

Fight over California rent control is coming

By Angela Hart, Sacramento Bee

A Santa Monica lawmaker is preparing to battle California's powerful real estate industry, going after a state law that for two decades has blocked cities from adopting stronger rent control measures.

A report released this year by California housing officials indicated the state's housing crisis is unprecedented. So Democratic Assemblyman Richard Bloom decided to target a state law passed in 1995 that curtails the type of housing covered under local rental control laws and prevents cities from strengthening tenant protections for renters.

In California, when a tenant leaves a rent-controlled unit, landlords are allowed to raise the rent to market rate, raising the rent-control floor. The number of housing units covered by any local rent-control ordinance is severely restricted. Single-family homes, duplexes and condominiums are also exempt. Under current law, rent control doesn't apply to housing built after 1995. Cities that adopted rent control prior to 1995 cannot strengthen existing ordinances.

Read the whole story

Significant storm veering

toward Tahoe

The National Weather Service is saying the storm approaching Lake Tahoe is expected to be the worst April storm in more than a decade.

A winter storm watch is in effect from midnight April 7 to 5pm April 8. A flood watch starts at the same time and ends at 11am April 8.

“There is a larger than normal uncertainty in snow level predictions with this storm which has a great impact on snow accumulations and impacts. Current projections have snow levels starting 6,500-7,500 feet Friday, falling to 4500 feet by Saturday morning,” according to the National Weather Service in Reno.

It’s possible by the end of the storm the higher elevations could have 4 feet of snow and the lake 10 inches.

South Lake Tahoe has sand bags available for free at 1160 Rufus Allen Blvd. and 2101 Lake Tahoe Blvd. Residents fill their own bags and transport back to their own residence. Try to limit the number of bags to 10 per visit.

Because this will be a wet, heavy snow, it could bring down trees and utility lines. Travel is expected to be a mess, especially on Friday.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- The Meyers Mountain Bike Festival has been renamed the Tahoe Mountain Biking and Brew Festival. It will be Aug. 26-27.
 - The Renaissance Faire at Camp Richardson will be June 10-11. It is from 10am-6pm on Saturday, and ends at 5pm Sunday. For more info, go **online**.
 - Doug Sentell has been promoted to sergeant in the South Lake Tahoe Police Department.
 - Heavenly Mountain Resort's ski patrol is having a fundraiser April 8 from 6-10pm at Hard Rock Lake Tahoe. Cost is \$25 for a glass stein for the beer tasting or \$15 for a plastic glass.
-

K's Kitchen: Vegetable-dominated frittata

By Kathryn Reed

One of the best things about a frittata over a quiche is not having to make a crust. That also makes it healthier.

I'm a believer eggs are a good dish for dinner – or lunch. This recipe proves that sentiment to be true.

Many frittata recipes call for cheese and milk. I've left both out. The main reason is that I didn't have either in the house. Secondly, it made this dish healthier. I whipped the eggs until they were frothy; this ensured the eggs would stand

up a bit and not be so dense. It worked wonderfully.

Any combo of vegetables will work. Just make sure they are cooked before baking the concoction.

Serving this with a little salsa would be tasty. And, honestly, I thought it was better the next day.



Asparagus-Pepper-Mushroom Frittata

2 T butter

$\frac{1}{2}$ medium red onion, diced

5 cloves garlic, minced

$\frac{1}{2}$ red pepper, chopped

$\frac{1}{2}$ pound asparagus, chopped

4 ounces baby bella mushrooms, chopped

1 T fresh thyme

$1\frac{1}{2}$ T fresh rosemary

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp kosher salt

Dash hot sauce

8 eggs

Cooking spray

Salsa, optional

Melt butter in sauté pan over medium heat. Add onion and garlic, then pepper and asparagus. Then add mushrooms, herbs, salt and hot sauce. Cook until asparagus is tender. This will not take long.

Coat pie dish with cooking spray. Heat oven to 400 degrees.

Whip eggs until slightly frothy.

Place vegetable mixture in pie plate. Pour whipped eggs over vegetables. As the eggs start to set, with a spatula pull back lightly from sides to allow runny eggs to fill that space. Cook until there is no evidence eggs are runny; at least 10 minutes. Keep an eye on it so it's not overcooked.

California's drought is over. Now what?

By Taylor Kate Brown, BBC News

At the height of California's multi-year drought, Rafael Surmay's well – the only source of water to his house – went dry. For two and a half years, Surmay, his wife, and his four children showered, cleaned, drank and cooked using a water tank and 10 gallons of bottled water per month. They depended on monthly deliveries to refill their water tank.

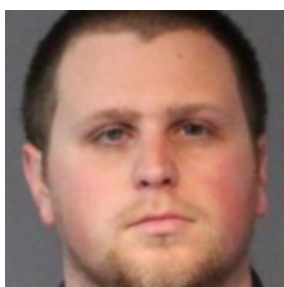
Over the past several months, rainstorms have brought relief to parts of California, which has been suffering from drought since 2012. Some areas have had record rain, and snowpack across the Sierra Nevada is close to 200 percent of normal.

But several years of widespread, deeply dry conditions have extracted a toll on the state that will take more than one wet season to fix. In some cases, the landscape may be forever altered.

Read the whole story

Heavenly kids' instructor faces child porn charges

A Heavenly Mountain Resort children's ski school instructor was indicted April 5 on child pornography charges.



Stephan L.
DeGraffenreid

Stephan L. DeGraffenreid, 26, of Gardnerville faces one count of sexual exploitation of a child, one count of possession of child pornography and two counts of attempted sexual exploitation of a child.

He has been let go by the ski resort.

Law enforcement said the illicit photos were on DeGraffenreid's iPod that was found at the ski resort. Officers said more photos were found at his residence.

“We have no reason to believe that the alleged activity has any connection to Heavenly Ski Resort or its guests. The alleged activity is abhorrent to everything that our resort stands for and we remain available to cooperate with the authorities in their investigation, if requested,” resort spokesman Kevin Cooper said in a statement.

The FBI, along with Washoe and El Dorado County sheriff’s departments are leading the investigation. If convicted, DeGraffenreid faces 15 years in prison for each charge.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Opinion: Why cyber attacks are hard to combat

By Christopher S. Chivvis and Cynthia Dion-Schwarz

Imagine that the United States is hit by a cyberattack that takes down much of the U.S. financial infrastructure for several days. Internet sites of major banks are malfunctioning. ATMs are not working. Banks’ internal accounting systems are going haywire. Millions of people are affected.

The first question that policymakers might debate is whether such an attack deserves a military response. But several problems immediately arise. First, would the U.S. government—and specifically the National Security Agency—know for certain who had conducted the attack?

Without being able to attribute the attack, or if there were some uncertainty about who was responsible, it would be very

hard to strike back. Unlike conventional attacks, cyberattacks can be difficult to attribute with precision to specific actors. In the event of a major cyberattack, pressure to respond would be immediate—and probably intense. But if a country strikes back and the forensics are erroneous, then the retaliation will have unnecessarily and inadvertently started a war.

Russia's alleged meddling in the 2016 U.S. presidential elections has brought the issue of cyber war again to the top of the news, but the possibilities it raises are only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the role of cyber operations in modern warfare. Most—although not all—analysts agree that cyber will be a key domain in the conflicts of the future. Exactly how cyber will impact these future conflicts, however, is hard to say with any certainty. Cyber weapons are not like missiles or tanks; because their initial impact is in the information domain, their effects are much harder to judge.

Even in cases where an attack is linked to one specific country—say, Russia—it could be hard to know for sure whether it was directed by the Russian government.

This is because governments like the Russian government appear to rely heavily on third parties to develop their cyber weapons and conduct their attacks. This offers them many benefits—deniability being one of them—but it also offers them less control over what their cyber warriors actually do — creating a so called “principal agent problem.”

In other words, an attack that originates from within the Russian cyber world might be the work of the Kremlin—or it might not. This further complicates the choice of response.

Sometimes, the culprit will be clear, of course. But in these cases, the question is how, specifically, to respond.

Some advisors might push for a cyber counter-attack that inflicts equal damage on the guilty party. But this isn't

always possible. If the perpetrator is a party like North Korea, then there is no equivalent financial system to target. But should the United States instead use conventional military weapons like a cruise missile, perhaps on Pyongyang's cyber training facilities? A strike like that would clearly risk serious escalation of the conflict. It might be seen as disproportionate if the U.S. financial system had recovered in the interim with relatively minimal real damage.

Imagine, however, that the attack is against the U.S. power grid or oil and gas infrastructure. This kind of attack could easily have military consequences if it were extensive. The U.S. military has backup power generation capability as well as stocks of fuel reserves, but these stores are not infinite. If such an attack on U.S. infrastructure has military consequences, the case for a cyber retaliation—or even a Tomahawk cruise missile strike—starts looking a lot stronger.

Even if the U.S. power grid were seriously affected by a cyberattack, however, and the United States knew with a high degree of confidence who the guilty party was, there would be reasons for caution—especially if the attack was an isolated incident and there were no other signs of aggression or malign intent.

This is because cyberattacks can have unanticipated consequences. With any military strike, collateral damage is always possible, but with most conventional attacks, methods of assessing and avoiding collateral damage are well developed, and based on well-established physics principles and observational experience.

But cyber weapons don't operate like missiles or tanks. They attack the underlying network or computer systems. The possibility of unexpected effects in the cyber world is much greater.

For example, a cyberattack on an electrical grid might be

intended to knock out the lights in a specific location, but end up affecting a whole region's energy supply. The world saw this potential with the Stuxnet worm: Apparently intended for a very specific, isolated network (an Iranian control system), the worm was discovered precisely because it spread beyond its intended target into other related networked systems. Stuxnet did not attack other control systems, but only because the designers programmed in a self-destruct date. If the designers had been less cautious, its effects would have been much more widespread.

Therefore, before targeting a cruise missile at that (hypothetical) cyber hub in Pyongyang, the U.S. president would want to have at least some knowledge of both the intentions of the attacker and the consequences (including secondary effects) of the response—otherwise the United States might be starting a war by accident.

But a desperate foreign leader might miscalculate that he can get away with a surreptitious attack on U.S. infrastructure for exactly these reasons—and that in and of itself is cause for concern.

This is why context will make a big difference. It's relatively easy to assess the damage done by an attack on America's infrastructure, but less easy to assess the intent of that attack. If the U.S. power grid is seriously disrupted by a cyberattack during an ongoing war with a known aggressor it will be much easier to strike back—with kinetic (i.e. physical) force or with cyber weapons—simply because it will be easy to assume the attack was intentional.

Alternatively, a fearful foreign leader might lash out at the United States if she or he fears the United States is on the verge of conducting a devastating cyberattack. The hostility might come in the form of a massive, pre-emptive cyberattack, a conventional attack, or in the extreme, even a nuclear salvo.

Since the ability to mount cyberattacks depends on keeping targeted vulnerabilities secret, both sides may fear that their adversaries possess capabilities that have far-reaching destructive potential – even when they don't. This fear in turn could increase the tendency toward pre-emptive action and hence escalation.

Cyber adds new and significant uncertainty to warfare, making it difficult both to deter and respond. It will take time and a great deal more research and analysis before the problem is fully understood.

Christopher S. Chivvis is associate director of the nonprofit, nonpartisan RAND International Security and Defense Policy Center. Cynthia Dion-Schwarz is a senior scientist and the Manager of Cyber and Data Sciences Programs at the nonprofit, nonpartisan RAND Corporation. This essay is part of an Inquiry, produced by the Berggruen Institute and Zócalo Public Square, on what war looks like in the cyber age.

Hotels latest frontier for voice-command technologies

By Hui-Yong Yu and Spencer Soper, Bloomberg

Amazon.com Inc.'s battle with Apple Inc. over digital assistants is moving to a new venue: hotel rooms, where Alexa and Siri are both vying to be the voice-controlled platform of choice for travelers.

Marriott International Inc., the world's biggest lodging company, is testing devices from the two tech giants at its Aloft hotel in Boston's Seaport district to determine which is

best to let guests turn on lights, close drapes, control room temperature and change television channels via voice command. In December, Wynn Resorts Ltd. became the first hotel company to install Alexa-powered Echo devices, starting with suites at its flagship Wynn Las Vegas property.

Technology companies are using hotel rooms as showrooms for new services and devices that can also control so-called smart homes.

Read the whole story

Lawyers want Calif. schools to stop asking citizenship-related questions

By Loretta Kalb, Sacramento Bee

Civil rights lawyers have identified 75 California school districts, including one in El Dorado County, that they believe may deter immigrant families from enrolling their children by asking for information such as Social Security numbers and citizenship status.

California Rural Legal Assistance and the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area called on state Attorney General Xavier Becerra to investigate the 75 districts' enrollment practices. Students have "clear legal protections" to attend school, the report said, but they could be "unlawfully discouraged" from doing so when asked for information related to citizenship status.

“Truthfully, it’s not who we are and not what we believe,” said Superintendent Marcy Guthrie with the Mother Lode Union School District. She was flabbergasted to learn that her district had landed in the lawyers’ report showing that students entering her district were asked to share their citizenship status. “I just hung up with the principal of our elementary school. We’ve already pulled (the forms) down from the website. We’re making it right.”

The district is small, with just 1,100 students at an elementary and a middle school that serves students from El Dorado, Diamond Springs and Placerville.

Read the whole story

2 nights of ‘Carmina Burana’ in Incline Village

Sierra Nevada College’s choir will perform “Carmina Burana” on April 6 and April 8, at 7 both nights, at St. Patrick’s Episcopal Church in Incline Village.

“Carmina Burana” is based on 254 poems from 11th-13th century Europe that were discovered in 1803 in a Benedictine Monastery in Bavaria. “O Fortuna” from “Carmina” is featured in many movies, including “Lord of the Rings,” “Excalibur” and “The Hunt for Red October.” It is the most played classical music of the past 75 years.

Donna Axton, SNC’s music program director, will be the conductor. Soloists include Brad Perry, Marty Gollery, Heather Shook, Elizabeth Rutherford, Miho Ogawa and Karen Colbert. The choir will be accompanied by an eight-piece orchestra, and the

North Tahoe Children's Choir will perform.

Tickets are available at The Potlatch, Handmade at the Lake and the SNC bookstore in Incline, and at The Store in Tahoe City. Tickets are \$15 in advance, \$20 at the door, and free those 12 and younger. For more information, call 775.881.7586.