

Politicians blocking people on social media sparks debate

By Brady McCombs, Associated Press

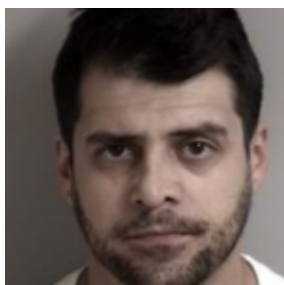
An emerging debate about whether elected officials violate people's free speech rights by blocking them on social media is spreading across the U.S. as groups sue or warn politicians to stop the practice.

The American Civil Liberties Union this week sued Maine Gov. Paul LePage and sent warning letters to Utah's congressional delegation. It followed recent lawsuits against the governors of Maryland and Kentucky and President Trump.

Trump's frequent and often unorthodox use of Twitter and allegations he blocks people with dissenting views has raised questions about what elected officials can and cannot do on their official social media pages.

[Read the whole story](#)

Prison sentence in felony hit-and-run DUI



Larry Guzman-
Martinez

A South Lake Tahoe man was sentenced this week to spend more than four years in prison for injuring a bicyclist while driving intoxicated and then fleeing the scene.

Larry Guzman-Martinez, 33, pleaded no contest to the charges. He was sentenced Aug. 14 to four years, eight months in state prison. His driver's license has been revoked and vehicle impounded.

On March 18 Guzman-Martinez struck a bicyclist after failing to stop at the intersection of Pioneer Trail and Midway Avenue. The cyclist was not seriously injured. Guzman-Martinez's blood alcohol was 0.24.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Billions in new spending for housing, water, parks and more could be on 2018 California ballot

By Liam Dillon, Los Angeles Times

Californians could vote on billions of dollars in new spending for low-income housing developments and water and parks improvements next year.

Gov. Jerry Brown and lawmakers are considering five proposals that would finance new homes for low-income residents, build

parks in neighborhoods without them and restore rivers, streams and creeks among dozens of other projects. The Legislature is likely to decide how much money would be borrowed and where it would be spent before it adjourns for the year in mid-September – a debate that legislative leaders say is pressing.

Voters have long backed bond financing, which allows the state immediately to spend more money than is otherwise available and pay back the debt with interest over time. Over the last four decades, California voters have approved \$164 billion in bond spending while only rejecting \$18 billion, according to the nonpartisan Legislative Analyst's Office.

Read the whole story

TKPOA-Lahontan working on herbicide permit

Tahoe Keys Property Owners Association is progressing with its plans to test herbicides next summer to rid the lagoons of invasive weeds.

The application to the Lahontan Water Quality Control Board was just resubmitted. That agency will have ultimate say over whether this will be allowed.

“It was resubmitted just to reorganize materials to address Lahontan staff questions; no substantive changes to the proposal itself,” Greyson Howard, spokesman for TKPOA, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Curly leaf pondweed and Eurasian watermilfoil have taken over

more than 90 percent of the 172-acre Tahoe Keys lagoon system. They have spread to other parts of the lake as well. This is usually done by boats.

The Keys wants to test nearly 14 acres with the chemical.

There is no date set when the Lahontan board will take up the matter. If Lahontan allows this, it will be the first time an herbicide has been permitted in the lake.

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Governing Board is expected to hear an update on all of this on Aug. 23.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Opinion: SLTPD enforcing no dog rules at parks

By Brian Uhler

Many South Lake Tahoe residents love their dogs. Most police officers love dogs, too. I've heard it said by someone not so long ago, "The more people I meet, the more I love dogs!"

We at the police department understand and share in this fondness. However, we receive weekly complaints from community members regarding dogs in public parks, and most frequently dogs at the Live at Lakeview events.



Brian Uhler

The South Lake Tahoe City Code does not allow dogs, even on a leash, to be in our public parks. Police officers have been asking people for voluntary compliance with this regulation and, for the most part, people are appreciative of the “soft” approach and comply. Others respond with agitation and anger, some even feel singled out.

Officers are not singling anyone out. Every person with a dog in a park is presumed to be in violation of SLTCC section 8.05.130 and should be contacted. After an officer makes contact and establishes an exemption under the law, the citizen is considered compliant.

Service animals: Under the Americans with Disabilities Act, a service animal is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for a person with a disability. The task(s) performed by the animal must be directly related to the person’s disability. Proof that the animal has been certified, trained, or licensed as a service animal is not required under the law. Those with service animals must be in control of the animal at all times.

Protections for those with disabilities: The ADA and California law respects and protects individuals with disabilities. Individuals with disabilities shall be entitled to full and equal access to places of public accommodation, including but not limited to public parks. The law also extends civil penalties to individuals who interfere with these protections.

Other support dogs: Emotional support, therapy, comfort, or companion animals are not service dogs under the ADA and do not provide the individual with an exemption to the city's restriction against dogs in the parks. We believe many people have a misunderstanding about this and this leads to further public confusion. The last thing we really want is an extended debate about the nuance of the law with people in the public.

Fake service dog issue: Lying about the legitimacy of a service dog undermines the public perception and acceptance of valid service dogs and the disable persons who truly need those dogs to assist them. There are individuals and organizations that sell service animal certification or registration documents online, these documents do not convey "rights" under the ADA and the Department of Justice does not recognize these documents as proof that a dog is a service animal. The California Penal Code protects owners of legally recognized service animals by including a prohibition against fraudulent representations of a guide, signal, or service dog. The penalty for this crime includes jail time of up to six months and a fine of up to \$1,000, as well as an administrative citation and fine for violation of SLTCC section 8.05.130.

SLTPD investigation: When a person brings a dog to a public park and/or the Live at Lakeview event, she or he should expect to be asked: (1) is the animal required because of a disability?, and (2) what task or job is the animal trained to perform? If the answers to these questions are insufficient under the law, the patron will be asked to remove the dog from the park and/or be cited.

Possible change to the law: City leaders always value insights from the community we serve. Not all cities have a prohibition against dogs in parks. Some allow dogs on leashes, but also require dog owners to pick up dog feces. Perhaps the public could express their preferences on this issue so those with the authority to make change could do so in a way which best

represents the public we serve.

Brian Uhler is the police chief in South Lake Tahoe.

6-year West Shore highway project finished

The 8-mile Highway 89 project along the West Shore that started in 2012 is finally done.

It started with Southwest Gas relocating gas lines that were in conflict with the new drainage systems to be built. That work was completed in 2014. Caltrans began drainage work in 2013 and started roadwork in 2014.

In addition to the drainage systems to filter storm water runoff, curbs and gutters were constructed, shoulder widths were increased, left-turn lanes were added and the highway was repaved and restriped.

The project cost Caltrans \$62.2 million.

Study: Forests taking longer to recover from drought

By Emily Guerin, KPCC

Gov. Jerry Brown may have declared the drought emergency over in April, but don't tell that to California's plants and

trees. According to a study, not only do the effects of drought on the environment linger after it starts raining, but this “drought recovery” period is lasting longer than ever before, likely because of climate change.

Scientists with Woods Hole Research Center, University of Utah and other institutions found that trees often don’t return to their pre-drought growth rates – even after rain and snow return.

“Just because the rains come back doesn’t mean the ecosystem is functioning,” said lead author Christopher Schwalm with the Woods Hole Research Center in Massachusetts. His study was published in Nature on Aug. 10.

Read the whole story

Vehicle fire in brush closes Kingsbury Grade



A vehicle fire in the brush on Kingsbury Grade on Aug. 19 has the road closed. Photo/Cheva Gabor

Kingsbury Grade is closed in both directions because of a fire.

Multiple fire agencies are on the scene, including a large water tender that arrived just before 10:30am Aug. 19.

It is vehicle fire – most likely a truck – on the valley side of the Grade. The vehicle is not on the pavement; it is in the brush, which is the main reason so many resources are on the scene, including a hand crew.

The fire is about 2 miles east of the summit on the north side of the road just past the old Pony Express trail. Nevada Highway Patrol has no idea when the road will reopen.

According to the U.S. Forest Service, the wildland fire was kept to one-quarter acre.

Crews are assessing whether any diesel has leaked into the soil or if it's spreading.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- Soroptimist International of South Lake Tahoe's 47th annual Evening of Food, Wine, & Beer Tasting and Competition is Nov. 10 from 6-9pm at MontBleu in Stateline. This year's event will include a best brewery competition. The theme is Hat's Off to You. Wear a special hat to be included in the best hat competition. Purchase tickets **online**.
 - The 14th annual Downtown Truckee Wine, Walk & Shop is Oct. 7 from noon-4pm. It brings wine, food and philanthropy together in support of this year's chosen nonprofit – Big Brothers Big Sisters of Nevada County and North Lake Tahoe. For more information or to buy tickets, go **online**.
 - On Sept. 9 at 8pm Stephen Stills and Judy Collins will be at MontBleu in Stateline.
 - Entrance fees to all national parks will be waived Aug. 25.
 - Friends of the West Shore is celebrating 10 years on Aug. 23 from 5-8pm at West Shore Pizza. It's a fundraiser and party. RSVP to jmtornese@aol.com.
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El Dorado County to remove dead trees

El Dorado County is looking for a contractor to remove dead trees on the West Slope.

The county has \$300,000 from the California Disaster Assistance Fund and cash from last year's budget to fell the 155 trees.

Bark beetle infestation is being blamed on the deaths of these trees in Happy Valley, Grizzly Flat and Camino. Most are pine trees, with some fir and cedar as well.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*