

Senator: Passing ERA brings Nev. into 21st century

By Sean Whaley, Las Vegas Review Journal

CARSON CITY – Supporters of the Equal Rights Amendment on Tuesday disputed arguments that the time for the ratification of the amendment to the U.S. Constitutional is past, saying equality for women is long overdue.

Sen. Pat Spearman, D-North Las Vegas, who sponsored Senate Joint Resolution 2, told an Assembly committee that passage of the amendment 35 years after a congressional deadline will make a powerful statement that Nevada is ready to move from the 19th century to the 21st century.

While Gov. Brian Sandoval does not have to sign off on the resolution should it pass the Legislature, he said Tuesday that he supports the proposal.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- Douglas County is updating the strategic plan to guide the county through fiscal years 2018-22 and is seeking public feedback on the draft that is scheduled to be presented at the March 16 board meeting. Go **online** to provide input.
- On March 16, Tahoe Expedition Academy will host a free presentation in Tahoe Vista by Judy Klein, assistant professor of emergency medicine at UCSF-ZSFG. She will talk about the importance of connection with nature and risky play in the

outdoors. The free talk is from 6:30-8:30pm at 7000 Latone Road, Tahoe Vista.

- El Dorado County Supervisor John Hidahl has scheduled a community meeting in El Dorado Hills to describe the mission of the El Dorado Hills Community Council, and the realignment of the organizational leadership structure and teams to align with the El Dorado County Strategic Plan. It will be March 13 from 7-9pm at EDHCSD Norm Rowett Pavilion, 1021 Harvard Way, El Dorado Hills.

- Ladies' Morning Out, formerly Mom's Morning Out, is a day of pampering, fitness and wellness with Barton Health. It is free for all ages. Yoga class starts at 8am April 29, other complimentary activities start at 9am and include coffee and brunch, wellness booths put together by local businesses, health presentations, and a Zen room with complimentary pampering and massage services. No registration required.

- El Dorado County CASA training begins April 18 from 1-4pm at the courthouse in South Lake Tahoe. For more info, email shanna@casaeldorado.org

History of blue jeans to be revealed in SLT

As the well-known inventor of riveted work pants, much has been written about Jacob William "JW" Davis, some fact and some fiction. The fact that the world's favorite item of clothing was invented and patented in Reno by him is unknown to most locals and denim fans worldwide.

Having followed numerous paper trails, Kathleen P. Clemence

will give a talk in South Lake Tahoe about the true story of Davis and his family based on documented evidence.

Weaving the intricate threads of Davis' compelling life story, Clemence will discuss his journey from Russia through the Canadian wilderness and on to the American West, as well as his many business ventures along the way. Details will include his family history, including his marriage to Annie Packscher, who may be the missing link in this story that changed the future of the fashion industry.

Friends of the the South Lake Tahoe Library is hosting this free talk on March 28 at 6pm, at the library, 1000 Rufus Allen Blvd.

SLT's No. 1 priority – improving roads

By Kathryn Reed

The 13 strategic initiatives that came out of the South Lake Tahoe City Council's strategic planning session last month were whittled down March 7, with roads being the No. 1 priority.

It was agreed a survey will be taken soon, with the goal of having results presented to the council by May. The survey will gauge what voters think of raising the sales tax by one-half percent to be used strictly for roads. It could then be on a ballot this year. (The state sales tax rate went down 0.25 percent on Jan. 1.)

With requiring 66 percent of the voters to approve it, the

money would be solely for roads and could not go anywhere else. While there was no proof given, Councilmember Austin Sass said 75 percent of the tax burden would be absorbed by tourists.

Sass also advocates for a toll fee; something the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and Tahoe Transportation District are looking into. He is on both of those boards, though the council as a whole is not in agreement that is a good idea.

Another survey question would be asking people's thoughts about creating a road authority. It would be similar to the now defunct Redevelopment Agency in that the council members would likely be the road authority members. However, the council could put community members on the authority's board. The point of such an organization would be to make sure there is no question in residents' minds about where the money is going. The authority could also have decision making responsibilities beyond just where that tax money is spent.



South Lake Tahoe City Manager Nancy Kerry on March 7 leads the strategy session workshop. Photo/LTN

South Lake Tahoe needs \$3.2 million a year to maintain its roads. A dedicated program will bring jobs – internally and externally. The goal is to improve the pavement condition index. According to Jim Marino, deputy public works director, within three to four years the public would see a significant

improvement with a dedicated funding source for roads. By year 15 the money would be for preservation and keeping the roads in good shape.

The city's roads were never constructed correctly. Last week a plow took a huge chunk out of a street – not just a pot hole size section.

Even without a new revenue stream, the city will be spending at least \$1.5 million on road repairs this season. The contract is signed and work will begin as soon as the weather allows. Plus, the city is trying to get as much money out of the state and feds from storm damage. That should at least fund pot holes as things dry out.

The council decided to combine Fixin 50 with business façade improvement and single room occupancy hotels into what will be a new program. Staff will bring back this yet to be named program to the council with achievable outcomes. This is when one-time funding would be used. The city would provide financial incentive for business owners to improve the aesthetics of their buildings to meet design standards, but those structures also must be up to code. The money will be for businesses fronting highways 50 and 89.

The Fixin 50 initiative was passed when Tony O'Rourke was city manager, but it didn't go anywhere. The hope is it would be better received this go-round because the economy is better, the city is likely to put more money into the program – maybe \$500,000, and a better marketing plan will be devised. With this, Police Chief Brian Uhler wants more enforcement of codes.

Vacation home rentals is not coming off the work plan, but because a study is under way on the subject there is nothing to decide at this moment. The study outcome should be released in May or June, and at that time decisions will be made.

Council wants to make sure VHR enforcement is happening. The

90-day extra enforcement ends mid-March. After that a report will be forthcoming. Uhler said few complaints are made about VHRs. Kevin Fabino, development services director, said the industry is beginning to change and be more compliant.

When it came to the idea of creating one Tahoe county, the council opted to make it a future workshop topic in order to delve deeper before making a decision about pursuing this. A positive is that it would reduce duplicate administrative services. For every dollar in property taxes sent to the county the city gets 40 cents back in services.

Councilmember Brooke Laine, who is spearheading the idea, wants to hire a consultant to gather financial data. Sass said because 51 percent of El Dorado County needs to approve this and that there has not been a new county in 100 years, he is skeptical of its ever becoming a reality and doesn't see the reason to put money toward to it. Councilmember Tom Davis wants to know the costs and political process.

Regarding marijuana, in particular recreation use, the city needs to have a policy in place by the end of the year before the state starts allowing the use in 2018. State voters last year approved recreational marijuana.

Delivery services are one concern. According to Uhler, the district attorney will not prosecute those cases, but the city could still shut the operations down in other ways.

Community workshops will be forthcoming, then the council will decide what to do. If pot were taxed, there is the possibility that money could go to restore the narcotics task force. For taxation to happen, it could go to voters in June 2018.

The plan is to have a workshop and talk to folks in Colorado. Advice to date from others is to go slow with decision making.

Some call it marijuana tourism. At the one local medical pot shop there are 38,000 cards, which proves with only 55,000

people living in the entire basin that this isn't just a medicinal business.

Everyone agreed housing is an issue; what needs to be decided is what the city's role should be. Councilwoman Wendy David is the champion for this cause. Single room occupancy, vacation home rentals and affordable housing need to be talked about together. It was noted there is limited state money for affordable housing.

Coverage and commodity rights are the biggest obstacles, according to Marino.

City Manager Nancy Kerry mentioned the El Dorado County-led housing task force, spoke of how the city has created a lot of housing projects, and said the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency needs to change commodities.

With anyone allowed to buy here (or anywhere in the United States), the supply-demand issue cannot be resolved. But it's possible to limit second homebuyers as other jurisdictions have done.

An issue is that old tourist hotels are becoming single residency occupancy lodging for locals because they are profitable.

Renewable energy goals are being deferred to the public, with those advocates asked to bring more information to the council. Creating a sustainability committee is being considered.

Fiber optics – Tahoe Prosperity Center is working on this. The plan is to keep funding TPC to work on this endeavor. Tied into this is the support of "dig once" policy. Ray Jarvis, public works director, said conduit should be put in the ground when someone cuts the road.

Regarding an outdoor events center, Marino believes this would

be a huge money generator. Councilman Jason Collin said it should not be a priority.

Staff will bring back a work plan to the council, most likely in April. Other things on it will include airport improvements and possible rent hikes, relocation of the public works yard, negotiations with the county regarding the 56-acre site, changes to development services, financial policy stabilization initiative, CalPERS, communications infrastructure, storm water program and the recreation center.

Workshops are going to be part of this council's future in order to delve deeper into topics and help determine where to go with specific issues.

Letter: SLT council limiting public opinion

To the community,

After attending the March 7 [South Lake Tahoe] City Council meeting and workshop, I have to say that I am very concerned by what transpired. At the beginning of the meeting, prior to "public communications," [Councilman] Austin Sass read the following statement that had been added to the agenda: "This is the public's opportunity to speak on any topic not listed on this agenda. Comments shall be limited to four (4) minutes (or less). Please note, however, in accordance with the Brown Act, the City Council cannot deliberate or vote on any matter raised under public communications, but at the conclusion of public comment, the City Council and/or City Staff may comment on any public comment for clarification of the public record. (Government Code Sections 54954.2)"



Tami Wallace

Mr. Sass went on to say that that the council and staff would use this time to “correct any inaccuracies,” as well as doing so “on camera.” Essentially, they will be using this opportunity to call members of the public liars. Mr. Sass and mayor pro-tem, Wendy David, both recently used councilmember reports as an opportunity to call out former Councilmember/former county Supervisor John Cefalu’s comments during “public communications” that the city’s snow removal operations were perceived as less than satisfactory by many members of the public. This, I believe, is what’s known as “a matter of opinion.” Yet, members of our City Council have chosen to call this person a liar.

Mr. Sass made the comment during a previous City Council meeting that “he will no longer sit back and allow the public to lie during public communications and on camera.” Unfortunately, Mr. Sass has decided to call members of the public, his supposed constituents, liars even when they speak on subjective matters. What may be his “truth” may not be a member of the public’s “truth.”

As elected officials, the council should 1) have thicker skin or get out of politics, 2) listen to the public they were elected to serve, and 3) be very careful calling members of this community liars when they are coming forward to express an opinion. Isn’t this what we elected them to do and are paying them for?

Bottom line, as many are aware, public speaking is the biggest phobia we humans face and knowing that our comments/opinions

expressed to our local elected officials – our employees – will be met with scorn and accusations, will have a chilling effect on the public's right to take an active part in local government. I guess when they want our opinion, they will tell us what it is.

Respectfully,

Tamara Wallace, executive director South Tahoe Chamber of Commerce

Water conservation in Calif. continues in January

A wet January made it easy for Californians to conserve water.

Californians' monthly water conservation was 20.5 percent in January, an increase from the 17.2 percent savings in January 2016.

"Californians continue to conserve despite the wet weather in many areas," said State Water Board Chair Felicia Marcus. "This ongoing effort is important rain or shine for all sorts of reasons, in light of the greater extremes we can expect with climate change and increasingly weird weather. We're going to need to use all our tools including conservation and efficiency, water recycling, stormwater capture, and storing water above and below ground in wet times to get us through the dry times to deal with the Mack truck of climate change that has already arrived."

In February, the board extended its existing water conservation regulations. Gov. Jerry Brown has said he will

reconsider the regulations this spring.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

South Lake Tahoe Democrats starting to organize

The South Lake Tahoe Democrats will meet monthly at Lake Tahoe Golf Course in Meyers beginning March 16 from 6-8pm. The meetings will be the third Thursday of each month. Democrats and progressives are encouraged to attend.

Items on the March 16 agenda include:

- Reports from subcommittees on local immigration issues, health care, candidate recruitment and more
- Discussion of collaborative efforts with indivisible groups in El Dorado County and congressional District 4, the Solidarity Network, Climate Coalition, Sierra Club and city of South Lake Tahoe as well as county and state organizations
- Next actions.

The purpose of the club is to advance the views of the Democratic Party on a local level, promote democratic candidates at all levels of government, to collaborate with other organizations in the Lake Tahoe Basin to promote the social and environmental sustainability of the community, to engage in community service and to be inclusive of all who

share their values.

The South Lake Tahoe Democrats can be found on Facebook.

Artist to give talk, demo at LTCC

Lake Tahoe Community College Art Club is bringing artist Max Rain to campus for two days of free events for the entire community.

On March 10, Rain will present a lecture and slideshow about his varied artistic pursuits at 5:30pm in Room F101 in the Fine Arts building. On March 11 from 10am-1pm in Room F104 in the Fine Arts building, Rain will host a free demonstration of the more technical aspects of his work.

Space is limited for both of these free events.

Rain uses clay, wood, and paper as mediums, incorporating images rendered in ceramic and stains, shoe and nail polish, colored pencils, and more. His sources of inspiration are late Renaissance paintings, the muralists of the Works Progress Administration (a New Deal era agency that employed millions of people in public works projects), and communist propaganda posters from China and the former USSR. However, it's Rain's modern urban experience of living in Los Angeles that informs his day-to-day inspiration.

Battle over ownership of public lands in Nevada

By Sean Whaley, Las Vegas Review Journal

CARSON CITY – The decadeslong battle over federal ownership of nearly 110,000 square miles of Nevada is about to be re-engaged at the Nevada Legislature.

With about 85 percent of those acres under control of a variety of federal agencies – primarily the U.S. Bureau of Land Management – some Nevada political leaders want a transfer of as many as 7 million acres to state control in a first phase that could eventually see large tracts of land become state lands.

Economic development is the primary driver for the introduction of Senate Joint Resolution 7, but some proponents see it as the first step in a state takeover of much of the federal public land in Nevada.

[Read the whole story](#)

2 community soup nights in Truckee

Slow Food Lake Tahoe and Tahoe Food Hub's seventh series of Community Soup Night resume this month.

Community Soup Nights will be from 6:00-7:30pm. The series kicks-off on March 15 at FiftyFifty Brewing Co. at The Rock and on March 29 at Full Belly Deli's Truckee location in the

Pioneer Center.

Community Soup Night is a family-friendly event and all are welcome to attend. The cost is \$5 at the door for a bowl of soup and slice of bread. A vegetarian option will also be offered. A fresh salad may be added for \$2 and drink specials will be available for purchase.

Chef Felipe Garcia from FiftyFifty Brewing Co. and Chef Tom Marrin from Full Belly Deli will be preparing their unique creations. Each evening will host live music by Sean McAlindin and Aaron Oropeza, as well as a raffle to win a variety of prizes.

Proceeds from each Soup Night will go toward Slow Food Lake Tahoe and Tahoe Food Hub's initiatives to educate and reconnect the local community to our sustainable and regional food system.