

El Dorado County judge wants to be AG

El Dorado County Superior Court Judge Steve Bailey has designs on being the attorney general of California.

He plans to seek the office in 2018. However, to hedge his bets he has also filed paperwork with the state to retain his current job. That election would be in 2020.

Bailey was first elected to the local bench in 2008. He ran opposed in 2014. He has spent the bulk of his time in the South Lake Tahoe courthouse.

He did not return multiple inquiries.

If Bailey goes through with seeking the position of the state's top cop, it's unknown who he might face. Kamala Harris, the current attorney general, is vying to replace the retiring Barbara Boxer in the Senate. If she wins, it would be up to Gov. Jerry Brown to appoint a replacement for the next two years.

It is highly doubtful Bailey's name would surface as a potential appointee. This is because Brown and Bailey are about as far apart as one can get on the political spectrum, even with the governor becoming more moderate as he ages. Bailey's website has pictures of him with Rep. Tom McClintock and Sen. Ted Cruz.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- **Newschoolers** teamed up with *Transworld Snowboarding* and Snow Park Technologies to rank and catalog the best terrain parks across North America. Northstar, Sierra and Mammoth made the list.
 - There will be an interactive field tour on the South Shore on Nov. 5 to learn about the threat of wildfire in the basin. Space is limited. RSVP to Marybeth at 530.543.1501, ext. 114.
 - The 18th annual Tahoe Cross Country ski swap is Nov. 12 from 10am-2pm at the Tahoe City ski center. For more info, call 530.583.5475.
 - There will be daddy boot camps on Nov. 5 from 9am-noon, Nov. 10 from 6:30-9:30pm, Dec. 3 9am-noon, Dec. 8 6:30-9:30pm at 1077B 4th S., South Lake Tahoe. The goals of the Barton Health sessions are to equip men to become confidently engaged with their infants, support their mates, and navigate their transformation into dads. Sign up **online**.
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Ballot puts medical, recreational pot users at odds

By Patrick Whittle, AP

A handful of recreational marijuana legalization drives has the medical pot industry bracing for something it never expected to deal with: competition.

Legalization is on the ballot in five states this November, and all five currently allow some form of medical marijuana already.

Growers, medical professionals and users of medical marijuana say they worry that people who want medical marijuana will buy it on the open market instead of going through the hassle of getting a doctor's recommendation.

"This is being structured for big corporations to come in and in a very short period of time wipe out the caregivers," said Lori Libbey, a board director of a Maine group campaigning against legalization and a nurse who administers cannabis. "I wonder who is going to be able to provide for pediatric patients."

But in Maine and the other states considering legalization, others in the marijuana business are very much looking forward to the possibility of legalization. And some proponents believe medical marijuana professionals just don't want to lose their monopoly.

Recreational legalization measures are also on ballots in Arizona, California, Massachusetts and Nevada. Concerns from medical marijuana professionals have also cropped up in those states, and they have echoed similar struggles in states that have already legalized recreational marijuana, such as Oregon and Colorado.

Competition in the marijuana market has become part of the landscape in Colorado, which saw nearly \$1 billion in sales of medical and recreational marijuana last year. The state went legal in 2012.

Paul Armentano, spokesman for the leading marijuana legalization group NORML, said some medical users and advocacy groups worry about potential corporatization of marijuana as the market expands. Tension between medical and recreational marijuana supporters, he said, has already become an issue in

California.

NORML is sensitive to the concerns of medical marijuana users, Armentano said, but also understands some of the consternation is about angst over free-market competition.

“There is a concern among individuals who largely have the marijuana market solely to themselves that the advent of broader legalization will introduce competition into the existing market and that competition will pose a threat to their existing business model,” he said.

Some advocates of medical marijuana feel state regulations are the key to making sure medical marijuana survives in the age of legal pot.

In Massachusetts, the language has alarmed some critics who fear passage of the ballot question could compromise or perhaps even overrun the state’s medical marijuana program, which has already been slowed by regulatory delays since Massachusetts voters authorized it in 2012.

Nichole Snow, executive director of the Massachusetts Patient Advocacy Alliance, said her group, which supports medical marijuana recipients, is neutral on the ballot question and uncertain of its potential impact.

“I hope there is still patient focus (if) this initiative passes,” Snow said.

Americans for Safe Access, an organization that advocates for legal access to medical cannabis, said recreational marijuana programs should be kept separate from medical marijuana.

The group sees potential “competing interests” between the two if they are comingled, said Beth Collins, a leader of the organization. The group also sees potential harm from the possibility corporatization of marijuana, Collins said.

“On the negative side, big business may try to impose

regulations to keep other players out, which could lead to fewer products,” she said. “The best medical cannabis programs allow for both large and small businesses along with access via patient or caregiver cultivation.”

Some ardent proponents of medical marijuana are on board with broad legalization.

Carey Clark, a member of the board of directors for the American Cannabis Nurses Association, said recreational legalization will allow people who use marijuana as medicine to have easier access to it.

“When it’s legal we’re going to see an increase in quality and a decrease in cost, and that is really good for people who need access to this medicine,” Clark said. “Things will be labeled and they’ll know what they’re getting.”

Associated Press writer Bob Salsberg in Boston contributed to this report.

BLM to remove horses from Nev. sage grouse habitat

By Associated Press

The federal Bureau of Land Management is planning to remove 1,100 wild horses from a part of Northern Nevada that also contains sage grouse habitat.

The helicopter gather in the Owyhee area is scheduled to begin Tuesday, according to the *Elko Daily Free Press*.

BLM Nevada Wild Horse and Burro Program Manager Alex Shepherd

said the gather is meant to cut down on the overpopulation of wild horses in the area, which has been marked as priority sage grouse habitat.

The removed horses will be taken to the Palomino Valley Wild Horse and Burro Adoption Center near Reno, where they will be prepared for the BLM adoption program.

Incline group seeks Thanksgiving donations

The 22nd annual Let's Talk Turkey Food Distribution and fundraising drive is under way.

Last year, the Incline Village-based nonprofit Project M.A.N.A. helped 325 families, (or 944 individuals), in the area. They received a turkey and all the trimmings to cook a traditional Thanksgiving meal.

Project M.A.N.A.'s goal this year is to raise \$25,000 to support the annual Let's Talk Turkey program and operations. A \$50 donation provides a Thanksgiving meal for a local family in need.

Go **online** to make a donation.

Silverado – sanctuary away from Napa's chaos

By Kathryn Reed

NAPA – With 10 pools, two hot tubs, two PGA championship golf courses, 10 lighted tennis courts, three bocce ball courts, a spa, three restaurants, and a market why would anyone leave?

Wine would be the No. 1 reason.

The Silverado Resort is in the heart of Napa, just off the famous Silverado Trail. It's a sanctuary nestled into what can be a chaotic world of tourists.



A toast to
relaxation.

Photo/Kathryn Reed

A calmness seems to permeate the grounds – even during a

tennis lesson. Quinn, one of the tennis pros, keeps the clinic moving at a fun, adrenaline-pumping pace. He sprinkles in compliments with tips.

While Silverado is more known for its golf – especially with hosting the PGA Safeway Open earlier this month – tennis is also a big deal. Tennis Resorts Online regularly lists this as one of the top 50 tennis resorts in the world. Programs are offered daily – for guests and residents, as well as camps and tournaments throughout the year.

Driving in it's almost like being transported to the South. The “big house” as I called it, looks like it belongs on a plantation. Construction of the mansion began in the 1870s by a Civil War general.



A variety of tennis programs are available at Silverado.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

Today the Silverado is owned by hall of fame golfer and lead NBC analyst Johnny Miller and partners. He was instrumental in redesigning the North Course in 2014.

Being on a bottom floor unit was perfect because it meant walking right onto the golf course. There was no fence – so it was green lawn as far as the eye could see. I don't really play golf, and didn't intend to on this weekend visit. But there is something about walking the grounds with a glass of

wine in hand that is so relaxing. Golf courses really are beautiful.

Scattered about are seven housing complexes making up the 1,200-acre Silverado community. Four of them are part of the condo rental program. Most of the 380 rooms were renovated two years ago.

While the area is sprawling, there is a free shuttle service via golf carts. It also didn't take long to figure out how to walk to the various destinations.



The main building at Silverado was a private estate in the late 1800s. Photo/Kathryn Reed

A future destination will be the 30,000-square-foot events center that will include a 5,000-square-foot pavilion, stage and small vineyard.

The only air of pretentiousness was at the spa. As a massage therapist I really don't understand this uppity attitude that so many resort spas have. While the massage was adequate, what left a sour taste was the automatic 20 percent gratuity. This

feels like stealing in a way. Pay the therapists more or raise the rates – just be honest with the price.

Being at the Silverado is relaxing in itself, especially with the numerous pools. The main one has food and cocktail service seasonally.



The market at the resort offers fresh baked goods and more substantive choices, along with a nice wine selection.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

Tranquility was also found in the condo. The plush robe was perfect to lounge in while enjoying the comforts of what felt like home for a couple days. While there was a full size kitchen, not much cooking was taking place.

Being at the Silverado you are away from the hustle and bustle, and yet still close enough to partake in whatever might be going on off property. Uber is an excellent choice to get to downtown Napa where there is an abundance of restaurants and shops.

Wine tasting is walking distance, with William Hill Estate Winery on the same street. It, like so many wineries in the Napa Valley, requires reservations for tastings.

Tennis, wine and relaxation – not a bad birthday weekend.

Opinion: The cannabis cartel California needs

By Joe Mathews

To legalize cannabis successfully, California is going to need its own cartel.

For the record (and to reassure federal law enforcement), I am not smoking anything. And I am not suggesting that California encourage a criminal syndicate like the Zetas. The California cartel would need to be a legal corporate oligopoly. The cartel members would be a small number of companies with the size and resources necessary to control the distribution of cannabis so that our state can properly track, regulate, price, and tax America's largest marijuana market.



Joe Mathews

Without a powerful force to wrangle the motley cannabis players who operate in remote corners of the state, California marijuana could quickly spawn yet another of the convoluted regulatory messes for which our state is famous.

Early attempts to design regulation around cannabis are

worrying. Instead of designing one system to cover all forms of cannabis, regulation is moving right now on two separate tracts. Work is under way on a new regulatory system for medical marijuana. At the same time, voters are considering whether to approve Proposition 64, which legalizes, and proposes regulation of, marijuana's recreational use.

Hopefully, medical and recreational marijuana would be combined into a single regulatory system. But even then, Propositions 64, at 62 pages, is the longest initiative on the November ballot and outlines so many different priorities that a regulatory system based on them would be highly complicated.

How to bring order to the potential chaos? A cartel is by far the best answer.

For one thing, it's proven. Alcohol has long had this sort of three-tier system, with a middle tier of powerful distributors connecting a diverse array of brewers with all the various places that sell beer. For another, a powerful distributing cartel allows for ownership and accountability in the system. The cartel must buy the product from the growers, thus providing a check on supplies and quality and licensing. And the cartel must sell to the retailer, tracking the amounts of sales and the quality of product sold. And by tying together the system, distributors would be the natural vehicle for regulating and taxing cannabis.

The cartel has another important role: keeping the price high enough to protect small players. Without a choke point in the industry, legalization of recreational cannabis in California will likely produce a big drop in price. That's because demand is unlikely to spike after legalization; most of those who use cannabis in large amounts already have access to it, via medical marijuana and the ubiquity of the black market. But legalization is all but certain to increase supplies significantly, as growers move out of the shadows and make their once illegal businesses more productive.

That combination—a big increase in supply, while demand stays relatively flat —could produce a dangerous drop in prices and encourage more people to use marijuana. Distributors, as middlemen, would by their existence keep prices higher.

So, what sort of person could assemble such a cartel?

My own choice would be someone like Eric Spitz, who has already publicly raised his hand as a person interested in shaping the future of pot in California.

Spitz, who has an MBA from MIT's Sloan School of Management, ran a brewing company and founded a "fast-casual" food chain. He talks messianically about how those experiences, along with the investment in the Orange County Register that brought him to California a few years ago, make him the right man to help the state design a new regulatory regime and structure for the industry.

Spitz's goal? To help shape the system and eventually become a distributor. Spitz is now advising local governments about how to regulate cannabis businesses and he's been talking with former state Attorney General Bill Lockyer. "It's great fun to see how he thinks," says Lockyer.

Spitz says the question is not whether such a cartel (which is my term; he uses the word "consortium") arises, but when, and how it's structured. Will it have only a couple of distributors or many? And will such a distribution system be divided up into regions, or be truly statewide? He says that it should start statewide and then become regional as the number of outlets proliferates and retailers transform themselves from marijuana-focused dispensaries to restaurants or clubs that offer cannabis in the same style that bars offer alcohol.

"We have a responsibility to do it right, not only to make sure our system works, but because we know how California is going to tilt the scales for the rest of the country," Spitz

says.

And how will you know if the system is working? My own view: When people in the marijuana business stop complaining about all the uncertainty and chaos as their industry emerges from prohibition—and start complaining about the decisions of the cartel in charge.

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

Laird finds his calling with Calif. Natural Resources

By Andrew Lachman, Santa Cruz Sentinel



John Laird

For John Laird, California Secretary for Natural Resources, a commitment to conservation is a natural outgrowth of fishing at Bodega Bay and hiking along the Russian River as a child as well as exploring the backcountry above the family cabin nestled between Lake Tahoe and Yosemite National Park.

“When you are up in the High Sierra mountains you just know you have arrived when you have been there long enough that you are constantly hearing the wind before it gets to you,” Laird

said.

His dedication to public service emanates naturally from parents who moved from the Midwest to California and eventually settled in Vallejo where they strived to advance the civil rights and opportunities of all its residents.

Read the whole story

Fatal casino bus crashes draw attention of feds

By Brian Melley and Julie Watson, AP

LOS ANGELES — Rosa Ruiz returned from a gambling jaunt to San Diego before dawn Saturday and was back on another bus that evening, headed for a desert casino.

Like others who routinely board buses bound for distant casinos, Ruiz wasn't so much dreaming of striking it rich, just escaping her normal life for a few hours to socialize, snack and play the slots.

But this night out ended in disaster on the freeway near Palm Springs when the bus slammed into a tractor-trailer in the pre-dawn darkness Sunday. Ruiz was killed along with 12 others, including the bus driver who also owned the USA Holiday bus. It was the latest in a growing number of casino bus tragedies around the country, from New York to Minnesota to Texas.

Fatalities involving casino buses have become so frequent that

the National Transportation Safety Board, which investigates major crashes, is studying them for common patterns, said Earl Weener, an NTSB board member overseeing the crash probe of the USA Holiday bus.

As casinos have proliferated, buses ferrying gamblers have become a fixture. Many, like Ruiz, travel from big cities to out-of-the-way casinos and stay for as little as four hours before the buses head home.

The tours typically draw a similar demographic: older, lower-income and, often, minorities. Many of those killed in the crash last weekend were Latinos, and they boarded the bus in the Koreatown neighborhood of Los Angeles.

"They don't take off from the Santa Monica pier. They don't take off from Beverly Hills," said Dr. Timothy Fong, a psychiatry professor and co-director of gambling studies at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Day and night, people line up at street corners, parking lots and fast food restaurants across the Los Angeles area where the buses arrive and depart for short casino trips.

At the Koreatown location where Ruiz, 53, embarked on her last journey, fellow travelers gathered this week to light votive candles, stick roses and daisies in the bark of a palm tree and remember their lost friends. All the while, white buses pulled up to shuttle others to casinos in the desert or Santa Barbara and San Diego counties.

These so-called curbside carriers are often mom-and-pop operations that have proliferated in the U.S. for tours of all kinds, including gambling trips. Government regulators are stretched to try to ensure all are abiding by safety rules.

Attorney Katherine Harvey-Lee, who has sued bus operators, said casinos typically pay a per-passenger fee to smaller operations like USA Holiday, the one-bus operation owned by

Teodulo Elias Vides, who was also the lone driver. Gamblers usually get \$20 to \$30 in tokens or casino credits.

Vides charged \$20 for the roundtrip to Red Earth Casino, a bare-bones operation in the community of Thermal, with about 3,000 residents living next to the Salton Sea, California's largest lake. A gas station and convenience store help draw travelers on Interstate 10, but the casino, packed with penny slots, lacks amenities and glitz. The dining area resembles a school cafeteria with basic offerings of pizza and sandwiches.

The bus would have passed bigger, fancier and better-known Indian casinos to reach the destination 135 miles from LA.

"The fact that this is a way for them to bring gamblers from hundreds of miles away to a place they would never go or would ever have heard of makes one think there has to be a relationship between the operator and the casino," Harvey-Lee said. "They weren't going to a place where some celebrity was playing in the lounge."

The general manager at Red Earth Casino did not return a call seeking comment.

Investigators are looking at Vides' relationship with the casino along with possible mechanical issues on the bus and what Vides did in the hours leading up to the crash to see whether alcohol or fatigue or some other factor might have contributed.

The bus was traveling "freeway speeds," and it did not appear to brake before slamming into the big rig that was moving at 5 mph as it approached utility work, California Highway Patrol Border Division Chief Jim Abele said. The crash occurred just after 5:15 a.m. when most passengers were sleeping.

While the survivors of the crash and others who routinely board casino-bound buses said the trips are mostly for fun and socializing, there can be a darker side.

Concerned that casinos were targeting vulnerable elders in San Francisco's Chinatown, a health care organization there tried unsuccessfully to distribute brochures about problem gambling on buses and at tour bus offices. The companies wouldn't cooperate, so workers hand out literature on sidewalks near the buses.

"For so many of our clients, that trip to the casino represents hope," said Michael S. Liao of NICOS Chinese Health Coalition.

The reality is that most of those people end up losing, and some carry huge debts.

"It's not about how much you lose, but how much you can afford to lose," he said.

Watson reported from San Diego. Associated Press writers Amy Taxin in Los Angeles and Elliot Spagat in Salton City contributed to this report.

Unions flex muscle in Nev.'s high-stakes Senate race

By Michelle Rindels, AP

A busload of casino housekeepers wearing pinstripe uniforms and Caesars Palace nametags waited at a warehouse early voting site just off the Las Vegas Strip, speaking in Spanish as they clutched pocket-sized brochures listing candidates endorsed by the powerful Culinary Union.

Asked who they chose in Nevada's super-close Senate race, one worker simply said "the Democrat." Another identified her

choice as Democrat Catherine Cortez Masto, explaining with an argument progressive groups have relentlessly lobbed against Republican Rep. Joe Heck even after he revoked his endorsement of Donald Trump earlier this month.

"What I know about Joe Heck is he's totally leaning toward Donald Trump," Ana Aguirre, 40, said in Spanish, adding that she was particularly concerned that Heck is open to revisiting the idea of birthright citizenship.

And on Trump? "I've thought about the possibility that he's president, and I feel terror," she said.

Inflamed by Trump's candidacy but with an eye on turning the whole ticket blue, organized labor groups including the heavily immigrant Culinary Union are in the thick of an aggressive get-out-the-vote campaign that's contributing to Democrats' early voting turnout lead in Nevada, and raising alarms for down-ticket Republicans. The union's work so far this cycle included ensuring 34,000 of its members are registered to vote, reassigning 150 of its members to full-time political work and leading a ground operation that's knocked on more than 200,000 doors.

Workers try to sway their co-workers in casino cafeterias and by phone, and they're leaving no room for excuses in physically getting people to the polls. Chartered buses shuttle casino workers to an early voting site during their paid lunch break, and they're handed a boxed lunch for the ride back.

The election comes just as the union engages in a labor dispute with management at Trump's Las Vegas hotel, adding more ammunition to their campaign against him. A majority of workers voted for Culinary Union representation in December, but management has yet to come to the bargaining table to negotiate a contract.

As a result, union officials say, Trump workers make an

average of \$3 less an hour than their counterparts at hotels with union contracts.

"I think the workers at his hotel have a really strong message to bring the country and that is – what happens to them in Las Vegas could happen to America if he gets into the White House," said Yvanna Cancela, the group's political director.

Democrats have a 6 percentage point registration advantage in Nevada but have lived and died on motivating low-propensity voters in their base. Danny Thompson of the Nevada AFL-CIO often rallies his volunteers with reminders of the "red wave" in the 2014 midterm election, when lackluster Democratic turnout wiped out a bench of rising star Nevada Democrats and rendered the party largely defenseless against anti-union efforts in the Republican-dominated state Legislature.

"We lost everything," he says. "We got a do-over."

His group has coordinated waves of reinforcements from states like California with less-competitive elections. The LA County Federation of Labor, for example, has its members making phone calls into Nevada to talk about the Senate race and brings busloads of volunteers from Los Angeles for weekends of canvassing in Las Vegas.

"We see the work that's happening here being critical to the national conversation, and we also have sisters and brothers in need here who are facing an uphill battle," said Rusty Hicks, executive secretary treasurer of the union. "While we have our own work, we certainly feel a sense of responsibility to support those who need support."

While they lack union muscle, Republicans point out that they've had boots on the ground far earlier than in years past, including 67 paid Republican National Committee staffers in Nevada as of late October. The organization has tried to mimic Democratic successes with a sophisticated data collection program modeled after President Barack Obama's

campaigns.

Republicans say that even though Democrats have an 8-point turnout lead in absentee ballots and the first six days of early voting, Democrats haven't run away with the election.

"We always knew that we would go into early voting with a deficit. Republicans vote on Election Day. It's their conservative mentality," said Donald Trump's Nevada State Campaign Director, Charles Munoz. "We feel extremely confident in what we're seeing and trying out on the ground ... I think we're going to see that the Democrat lead for turnout taper off."

But fears of a blue wave that could sink Heck are evident in outside TV spending. Groups linked to the billionaire Koch brothers that pulled off TV to focus on field work returned to the airwaves this week to boost Heck, while the Senate Leadership Fund, linked to Republican Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, planned \$7.5 million in last-minute ad spending in Nevada.

Labor isn't taking its foot off the gas.

"There is still a difference between people power and money," said Randi Weingarten, head of the American Federation of Teachers. "They don't have people power so they try to fight by fear and not by hope. Catherine fights by hope, by opportunity. She exudes opportunity."