

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- Nevada Assemblyman Jim Wheeler, R-Minden, introduced a bill that change the legal age to gamble from 21 to 18.
- South Lake Tahoe City Councilmember Wendy David withdrew from the Cal-Tahoe JPA board and Councilmember Brooke Laine is now on it. Councilmember Tom Davis is now the city's rep to the California-based chamber.
- Tahoe Cross Country in Tahoe City will be closed Feb. 10 for the North Tahoe Nordic school race.
- The final environmental document for the proposed roundabout at highways 50 and 89 in Meyers is available **online**.
- Late-Nite Productions presents Free Show Saturdays at Whiskey Dicks in South Lake Tahoe. Booty Shakin' Latin Nang Bang with Reno's Drinking with Clowns play Feb. 11. Must be 21 or older. Doors open at 9pm.

Free tax preparation in South Lake Tahoe

Free tax return preparation for California and Nevada taxpayers is available through AARP Tax-Aide.

This is for all ages with low to moderate incomes.

Bring Social Security card, photo ID, 2016 tax return documents, and a copy of last year's tax return. All tax returns are prepared and filed on site with no cost to the

taxpayer.

Preparers will be at the South Lake Tahoe Senior Center, 3050 Lake Tahoe Blvd. from Feb. 9-April 15 on Thursdays from 1-6pm, Fridays 9am-2pm and Saturdays 9am-1pm. No appointment is necessary.

Opinion: Why we shouldn't hate VHRs

By Jim Wire

I've lived on the South Shore of Lake Tahoe for over 34 years, which qualifies me as a longtime local. As a local, I'd like to give my humble opinion regarding a controversial subject that continues to fester in our community. All too often we are subject to negative opinions that often overlook the positive. I'd like to change that by giving a perspective that is not expressed enough. My objective is to outline the issues that have contributed to the hatred of vacation rentals and balance that with a more positive perspective.



Jim Wire

For the last couple of years, the South Lake Tahoe City

council has been consumed with creating more regulations for vacation home rental permits. This has been driven by a small group of older folks that just aren't happy until they have effectively eliminated vacation rentals all together. What began as a noise nuisance complaint has grown into something larger that encompasses a wider range of issues. The other issues include unfair competition, neighborhood character, housing shortage, health and safety, mini-hotels, zoning and more. What should have been a quick and easy fix to the noise nuisance issue instead turned into a perpetual and unrelenting attack on VHRs.

When you ask almost any local about their feelings regarding VHRs, they will almost always say that they hate them. Their reason is based primarily on the noise nuisance issue. Almost everybody has a story about their sleep being disrupted in the middle of the night. They are further frustrated that there has never been an immediate remedy. Nobody likes to lose sleep, but with the added regulations the city has more tools to provide the remedy. Regardless, this is a stigma that still sticks in the minds of many locals.

Within the last couple of years more regulations have been created to give law enforcement more tools to abate the noise issue. Rental management companies are more sensitive and more responsive than ever before. They have become late night minutemen and respond to noise complaints. If their property owner receives more than two police citations, then the VHR permit is revoked. Despite the more stringent enforcement and proactive rental management, they are still pushing to make the VHR process more restrictive than it already is.

While most locals hate the noise nuisance from VHRs, they love the dollars that it brings to our town. After all, tourism is our economy. It always has been and it will continue to be so. We all benefit when the tourists fill our town whether it is directly or indirectly. If you aren't touched by a tourist dollar, then you aren't looking close enough. Even if you are

retired or unemployed, you still benefit from the government services that it contributes to or the property values.

Not long ago, the city of South Lake Tahoe was faced with a budget deficit. Thanks to the surge in the tourism the TOT (transient occupancy tax) tax that VHRs had generated amounted to something close to \$2.2 million. At that time, it was an unanticipated gift. Nobody had complained about the VHRs then.

Property values have benefited from vacation rentals. Locals care about real property values because eventually, everybody sells their home, income property or vacant lot. For buyers that may not be able to afford the higher price, a vacation rental income may give them a little edge. As a real estate agent, I can attest that most property owners that use their homes or condos as VHRs are not motivated to make it a profitable venture. It is primarily an investment in lifestyle. It's a place to park their money and have a place to stay in Tahoe.

It has been argued that vacation rentals have depleted the rental housing for locals. Squeezing the VHRs with regulations will not result in a conversion to more long term rentals. Contrary to belief, many owners will choose to keep them vacant to allow for their own personal usage. If the loss of VHR income results in a hardship, the owner may choose to just sell, which may go to another second home buyer that intends to acquire it for personal use. It is a weak argument to say that less VHR homes will translate to a larger long term rental inventory. I believe that there are better solutions to providing more long term rental housing and it doesn't involve squeezing the VHRs.

It has been said that VHRs have negatively impacted the character of the neighborhoods. I'm assuming, that they are objecting to having nicer homes that are rarely occupied. Personally, I like that my neighborhood is vacant about 70 percent of the year because it's more tranquil. I don't like

to admit it, but some of those VHR homes are better kept than mine. To be competitive in the market, a VHR must be better kept. That means that they are using local contractors, maintenance services and buying product and materials in Tahoe. They are also paying for services that they don't use all the time such as mandatory garbage pickup.

Another objection is what the city has labeled "mini-hotels". I don't know of many homeowners that haven't maximized the allowable coverage on their land. If your lot is large, then your home will most likely be large. Owning the smallest home in the neighborhood isn't such a bad thing. You will most certainly benefit from higher values which are influenced by larger homes. The impact of larger homes is that they have a higher number of bedrooms which can accommodate larger families or groups of people. For some neighbors this can be an intimidating experience but they too must comply with the same rules as a small home.

Some of the motel and hotel owners have expressed a concern that VHRs are unfairly taking their business away. In an effort to level the playing field, the city had increased fees and regulations. Most notably homeowners with VHR permits are now subject to a building inspection. This is to ensure health and safety code and check for unpermitted improvements.

From my observation, the plight of motel and hotel owners has more to do with vacation trends and lack of investment. For decades, I've seen motels and hotels neglect to maintain and improve their properties. They have relied on reducing their room rates which crippled them financially to make the much-needed reinvestment.

More than that, vacation trends have changed on a national level. More tourists are choosing homes over motels or hotels because they are seeking a different experience. Homes have space for people to mingle and gather. They can share more activities together. Be closer to the outdoor activities that

they enjoy such as paddle boarding, mountain biking, hiking and snow riding. Being embedded in a neighborhood allows them to feel like a local and fit in.

However, hotels are still competitive and are hugely successful. The Grand Marriott and Heavenly Village is proof that a large tourist population prefers the walkable access to a wide variety of services and experiences. A couple of the top grossing restaurants in the city of South Lake Tahoe are in the Heavenly Village. Edgewood has recognized this and they have built a new hotel which is opening this spring.

I may not have persuaded you to love VHRs, but at least you may recognize that are positive impacts as well. They contribute to a significant portion of our local economy. You might say that VHRs have evolved from home sharing and that is a concept that is old as the homes in our community. It's also a concept that you cannot regulate away. We can save a lot of city's time, energy and money by learning to accept and embrace VHRs. The current rules and regulations has had a significant impact on the behavior of VHRs. Rental management companies and home owners have learned to become more responsible and accountable. My suggestion is to give it time. Most of these rules and regulations are still new. Both the city and stakeholders are still in the process of adapting to it. More time is needed to recognize a measurable impact. Before you cuss out the tourist for driving too slow on the highway, keep in mind that they are the ones putting food on your table and a roof over your head. Be patient and welcome our tourists with a smile.

Jim Wire is a real estate agent with Chase International.

Presentation about Medicare, Social Security, Obamacare

What's in the future for Social Security and Medicare and how might changes in the Affordable Care Act affect your Medicare coverage?

Those topics will be discussed in a community presentation on Feb. 27 at 5:30pm in the South Lake Tahoe Senior Center, 3050 Lake Tahoe Blvd.

Kathleen Newton will describe the current structure and financing of the Social Security and Medicare systems, and provide information about current congressional legislative initiatives that may affect both programs.

Newton, who works with the National Committee to Protect Social Security & Medicare, is a former journalist and newspaper publisher. A question-and-answer session will follow her presentation.

The free event is sponsored by the South Lake Tahoe Democratic Club.

5 years cancer-free without Big Pharma

By Kathryn Reed

Five years is a milestone most cancer patients celebrate. It doesn't mean the disease won't come back, but it is a positive indicator.

Chemo, radiation, surgery or some combination is usually the medical cure. Not so for Steve Kubby. He attributes reaching the five-year mark to cannabis cryogenic extract.

This month the 70-year-old South Lake Tahoe resident celebrates being cancer free for five years.

At 21 he was first diagnosed with cancer. At 28 he was told he had terminal malignant pheochromocytoma. According to the Mayo Clinic, pheochromocytoma “is a rare, usually noncancerous tumor that develops in cells in the center of an adrenal gland.”

The rare disease is often fatal. He was give six months to two years to live, and told to get his affairs in order.



Steve Kubby and Nobia Monsaurt with the marijuana plants they use for medicine.
Photo/Lisa Gresham-Gordon

“I went to the Mayo Clinic. They threw everything they had at it. Nothing worked,” Kubby told *Lake Tahoe News*. He defied doctors’ predictions, but the cancer was always there.

It was five years ago that he started using the cannabinoid.

Raphael Mechoulam, who discovered tetrahydrocannabinol is the

most active ingredient in cannabis, had figured out cannabinoids are lost whenever cannabis is dried. That is what led Kubby to the cryogenic or freezing process. Kubby developed the process by using a plant from South America he had been breeding.

It's non-psycho active, which means using it won't make the person high. Kubby ingests the medicine, as opposed to smoking it.

"It can trigger adult stem cells. No one is using this method that we know of," Nobia Monsaurt said. Monsausrt is an integral part of Kubby's continued research into medical marijuana. They plan to be married this April.

They have a research team helping them refine the product, which one day the couple would like to bring to market.

Kubby had gone off the drug for a while, believing he was cured of cancer and not in need of it anymore.

In April 2016, he suffered a minor stroke. Kubby returned to using his special medicinal marijuana formula. He said it alleviated the lingering stroke issues, brought down his blood pressure and even decreased his prostate numbers.

The plan going forward – stay on the medicine indefinitely and continue to study the benefits with the hope one day the strain is available commercially.

Hwy. 50 between South Shore-

Carson closed



Highway 50 in Douglas County at the lake is closed.
Photo/LTN

Updated 7:10pm

By Kathryn Reed

Access to Carson City from the South Shore via Spooner Summit is off-limits for an indeterminate amount of time because boulders keep falling onto Highway 50.

Wednesday marked the third consecutive day boulders as large as a vehicle have come loose from the hillside.

Nevada Department of Transportation officials are worried about yet another boulder that looks like it could shake loose at any moment. It is more round and therefore could roll easier.

“We don’t want it to roll onto traffic or the houses below,”

Meg Ragonese with NDOT told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Crews will not be able to stabilize the hillside until it dries out a bit. Rain is in the forecast through Friday. The other option to try is to dislodge the rock before Mother Nature does.

A concrete barrier has been placed in the Logan Creek Drive area to help prevent more rocks from reaching the road.

With safety being NDOT's priority, though, no vehicles are getting from the South Shore to Carson City for the foreseeable future.



Tahoe storm issues:

- Highway 50 between Meyers and Placerville has issues with mudslides; traffic controls are in place
- In South Lake Tahoe: Bill Avenue, Shirley Avenue and Bijou Creek are currently closed due to flooding. Lake Tahoe Boulevard between Glorene and Viking Way have been reduced to one travel lane due to flooding.
- Snow has taken out part of the roof at the California Highway Patrol office in

Meyers. The parking lot looks more like a pond.

- Caltrans says Highway 89 around Emerald Bay will remain closed through these storms because of instability in the slide are.

- An avalanche on Feb. 7 near Stanford Sierra Camp at Fallen Leaf Lake took out the power for a few hours, but did not damage any buildings.

- Lake Tahoe Boulevard at Sawmill Road is closed.

- For current highway information, click on the state icons on the home page of *Lake Tahoe News*.

A flood watch is in effect for the Lake Tahoe Basin from 10am Feb. 9 to 4am Feb. 10.

From the National Weather Service in Reno, "Occasional light rain will continue today with streams running high. Another period of heavy rain is expected Thursday afternoon and Thursday night with even higher flows and more flooding possible. Areas where snow has clogged drainage paths may remain flooded for longer periods of time. Rock and mudslides may also impact travel."

Douglas County is urging residents to prepare for flooding and high winds. Residents can expect intermittent road closures due to flooding. Douglas County has sandbags available at nine locations, including Zephyr Cove Park.

Truckee residents near the southwest corner of the Donner Lake area along the streets of Washoe Circle, Conifer Drive, and parts of South Shore Drive in the known avalanche areas are advised the potential avalanche danger in these areas is currently high and this danger is likely to persist for several days.

Widespread flooding in Truckee is not expected to occur with this storm, however minor flooding along drainage ditches and small streams is possible.

Homewood Mountain Resort issued this statement, "Due to inclement weather we will be suspending operations for the 8th." Limited trails are open at Tahoe Donner Cross Country. Check with the ski resort before going because the weather is likely to impact operations at all of them.

There is one-way traffic control on Highway 50 at the Silverfork Cafe area in El Dorado County due to drain clearing work. Caltrans has not estimate when it will be cleared.

Current highway conditions are available by clicking on the state icons on the home page of *Lake Tahoe News*.

The sun should come out again on Saturday.

Bill would remove Nev. from 9th Circuit Court

By Debra J. Saunders, Las Vegas Review-Journal

WASHINGTON — How big is the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals? The San-Francisco-based circuit is so big that it represents nine states, including Nevada, 20 percent of the U.S.

population and 40 percent of the nation's land mass. It's so big that Congress has looked at bills to split the circuit since 1941, and it's so big that none of those measures have succeeded.

This year, however, Sens. Jeff Flake and John McCain, both R-Ariz., see the possibility of success. They've introduced legislation to create a new 12th Circuit by peeling away six states – Nevada, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Arizona and Alaska.

The slimmed-down 9th Circuit would continue to hear appeals from California, Oregon and Hawaii, as well as Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands.

Read the whole story

Open house for USFS OHV grant program

Tahoe National Forest has scheduled an open house in preparation for the annual application to the California Department of Parks and Recreation, Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division, to request funding for trail maintenance, restoration, development of facilities, law enforcement, and planning for off-highway vehicle access.

It will be Feb. 16 from 4-7pm. This is for individuals and organizations to provide input and review proposals for the application.

Written comments will be taken until Feb. 24.

These annual grants provide funds for the Forest Service to

develop and maintain trails and trailheads, repair winter storm damage and restore trailside environments, as well as provide patrolling and monitoring of these areas.

The open house will be at Tahoe National Forest headquarters, 631 Coyote St., Nevada City. For more info, email joetchavez@fs.fed.us.

Calif. not 'out of control,' leaders tell Trump

By Sharon Bernstein, Reuters

California leaders pushed back on Monday against President Trump's claim that the state is "out of control," pointing to its balanced budget and high jobs numbers in the latest dustup between the populist Republican and the progressive state.

The state's top Democrats called Trump cruel and his proposals unconstitutional after the businessman-turned-politician threatened to withhold federal funding from the most populous U.S. state if lawmakers passed a so-called sanctuary bill aimed at protecting undocumented immigrants.

"President Trump's threat to weaponize federal funding is not only unconstitutional but emblematic of the cruelty he seeks to impose on our most vulnerable communities," state Senate Pro Tem Kevin de Leon, a Democrat from Los Angeles, said in a statement on Monday.

[Read the whole story](#)

Editorial: That's not anarchy, McClintock, it's democracy

Publisher's note: *This editorial is from the Feb. 6, 2017, Sacramento Bee.*

President Trump's chaotic first weeks have generated wide disapproval, and not all the protests have been placid. But Rep. Tom McClintock needs to stop insisting that the seniors, families and middle-aged picketers at his town hall this past weekend were an "anarchist element."

As the *Sacramento Bee's* Angela Hart reported Saturday, the unhappy crowd that greeted the Sierra Nevada's man in Congress was anti-Trump and noisy. But McClintock's claims to outside media afterward that "anarchists" had gathered to "disrupt" his meeting was true only if by "anarchists" you mean "neighbors and grandparents."

Interviews revealed a lot of gray-haired retirees worried about Medicare and workers fearful of the Republican plan to dismantle the Affordable Care Act. Some said they had driven hours through the Sierra to hear the congressman speak in downtown Roseville; others said they had never demonstrated before, but wanted to register their dismay at Trump's ban on travel from seven Muslim-majority countries and his efforts to roll back environmental rules.

Read the whole story