

Opinion: Climate change can't be stopped at the border

By David Horsey, Los Angeles Times

At Squaw Valley last weekend, skiers were half naked. Guys were going shirtless. Girls were in bikini tops. Everybody was in shorts. Ski season in California has not ended and may not completely stop before the snow starts falling again in late autumn.

Skiing with skin bared is not unprecedented. Years ago at Heavenly Valley, I got the worst sunburn of my life when I shed my shirt for a day on the slopes. But that was a day in March, not a day at the end of June.

For the last several years, the snowpack in the Sierras was far below normal, severely stressing the water supply of a state locked in a five-year drought. But that drought ended abruptly this year as the precipitation poured down. The mountain snow got so deep that some ski areas experienced temporary shutdowns when chairlifts could not clear the top of the accumulated snow.

Read the whole story

Expert: Quake storm near Truckee no big deal

By Dustin Quiroz, Reno Gazette-Journal

The Truckee area was shaken up Tuesday morning, but experts say it's nothing to fear.

Around 30 small earthquakes were recorded north of Truckee with the highest magnitude reaching 4.1.

While this may appear unusual, Mickey Cassar, a seismic records technician with the Nevada Seismological Laboratory, said it's just another case of seismic activity.

Read the whole story

Traffic-clogging Camp Rich light goes dark



The lights at Camp Richardson on June 28 are all covered and inoperable. Photo/LTN

By Kathryn Reed

A tool designed to relieve congestion in Camp Richardson did just the opposite.

That red light at the corner of the ice cream shop and the road leading to the Beacon is now covered up.

Caltrans last October installed the light as a safety measure because so many pedestrians cross Highway 89 there but drivers often failed to stop. However, what the light did instead was create a worse traffic mess. On non-holiday periods and not even on weekends vehicles were backed up to 15th Street.

“It was allowing the pedestrians to control the traffic rather than giving pedestrians a break,” South Lake Tahoe City Manager Nancy Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News*.

People would hit the button and the light would come on. There wasn't a delay as there is on most crossing lights.

But that wasn't the only problem.

“With no green people don't go right away after the red goes off,” CHP Lt. Cmdr. Terry Lowther told *Lake Tahoe News*. So, while traffic had the right-of-way, they weren't taking it.

The light only showed red, flashing red or nothing. People are programmed to not drive until they see green after a red light.



The light working on June 25 – a Monday afternoon – is perfect for pedestrians, horrible for drivers. Photo/LTN

Lowther said the light is programmable and that his agency is working with Caltrans to make it function for all involved. It's not known if this new technology actually works for the volume of foot/bike and vehicle traffic this stretch of road handles this time of year.

The city, El Dorado County, California Highway Patrol, Caltrans and Tahoe Regional Planning Agency have feverishly been working on a solution. As of June 28, the lights are covered up and not operating.

"This is not the weekend to have experimental pedestrian traffic lights," Kerry said.

After the Fourth of July holiday a more permanent decision should be forthcoming.

A super long-term solution is the possibility of a more comprehensive plan to manage traffic in this area. That, though, would also involve the U.S. Forest Service because the feds own most of the land.

While TRPA, the Tahoe Transportation District and others keep on the broken record of wanting fewer cars everywhere in the basin, they don't provide any other means for people to get from point A to point B. Then on the flip side are the

agencies trying to get more tourists to the area. It's a conundrum where divergent interests are in conflict, and the driving and walking public are ultimately caught in the middle.

Zephyr Cove couple sentenced in fraud scheme

A Zephyr Cove couple and their daughter from Illinois have been sentenced in a scheme where they misused a federal internship program.

David Marzano will be going to prison for 26 months, with three years probation to follow his release. He also must pay restitution of \$815,570. His wife, Laura Blair, and their daughter Janece Burke were each sentenced to five years probation. Blair was ordered to pay \$815,570 and Burke \$271,856.67 in restitution.

The trio had been indicted in March 2015. U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Alabama handled the case. The scheme, prosecutors said, spanned 13 states, starting in July 2009.

Marzano has already been to prison. In 2002, he pleaded guilty in the U.S. District Court of the Northern District of Georgia to a conspiracy involving the unlawful smuggling of aliens. The conviction stemmed from a staffing agency Marzano operated in the Atlanta area that utilized an illegal alien workforce. For that offense, he was sentenced to 15 months in prison, followed by three years of supervised release.

After getting out he started to use the aliases Paul Cohen and

David Cole. He started a series of staffing agencies and shell companies based in Chicago. The women also went by other names.

“Together, and with the assistance of others, these defendants engaged in a massive, nationwide fraud scheme designed to unlawfully profit from U.S. Department of State Exchange Visitor Programs,” according to the U.S. Attorney’s Office. “In addition, the defendants created various shell companies with names that closely resembled well-known corporations. One such shell company was Crowne Partnership Group, which, despite representations made by the defendants, had no association with Crowne Plaza Hotels.”

More than 200 foreign nationals were duped by these three. They lost thousands of dollars.

“Rather than receiving the high-level managerial training they expected, the victims were pawned off as cheap foreign labor to restaurants, hotels, and theme parks. The victims were also required to live in housing arranged by the defendants’ companies. The businesses where the victims worked paid Marzano directly, but the victims only received a small portion of the wages they earned,” according to court documents.

In June 2015, Burke pleaded guilty to conspiring with Marzano and Blair to commit wire and mail fraud. In April 2016, Blair pleaded guilty to the conspiracy charge. Marzano then pleaded guilty to conspiracy, as well as a charge for substantive wire fraud.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Nev. rural Airbnb operators earned \$5M in 2016

By Jason Hidalgo and Nancy Trejos, Reno Gazette-Journal

Nevada's rural Airbnb hosts posted the fifth-highest average income in the nation for the home-rental service's non-urban locations.

A report released Tuesday by Airbnb found that rural host income in Nevada averaged \$9,000 in 2016. Only California, Hawaii, Delaware and Oregon reported higher host incomes last year, with California's \$11,900 leading the nation.

Nevada was also one of a select number of states where rural hosts earned more on average than their urban counterparts. In 2016, Nevada Airbnb hosts in urban areas reported an average income of \$7,400. Part of this could be attributed to the Tahoe effect, said Jasmine Mora, a spokeswoman for Airbnb.

Read the whole story

Work on I-80 affecting Donner Lake Road access

Bridge painting work has closed Donner Lake Road under the Interstate 80 overcrossings.

This section of roadway will be closed until Aug. 18 while crews perform overdue painting and bridge preservation work. Ramps to and from I-80 will remain open, allowing motorists to access the next available exit.

Motorists wishing to access Donner Lake Road from westbound I-80 should continue to the Castle Peak exit (No. 176) to reverse direction and use eastbound I-80 to reach the Donner Lake Road exit. Motorists coming from Donner Lake on Donner Lake Road who wish to travel west on I-80 should travel east to the Donner Pass Road exit (No. 184) to cross over and access westbound I-80.

Reminder: Personal fireworks illegal in Tahoe

Not only are fireworks illegal in the entire Lake Tahoe Basin, but numerous fires result from their use, not to mention the severe injuries they may cause to the users.

The South Shore area provides the locals and visitors a world-class fireworks display on the evening of July 4 at 9:45. This display is visible over the lake from the South Shore beaches on the California and Nevada sides of the state line.

South Lake Tahoe Fire Rescue wishes you a safe and sane 4th of July celebration.

– Sallie Ross-Filgo, South Lake Tahoe Fire

DUI suspected in fatal Hwy.

50 accident

A Carson City woman is accused of driving under the influence in the accident that killed a woman this week on Highway 50 just west of the entrance to Hidden Woods neighborhood

Officers have not released the name of the 40-year-old. She remained at Renown Medical Center in Reno on June 28 with non-life threatening injuries. She will be going directly to jail when medically able to.

Killed in the June 26, 4:39pm accident was Sranthon Bunnag, 52, of Thailand. She was here on vacation.

According to the Nevada Highway Patrol, the Carson City woman was going east when her vehicle crossed a double yellow line and struck the westbound vehicle head-on. Bunnag was in the front passenger seat.

There were five other people in Bunnag's car. All were taken to Barton Memorial Hospital with non-life threatening injuries.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Pollen not hurting Lake Tahoe's clarity



Pine pollen on the surface of Lake Tahoe. Photo/TERC

It is the time of year when the big blue turns yellow. Pine pollen can be seen blowing out of the forest in great clouds with much of it landing on Lake Tahoe's surface.

When viewed from the air great swirls of yellow more than a mile long look like a giant hand finger painted on the surface. Despite the vast quantities, pollen does little to change Tahoe's water clarity. Pine pollen grains (50-80 microns) are relatively large compared to the <10 micron particles primarily responsible for clarity loss.

In the water, the pollen grains stick together and settle to depth quickly. Once on the bottom they add to the historical record. Pollen grains recovered from sediment cores have been used by scientists to determine historic vegetation and provide clues to climate conditions thousands of years in the past.

– UC Davis, Tahoe Environmental Research Center

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- Current Nevada law requires drivers to slow down, proceed with caution, and if possible, move to the far lane when passing an official emergency response vehicle pulled over on the side of the road with amber lights flashing. Effective July 1, an updated law requires drivers to also do the same for Nevada Department of Transportation vehicles.
- Julia Mancuso, Olympic gold medalist from Squaw Valley, married Dylan Fish, general manager of Tavarua in Fiji, at the island resort last week.
- South Lake Tahoe residents and Barton Health employees Caroline and Alan Barichievich ran the Western States 100 last weekend.
- The Tahoe Truck Stop Food Truck Weekend scheduled for July 14-16 at the American Legion has been canceled.
- Tioga Pass is now scheduled to open June 29 at 8am.