

# Fire destroys Tahoe City house



Crews were to extinguish a fire in Tahoe City on Nov. 17. Photo/Provided

Fire destroyed a vacant Tahoe City house on Thursday morning.

By the time North Tahoe Fire Protection District firefighters arrived at about 5:50am Nov. 17 the house was fully engulfed with flames, and power lines were down.

The house on the corner of Sequoia Avenue and Highway 89 was a vacation home, according to officials.

The cause of the fire is under investigation.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

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## Go Local campaign promotes

# South Shore businesses

Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce is launching Go Local & Win on Nov. 26.

This campaign promotes and rewards shopping and dining locally by having a chance to win gift certificates and a shot at three grand prizes. For business owners and operators, it provides an opportunity to increase customers.

To participate, pickup up a Go Local passport at **participating businesses**, then shop or eat at any those businesses through Jan. 1. Contestants will receive a passport sticker for every \$25 spent. Once the passport is completed, it can be dropped in the mail addressed to the chamber. Contestants may submit as many passports as they like.

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## Bijou park hindered by lack of master plan

By Kathryn Reed

Bijou Community Park needs help.

“There are a lot of things people would like to do and add to the park but there is no master plan,” Pete Fink told the South Lake Tahoe City Council on Nov. 15.

Fink is a member of the city’s Parks and Recreation Commission. That advisory board has become a more vocal and active group in the past couple of years. One of the main purposes of the commission is to identify needs in the community and bring them to the council’s attention.

Just like when **Commissioner Scott Valentine** spoke last month about bike trails, Fink also advocated for an expanded budget. This would be for more front line staff and maintenance, as well then allowing for the expansion of programs.

Fink said the parks in town are being loved to death, especially Bijou.



Bijou Bike Park has multiple courses for all ability levels. Photo/LTN

The city has talked about doing a master plan, but that is as far as it has gotten. It will likely be brought up again at the council's February strategic plan meeting.

With the passage of Measure P this month, the city will soon have more money for recreation. About 60 percent of the revenues will be used to pay back the bonds once those are issued. That means there will be "leftover" money that could be used for more immediate and routine needs that the commission identifies – as well as for a consultant to prepare the master plan.

A master plan would also help with conflicts that exist.

“The gate is open for the dog park, but the park is closed (in winter). Having the gate unlocked sends mixed messages. A master plan can help with a solution,” Fink said.

As the Greenway Bike Path continues to be built, it will tie into Bijou park. But what’s on the books now would affect disc golf. A master plan would help plot where the various users would recreate.

The commission recommends:

- The council continue discussions with the California Tahoe Conservancy in regards to property exchanges so Bijou Community Park could expand.
- Installing a pedestrian-triggered crosswalk from the entrance of the park to the community ball fields on the other side of Al Tahoe Boulevard.
- Considering more concessionaires in the park.
- Having the park open in the winter – which would mean bathrooms, drinking fountains, snow play area and parking.

When a police officer is needed the incident at a park is often not the first priority. Fink suggested a park ranger of sorts to be dedicated to patrolling the various entities.

He broached the idea of altering the city’s agreement with TAMBA so the cycling organization could hire a part-time person dedicated to working on the bike park at Bijou.

The nonprofit spent \$18,000 on the park this summer, which included redoing the pump track so it’s not as steep. Benches have been added along with a repair station. A new line was added on the slopestyle course. More features were put in on the loop route to help people build skills. The BMX hill is now asphalt.

City recreation areas also include Lakeview Commons, Regan Beach, Bonanza Park, Campground by the Lake, Bijou Golf Course and the recreation center.

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# Opinion: Silicon Valley keeps us stuck in the political past

By Joe Mathews

As long as Silicon Valley and its futuristic technologies dominate our politics, we're doomed to stay stuck in the past.

The big story of the poisonous 2016 elections was how new digital media tools ended up crowding out two big topics from our conversation: the present and the future.



Joe Mathews

This phenomenon went beyond the controversy about “fake news” on Facebook; the problem wasn’t just quality—but excessive quantity. California and the entire country were deluged by digital tidal waves of data and information from months, years and decades ago.

Many of these were dredged-up video clips or photos or records of the candidates and their families and associates. There were endless emails from old hacks and investigations, followed by all the historical echoes, endlessly debated and rehashed, which kept us refighting the Cold War, J. Edgar Hoover's FBI, the Clinton impeachment, 1980s New York real estate and 17 waves of feminism. Donald Trump and his acolytes kept offering bogus ideas that refuse to go away—that President Obama wasn't born here, that vaccines cause autism, that immigrants add to crime in the United States.

Because these waves never stop, those who have some interest in the truth are left to explain—over and over—easily verifiable truths and old history. All this record-correcting leaves no time or bandwidth for conversations about the present (What to do about the wars that have been wound down but aren't over? How to take advantage of rising employment and wages to invest in infrastructure and reckon with national debt?), much less the future (How is this aging country going to make itself healthier, better educated, and more economically competitive?).

With all the past crowding out any conversation about today or tomorrow, the stakes of the election were never made clear—especially about how the result might affect our role in the world.

All of this is bad—but the really bad news is that, in four years, we're likely to look back at 2016 as the good old days.

Smart people in Silicon Valley say the digital media world is growing so fast (with more people around the world going online every day), that future ill-conceived regurgitations from the past could be even more destructive to our democracy. New immersive technologies—augmented reality, virtual reality—will allow us to invent out of whole cloth whatever past serves our purposes, and make it impossible for our brains to separate fact from fiction. Anyone with a modicum of

knowhow will be able to create digital experiences of candidates saying or doing things they never said or did.

This is a public health problem, as surely as an epidemic of opioid overdoses. The more political noise, the less political understanding. The more data, the less coherence. The digital age is not just the “post-fact” era; more dangerously, as Politico recently warned, it’s the “post-narrative” age of democracy. If you can’t follow the story, it’s because there isn’t one.

There is not nearly enough thinking about how to save democracy from media. Much commentary offers the false hope that the deluge of the digital past is somehow self-correcting, that the media culture has finally hit bottom and will reform itself. The free speech folks say you can fix pernicious and inaccurate speech with more speech—but more speech actually makes the problem worse.

The more serious, but less common conversation, involves giving people more tools to stop the flow. Should we allow people to litigate and recover damages more easily for sins visited upon them on the web? Do we want to regulate social media platforms more extensively?

I find the most intriguing approaches economic. Is it possible to create financial consequences for constant past-sharing and tweets and Facebook posts that pollute our civic culture?

Sam Lessin, a former Facebook vice president writing at The Information, suggested a tax on political coverage. If CNN, for example, wants to spend 50 percent of its time on election coverage, it should give 50 percent of its revenue to the government. “That would basically say that you can’t profit off the public discourse at all,” wrote Lessin. “We the people own it.”

Or we could create incentives for companies to change their designs to reduce the pollution around elections. Could our

smartphones be designed to keep us from constantly picking them up? Could social media sites be reshaped to slow people down, and require them consider or verify posts before hitting send? One suggestion: certifications for companies that agree to certain standards that encourage more limited, healthier media usage.

Somehow, and soon, we need new ideas that raise the costs of deluging us with the past—if the present and the future are ever again to have a fighting chance.

*Joe Mathews writes the Connecting California column for Zócalo Public Square.*

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# **Cannabis treats give senior dog a new lease on life**

**By Olivia DeGennaro, KRNV-TV**

As the medical marijuana industry grows in Nevada, more people are turning to cannabis to treat their chronic pain; but now some dog owners are following suit.

In Jaci Goodman's household, dogs aren't just pets. They're part of the family. She said, "they're our children because we didn't have kids."

As they watched Riley's quality of life degrade, Goodman's family looked for an alternative treatment. She said friends recommended Cani Bits – dog treats made with cannabis.

**Read the whole story**

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# Drink whiskey with your Thanksgiving turkey

By Jenn Harris, Los Angeles Times

A nice Pinot Noir, or even a Beaujolais Blanc Chardonnay may seem like the obvious, civilized options to serve for Thanksgiving dinner – and they are. But something from the whiskey family may work even better at cutting through the holiday meal's richness, and at soothing uncomfortable family exchanges across the table. Because if we're being honest, most everything is made better by bourbon, including turkey and yes, even politics.

The smoke, spice and even vanilla found in many bourbons offers a nice balance to all that roasted poultry, hearty root vegetables and those repeating slices of pie.

And a drink with some bite, such as a bourbon with heavy spice notes, can offer some relief from the often monotonous textures of stuffing, mashed potatoes and green bean casserole.

**[Read the whole story](#)**

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## Federal grant to combat Nev.

# property, drug crime

By Sandra Chereb, Las Vegas Review-Journal

CARSON CITY – Nevada has received a \$978,000 federal grant to combat and reduce recidivism among inmates convicted of property crimes and drug offenses, the state Department of Corrections announced Wednesday.

The grant from the U.S. Department of Justice will fund a program targeting male property crime offenders between the ages of 18 and 55, who are assessed as moderate to very high risk of reoffending and where substance abuse was a factor in the crime. Inmates serving sentences for drug crimes are also included.

“We know that property crime accounted for 80 percent of all crime in Nevada in 2014,” James Dzurenda, director of the Department of Corrections, said in a statement. Nevada was one of three states awarded grant funding.

**Read the whole story**

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## Star Guide: Meteorite exhibit is rock solid



Dan Ruby, Fleischmann Planetarium director, at the meteorite exhibit. Photo/Tony Berendsen

## By Tony Berendsen

There are only eight states that are less populated than Nevada, and only one with more public land. That adds up to a lot of open country to go hunting for meteorites: rocks that have fallen from space.

Unfortunately, there are a lot of rocks in Nevada, so finding a space rock among the mix, even if you know what to look, can be very challenging. The good news is the Fleischmann Planetarium has a new exhibit strewn with meteorites you can walk through. The staff can help you test to see if your rock came from space.

I've always been fascinated by meteorites because of their origin. During a visit to the planetarium this month I talked to Dan Ruby, Fleischmann Planetarium director, about his

passion for them, and learned of his interest in showcasing their fabulous collection to the public.

Ruby said, "Each meteorite we have in our collection has a story to tell, a story about our solar system and beyond."

He noted that meteorites are specimens from space that didn't require a spaceship to collect.

Ruby said, "In recent years the planetarium has encouraged the public to bring in meteorite candidates for a meteorite-meteor wrong test.

He also offered some advice to predetermine if a rock may be a meteorite:

1. Is it dark in color?
2. Is it compact and smooth-rounded with no holes, sharp edges, or veins of different material?
3. If irregular in shape does it have thumbprint-like indentations, or was it found amongst a field of similar specimens?
4. Is it heavy for its size?
5. Does it have a flaky crust?

If the answer is "no" to 1 through 3 its' not a meteorite, and if you said "yes" to all, then maybe you should bring it to the planetarium for some testing at the planetarium's Science Station.

Ruby walked me through the collection of meteorites in the exhibit hall, which are beautifully placed on pedestals capped with transparent cylinders allowing 360 viewing. Meteorites are arranged by type in a beautiful array around the massive 1-ton Quinn Canyon meteorite. You can even take one home, at least in a virtual way. Each meteorite in the collection is

being 3D scanned.

The planetarium has an intern working on a project to scan all of the meteorites in the collection and to make the scans available so they can be 3D printed by the public. The scanning process has just begun, but Ruby did provide me with a scan which I printed.

Last but not least, during my visit to the planetarium I talked to student employees Apryl Witherspoon and Alexis Romero about Saturday and Sundays at the Science Station. They do free science demonstrations ranging from electrical conductivity to polymers. The Science Station is located on the main floor just outside of the Exhibit Hall and is also used to test rocks for meteorite.

The **Fleischmann Planetarium** is located on the UNR campus next to the Lawlor Events Center on Virginia Street. You don't need to have a meteorite sample to stop by the planetarium. But, please do bring your fascination for science and astronomy. While you are there, why not take in a show or purchase a Christmas telescope for a loved one or maybe yourself.

*Tony Berendsen runs Tahoe Star Tours. He may be reached at 775. 232.0844 or [tony@tahoestartours.com](mailto:tony@tahoestartours.com).*

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## **Light Up a Life honors those who have died**

Light Up a Life is hosted by Barton Health's hospice staff to honor those who have died.

It is a nondenominational ceremony to share readings and a

remembrance message. The event will culminate with the lighting of tree decorated with photo ornaments honoring individuals lost.

The event is Dec. 6 from 6-7pm in the North Room at Edgewood Tahoe.

To have a loved one included, mail hospice staff a wallet-sized photo with the name of the person on the back to Barton Hospice, 2092 Lake Tahoe Blvd, Suite 500, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150 by Nov. 28.

For more information, call 530.543.5581 or email [tbruess@bartonhealth.org](mailto:tbruess@bartonhealth.org).

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## Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- League to Save Lake Tahoe is having a holiday open house on Dec. 15 from 5:30-8:30pm at its offices in South Lake Tahoe. Bring a jar or cup to transform it into a keepsake. Canned food and new toy donations will be collected.

- The Triumph Development hotel and residential project has been continued to a future meeting of the Truckee Planning Commission; most likely to December.

- George Runner, state Board of Equalization member, will speak at the Taxpayers Association of El Dorado County meeting on Nov. 21 at 7:30am. The meeting is at 99 Fair Lane in Placerville.

- The California Wildlife Conservation Board approved \$2.2 million to acquire approximately 624 acre-feet of water and storage rights in Heenan Lake for protection of the Lahontan cutthroat trout fishery located near Markleeville.

The money comes from bond measures approved by voters to help preserve and protect California's natural resources.

- Boreal ski resort is opening Nov. 18.