colleges, hold jobs, and in some cases serve in the United States Armed Forces. This is the only country, and sometimes the only language and culture, many of them know.

On Tuesday, Oakley described ending DACA as a "senseless decision that goes against American ideals and basic human decency. In California, we don't put dreams – or Dreamers – on hold."

Lake Tahoe Community College remains committed to serving all students, regardless of their backgrounds or immigration status. We are committed to providing them with a safe learning environment. And, we will continue to protect the private information that all of our students provide in the college application and registration process.

I have met many of our DACA students, and I know they are contributing members of our college and our community. I want our DACA students to know that we stand with them and remain fully committed to helping them achieve their educational goals.

The decision to "unwind" DACA does not impact LTCC students' ability to attend college, qualify for an exemption from non-resident tuition fees under AB540, or to apply for financial aid under the provisions of the California Dream Act. These are state programs that are entirely separate and distinct from DACA and the federal enforcement of immigration laws.

Current DACA students should know that the action taken by the White House does not mean that the DACA program has been terminated. Instead, a six-month window was created by the Trump administration for Congress to put the program into legislation. For now, current DACA students should know that:

- Anyone with a current DACA status can continue to enjoy the benefits of the program, including deferred action and work authorization.
- The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) does not intend to terminate an individual's DACA status prior to its stated expiration date.
- An individual whose DACA status is set to expire between now and March 5, 2018, may still apply for a renewal of their DACA status. However, the application for renewal must be accepted by Oct. 5, 2017.

This information comes from a DHS memorandum released on Sept. 5. A link to the entire memorandum is **here**.

For more information about the California Dream Act and Tuesday's DACA announcement, please go **online**.

Jeff DeFranco is president of Lake Tahoe Community College.

Opinion: Tahoe the talk of Hollywood

By Carol Chaplin

This past week is one for the record books in South Lake Tahoe. I know, you're thinking record temperatures, attendance at one of our special events or our filled-to-capacity lake. All wrong – I'm referring to ABC's Emmy Award-winning hit TV comedy series "Modern Family" and the filming of the show's season premiere here at South Shore.



Carol Chaplin

Now in its ninth season, the television mockumentary sitcom follows the lives of an extended family living in suburban Los Angeles. This year's premiere is centered around a joint houseboat vacation on Lake Tahoe. The episode is scheduled to air on ABC Sept. 27.

How does a hit television series go on location? It takes partnerships and coordination. A lot of coordination.

It all started with a call from Kathleen Dodge with the El Dorado County Film Commission to us/LTVA to explain the opportunity. She worked tirelessly with LTVA team and partners on strategy meetings, phone calls, emails, text messages,

scouting trips, planning, etc. Dodge also worked with the production team to secure permits through the U.S. Forest Service, coordinated with Matt Green of California State Parks, and the El Dorado Service Office Marine Division. She had the support from El Dorado County Supervisor Sue Novasel as well as El Dorado County Chamber of Commerce CEO Laurel Brent-Bumb and director of tourism, Jody Franklin.

In initial planning stages, Dodge had a site visit brunch at Riva Grill with “Modern Family’s” creative team to showcase the destination. Councilmember Tom Davis, local photographer Tim White, and Greg Almos with El Dorado County Sheriff’s Office joined them to brainstorm turning this into reality.

Our team assisted with Dodge for cast/crew accommodations and leveraging local business involvement in South Shore/El Dorado County. All of this gave us an up close behind the scenes look at how Hollywood magic really happens.

The Lodge at Edgewood Tahoe was headquarters for the cast during their week of shooting, while the crew made Lake Tahoe Resort Hotel their home away from home. Camp Richardson’s marina became a set staging area as the cast took over the resort’s marina duplex for hair and makeup, and added barges, boats, Jet Skis, and security. Bob Hassett and team at the marina were flexible, patient and accommodating. The production crew of approximately 150 people were amazing, courtesy and the kind of guests you dream of working with.

Word that the celebrities were in town started to spread as the cast and crew expressed their awe of Lake Tahoe on their personal social media accounts, starting with actress Julie Bowen’s Instagram post of a Tahoe sunset from Edgewood Lodge the night of her arrival, tagging it simply, “Ok, Tahoe. You got me.”

Sofia Vergara, who plays Gloria Pritchett on the show has 13 million-plus Instagram followers and posted 20-plus

images/video on her channel with majority of posts garnering a minimum of 100K likes each. The cast enjoyed South Shore's offerings during their time off including mountain biking, escaping Trapped in Tahoe's rooms, dining, and sunsets. Jesse Tyler Ferguson sang the destination's praises at the end with, "Lake Tahoe, you have been amazing."

These posts did not go unnoticed by journalists and resulted in national media stories about the filming including Travel + Leisure, Hollywood Reporter and UK Daily Mail.

You can't buy this kind of exposure – it would cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. Through the EDC Film Commission and our local partners, we will continue to garner millions of impressions of our incredible destination.

And the show just keeps on giving. A "Modern Family Supporting Local Families" themed-airing party will benefit Tahoe Women's Community Fund on Sept. 27. The evening includes viewing the premiere, featuring South Lake Tahoe, raffle prizes, snacks and beverages for purchase at Lake Tahoe Resort Hotel, from 7:30-9:30pm. Tickets are available for $20 in advance by emailing khaven@gmail.com.

We look forward to exploring more partnerships with the film commission. We already knew South Shore was a star. Now where's our Emmy?

Carol Chaplin is CEO and president of Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority.

Anderson wins season’s first slopestyle World Cup

By Gary R. Blockus, Team USA

Olympic champion Jamie Anderson of Meyers earned the first win of the 2017-18 slopestyle snowboarding world cup season on Sept. 4 at the Winter Games NZ in Cardrona, New Zealand.

The 26-year-old Anderson, who earned the first gold medal in women’s slopestyle snowboarding at the Olympic Winter Games Sochi 2014, scored 85.78 points to beat Japan’s Miyabi Onitsuka and New Zealand’s Zoi Sadowski Synnott, who finished second and third, respectively.

Anderson, the two-time defending champion in the biennial event at the Cardrona Alpine Resort, earned the top spot in qualifying with a 95.50 out of 100, while fellow American Hailey Langland, just 17, won her qualifying heat with 92 points, sending the Americans into the finals as the two top qualifiers.

Read the whole story

Key housing measure stuck in Calif. Assembly

By Taryn Luna, Sacramento Bee

After balking last week, the California Legislature is preparing for a vote on a series of bills that would help

offset the state’s housing crisis.

Senate Bill 2 from Sen. Toni Atkins, D-San Diego, is the most controversial measure in the housing package. The bill would impose a $75 to $225 fee on real estate transactions and generate as much as $258 million per year for low-income housing development and programs to combat homelessness.

Atkins has struggled to convince two-thirds of the Assembly – all 54 Democrats – to support a fee increase after they raised gas taxes on motorists earlier this year. Besides the unpopular transportation measure, the Legislature extended the state’s cap-and-trade program climate change, which will raise the price of gas.

Read the whole story

Man dies hiking Tahoe Rim Trail



Gordon Yorke

A man who set off to the hike the 165-mile Tahoe Rim Trail was found deceased not far from where he started.

Gordon Yorke, 56, was found Sept. 4 by search and rescue crews near Freel Peak.

No foul play is expected. An autopsy will be conducted.

The Canadian was hiking the trail alone. When family didn't hear from him and he missed supply pick-ups, authorities were notified.

Teams from El Dorado and Douglas counties participated in the search.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

S. Lake Tahoe on cusp of limiting vacation rentals

By Kathryn Reed

Owning and operating a vacation rental in South Lake Tahoe is likely to become more restrictive.

The City Council on Tuesday spent nearly six hours listening to the ideas staff and the subcommittee of councilmembers Austin Sass and Wendy David came up with, and then heard 35 people give their input. (Several people had to leave and never got a chance to talk.)

What the council didn't identify was what problems exist that necessitate any changes to the current ordinance.

A cap on the number of vacation rentals and the density of those types homes in neighborhoods are the two big unresolved issues.

Sass is of the thinking everyone believes there is a saturation point for VHRS. But that is factually inaccurate.

Plenty of people in the room believed free market should dictate the number.

Even among the council there was not consensus on a cap.

Comments on Sept. 5 spanned the spectrum from wanting a ban on the rentals to having an unlimited supply.

Most believe enforcement needs to be a bigger part of the picture. That has been an ongoing theme as these meetings. Noise, trash and parking remain the top three complaints.

The police department has the responsibility to make sure the laws are enforced. Community service officers are hired to do this. A second person is coming on board soon, which means there will be coverage seven days a week.

Councilwoman Brooke Laine believes enforcement is lacking – saying one CSO working four days a week is not robust enforcement.

Sass doesn't believe there will ever be enough enforcement to satisfy people.

An increase in permit fees for owners was supposed to pay for added enforcement. The city admits it has had a hard time finding people to fill that position, so the added enforcement has not been consistent. This means it is not known if adequate enforcement would resolve real or perceived problems.

From mid-December through mid-March, High Security Patrol workers were hired in a pilot program to work 10-hour overnight shifts. They did not interact directly with people at the VHR, but instead reported back to the community service officer who made the face-to-face contact. The $30,800 for the 90-day contract came from the Undesignated Vacation Home Rental Fund.

As of Tuesday's meeting, there were 1,350 active vacation home rental permits, with 92 pending. This represents about 18

percent of the housing stock in the city limits. Including the tourist core, there are about 1,800 VHR permits.

While the city contends the number of VHR permits is going up, based on stats provided by staff in **July 2015** there were 1,600 permits before the changes took effect that year and were closer to 2,000 after the new rules.

In 2015, it was stated that vacation rentals are a $20 million business in town. Changing the rules could reduce that figure. As one person said, a cap would be a "community killer." Secondary businesses like cleaning, hot tub service and landscaping are part of the VHR economy.

For the city, transient occupancy tax is its main revenue source, equating to millions of dollar a year.

The council has been tweaking the ordinance nearly every year since it was first adopted in January 2003.

While no action was taken Sept. 5, direction was given to staff to come back with a revised ordinance that would include:

· Mandatory bear boxes for VHRs.

· Allowing homeowners associations in the Tahoe Keys and Tahoe Tyrol to enact their own rules.

· Increasing fines.

· Eliminating warnings.

· Counting children as occupants.

· Limiting hot tub use from 7am-10pm.

· Occupancy totals being two per bedroom. Occupancy is any time of day – not just those sleeping there.

· Eliminating zoning hearings.

The tourist core area would not be affected by any changes in the next iteration of the ordinance.

Many of those commenting spoke about the potential of new VHRs not being allowed within 250 feet of an existing one. (This was a subcommittee recommendation.) With many neighborhoods having 50- to 60-foot frontages, that would mean about every fifth house could be used as a VHR. The city, though, could not provide a figure for how many VHRs would then be allowed.

Laine did math at the meeting and came up with a total of 250 VHRs would be allowed if the 250-foot rule were enacted.

Staff said they'd come back in October to show how many VHRs would be allowed based on different density scenarios.

Existing VHRs would be grandfathered in. However, industry representatives said about 15 percent of VHRs turn over each year. Their fear is ultimately there would be a dramatic decrease in the number of VHRs because the homeowner could not meet the 250-foot criteria.

Jerry Goodman, who has been a longtime opponent of VHRS because of the problems in his neighborhood, said he would consider getting a permit to stop others from being able to get one.

The subcommittee thought going forward 1,100 square foot homes or smaller should not be allowed to be a VHR. The thinking is this could help free up housing stock for permanent residents.

Councilman Jason Collin said it's important to separate the VHR issue from housing for full-time residents. He mentioned how he recently rented a small place and knows people coming to Tahoe might want a similar abode. Plus, he believes those owners should be able to make money.

Councilwoman Brooke Laine seconded those thoughts. She said it's better to incentivize what the council wants, not set up

obstacles to what they don’t want.

David supports 1,100 square foot and smaller houses being taken out of the VHR pool because she believes locals would be able to live there.

Ultimately, the 1,100 square foot threshold was eliminated.

(Councilman Tom Davis had recused himself from the entire discussion because of his ties to Tahoe Keys Resort Association.)

The subcommittee had wanted owners to be subjected to the same rules as renters, which would include noise and occupancy. That rule would mean owners could essentially not have parties because they would be over the occupancy threshold. That idea got dropped.

It was also agreed to back off on the idea of having an owner or their rep have to meet with the renters in person.

The council is slated to revisit the vacation home rental ordinance at the first meeting in October.

At the end of the meeting the council asked staff to bring back an agenda item to discuss possibly limiting the size of house on lots to thwart McMansions that tend to be built primarily as a vacation rental.

Accident causes delays on Kingsbury Grade



Vehicles had to be towed from Kingsbury Grade on Sept. 5. Photo/Natalie Yanish

A multi-car accident on Kingsbury Grade early Tuesday evening had traffic backed up in both directions.

The road has since reopened.

According to the Douglas County sheriff's personnel, no one was injured.

Further details were not available.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

· From the National Weather Service in Reno: "Increasing chances for T-storms this week. Some storms will be strong and produce heavy rainfall, especially on Wednesday."

· Northern Nevada farmers, chefs, and brewers are putting on Supper in the Street in downtown Sparks on Sept. 21, 5:30-8pm on Victorian Square. Regular tickets are $40

person, and VIP tickets with fast pass seating are $55 per person. Details and reservations are available **online**.

· A glider based in Minden set a world record in Argentina on Sept. 3 when it flew higher than 52,000 feet. Jim Payne and Morgan Sandercock were at the controls of the Airbus Perlan Mission II.

· Douglas County sheriff's Explorers received $1,000 for assisting with the Fore the Kids golf tournament in Genoa last month.

· After 25 years, Michael Berry is retiring as chief executive of the National Ski Areas Association. Parker Riehle is taking his place.

Smoke, rain an issue in Tahoe basin



Smoke and rain on Sept. 5 have erased what was a sunny day to start with. Photo/LTN

Cloudy, smoky skies have replaced what started out to be a beautiful, sunny day in Lake Tahoe.

Fires south of the basin are responsible for the smoke.

Radar from the National Weather Service in Reno at 2:30pm showed several strong thunderstorms rolling into the region. Heavy rain and hail are expected. Wind gusts could reach 40 mph.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report