

Settlement reached in Camp Sacramento death

By Mary Lynne Vellinga, Sacramento Bee

The family of a 13-year-old girl who died of an allergic reaction after eating a snack containing peanut butter has reached a multimillion-dollar settlement with the city of Sacramento, their lawyer announced Tuesday.

In a prepared release, Dreyer said the city, which owns Camp Sacramento, would also announce reforms to “ensure the safety of future campers.”

Natalie Giorgi went into anaphylactic shock July 26, 2013, after eating a Rice Krispies Treat during a hula hoop contest on her family’s last night of a four-day vacation at Camp Sacramento, a popular vacation spot near Lake Tahoe that has been visited by thousands of families since it opened in the 1930s.

The lawsuit said the snack contained peanut butter that had been mixed into a marshmallow filling “in such a way as to be visually undetectable” and also “difficult or impossible to determine that the treat contained peanut butter by taste.”

Read the whole story

Douglas County updating

transportation plan

Douglas County's 2016 Transportation Master Plan Update will be the topic of an Oct. 11, 6pm meeting.

Parson's Transportation Group Inc., who prepared the update, will give a presentation at the CVIC Hall, 1602 Esmeralda Ave. in Minden.

The plan outlines the improvements needed to the Douglas County Transportation Network from the present day until 2040 to maintain efficient movement of pedestrians, vehicles, and other transportation modes. The meeting will consist of a presentation on the goals, the findings of the update and the necessary transportation improvements.

The plan will also be presented at future Regional Transportation Commission, Planning Commission, and Board of County Commissioners meetings.

For more info, contact Erik Nilssen at 775.782.9063 or enilssen@douglasnv.us. A draft copy is available **online**.

Editorial: Byer deserves to be on DCSD board

Publisher's note: *The following endorsement is from Lake Tahoe News after a team of seven community members gathered to discuss who should be on the Douglas County School District board.*

Parents of students in Douglas County schools at Lake Tahoe have for years had a love-hate relationship with the board of

education and administrators in Minden.

The lake and valley in many ways are worlds apart – and geography is only one component. Course offerings, class sizes, student demographics, the number of schools – they are different to the point that in some ways it's like two school districts in one.



Keith Byer

While education should be the common denominator, that isn't always the case. Whittell High School parents in 2014 challenged the board to the point a special committee was convened to address their needs. While suggestions were made, little action has been taken.

This is why it is so critical that the person who represents the lake on the Douglas County School District board of education be someone who can speak for everyone here as well as be a bridge to the valley.

Lake Tahoe News believes Keith Byer is unequivocally the best qualified candidate to do the job. He has had one child go through the school system in Douglas and has another enrolled at Whittell High School.

Byer has attended board meetings besides during times of discontent. This shows he is engaged in the issues beyond when there is a crisis. He is an objective thinker who as a certified public accountant will bring a financial mindset to the table.

Even though each board member in theory represents the entire district, many of the four from the valley only make it to the lake once a quarter when the board meeting is here. That is why it is so critical to have the lake board member be strong.

Plus, Byer has experience as a board member. He spent eight years on the Anglo-American School of Moscow board. He was also on their finance committee. (He has lived in four countries.)

Byer would bring a worldly perspective to the board that it hasn't had. This is perfect for a small district, representing even smaller schools to have someone with such a unique background who can provide leadership for his colleagues and inspiration for staff and students.

The seat is vacant because of term limits. Not only is the lake losing Cindy Trigg, but Teri Jamin as well. While Jamin lives in the Carson Valley, for years she worked for the city of South Lake Tahoe. She understood the nuances of the lake in a way others did not. This, too, adds to the importance of voting for Byer because he will in many ways be the lone voice for the lake on the board.

Byer's opponent, Mike Kiger, chose not to answer *Lake Tahoe News'* questions. He said he was too busy building houses. We believe someone who can't take the time to tell potential constituents where he stands on issues will not be engaged enough to listen to their needs as a board member.

Byer is beyond qualified and the best choice for the Douglas County School District board of education.

Opinion: Medical care now Calif.'s biggest industry

By Dan Walters, Sacramento Bee

Four of the 17 measures on the Nov. 8 state ballot relate directly to financing Californians' health care, and collectively they would have tens of billions of dollars in impact.



Dan Walters

But in a sense, that's just peanuts, which takes a little explaining.

Propositions 52, 55, 56 and 61 indirectly symbolize a massive, if often misunderstood, transformation in California's economy over the last few decades.

A UCLA Center for Health Policy Research study reveals that we Californians are directly or indirectly spending a mind-numbing \$367.5 billion a year on our physical well-being, equal to 15 percent of the state's \$2.5 trillion economy.

Read the whole story

Weaker Calif. water conservation numbers prompt fears

By Matt Stevens, Los Angeles Times

Californians' water conservation slipped for the third consecutive month in August, prompting new alarm from regulators about whether relaxed water restrictions may be causing residents to revert to old habits as the state enters its sixth year of severe drought.

The trend raises new questions about Californians' willingness to continue austere conservation after spending the last two years dramatically reducing their water use by ripping out lawns, installing water-sipping appliances and shortening their showers.

Conservation numbers varied widely across the state, with some places actually saving more water compared with 2015 levels. But other communities are turning the spigot back on, and state data show that several of the worst offenders are the affluent cities that previously have been criticized for heavy consumption.

[Read the whole story](#)

Lake Tahoe Marathon to impact

traffic

Participants in the various Lake Tahoe Marathon events on Oct. 7-9 could cause delays for motorists.

On Friday there will be runners on the shoulder of the road between South Lake Tahoe and Incline Village. One westbound lane of Cave Rock will be coned off for runners between 8-9:30am.

On Saturday runners will be on the shoulder of the road or bike paths from Sand Harbor to just south of Homewood on Highway 89 at Meadow Road. The CalNeva Marathon will run from 6:30am-1pm.

The Carnelian Bay Half Marathon will start from Waterman's Landing at 9am, finishing at 1pm.

The runners mostly will be coming through Tahoe City between 10am and 12:30pm.

There will be a detour onto McKinney Road between 9am and 1pm, just south of Homewood to create a safe finish area for the runners.

On Sunday, runners in the Lake Tahoe Marathon and Emerald Bay Half Marathon will be on the highway between Homewood and South Lake Tahoe from 7am-2pm.

The McKinney Road detour will be in effect just south of Homewood again from 6:30-8am.

Inspiration Point at Emerald Bay will be closed to southbound traffic from 9:15-10:30am.

Northbound traffic on Highway 89 will be closed near Spring

Creek between 7-11am.

In South Lake Tahoe the race course will use bike paths, Tahoe Keys streets, bike paths, back streets, and the Highway 50 sidewalk in the Stateline area.

Whole Foods redevelopment project squandered

By Kathryn Reed

In what was touted to be a signature project to showcase how redevelopment can work to benefit the environment and the economy, and how competing agencies could work together is now the ultimate example of Tahoe drama that has collectively cost taxpayers and the would-be developer nearly \$1 million.

South Lake Tahoe entered a contract with Pradip Patel, owner of the Knights Inn on Highway 50, in February to purchase the property for \$6 million. This was \$1.5 million more than the appraised value. The city was going to recoup the difference by selling the commodities tied to the parcel.

(The transaction would have skewed the real estate market if the sale were to be above the appraised price; making comps for future sales a sticking point.)

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency in an attempt to curtail development assessed a value to things like commercial floor area, tourist accommodation units and coverage. More recently they developed a pilot program – which has not been used – where bonus units are available if stream environmental zones

are restored. All of this plays into this project and in some ways is partially to be blamed for the demise of it.

The blame, though, for why this project is dead in the water can be shared by nearly everyone who ever had anything to do with it.



This is what the Whole Foods in South Lake Tahoe could have looked like.

In the contract between South Lake Tahoe and Patel was a contingency that the deal was dependent on \$4 million from the California Tahoe Conservancy. The money would have been used to fund the environmental work, including daylighting the stream that is now diverted through an underground culvert and reducing sediment reaching Lake Tahoe by 10,000 pounds per year.

But the Conservancy board never got a chance to vote on this expenditure of Proposition 1 dollars because Executive Director Patrick Wright wouldn't put it on the agenda. Tom

Davis, the city's rep on the Conservancy board, said he is going to demand the issue be heard in December – even if it's too late.

The city started working with the CTC last October when it initially applied for funding. At the eleventh-hour the city was told to rewrite the application. City and Conservancy staff have differing opinions about why the paperwork had to be done, but those outside the agencies point to Wright as being the difficult player in all of this.

He wanted a larger say over what the project looked like. He wanted those bonus units from the TRPA.

The Conservancy has one of the largest pools of commodities in the basin. With the agency no longer flush with cash from the state, it has been resourceful in how to sustain itself. Selling commodities is one way.



The Knights Inn collects about \$100,000 in transient occupancy taxes a year. Photo/LTN

What got lost in battle between the city and Conservancy was the final outcome. All involved agree that what was proposed was so much better than what is there now.

While there was going to be some stream environmental zone (SEZ) restoration, ultimately this was more of a stormwater project. The more SEZ that was to be restored, the more bonus units that could have been procured. The Conservancy wanted an SEZ project.

It didn't pencil out for all the development to be solely on the southwest corner. In part this had to do with how much parking Whole Foods required.

While fine-tuning of the project, it was obvious that to build a viable commercial area that the SEZ was going to be redeveloped, not entirely restored. This didn't sit well with the Conservancy.

To have made the SEZ numbers pencil out the city needed to include the two CTC parcels adjoining the hotel property in the back.

A Conservancy staff member told *Lake Tahoe News* one thing holding up release of Proposition 1 money was that the city had not completed the CEQA document. City officials said they first heard the CEQA argument from *LTN*, never from the CTC. That environmental document, which cost a couple hundred thousand dollars, is done. But for it to be circulated it had to be tied to a project and currently there is no project.

Proposition 1 dollars that were to be used for this dictate that the project must be multidimensional – which this would have been.

The Conservancy kept changing its reason for why Proposition 1 funds were not appropriate for this project. The city contends it did everything Wright wanted when it came to applying for the money. Only the board can actually allocate the dollars,

but it has never had a chance to say yes or no.

The Conservancy wants the city to study the site more; the board awarded a planning grant at its September meeting. The city has yet to accept it. The city believes there has been enough planning and that now it is time to develop. The city had hoped to break ground next spring.

Hindsight shows that bringing in all the players sooner may have resulted in a different conclusion. Better communication may have helped to avoid what became an insurmountable disconnect.

Three members from the Conservancy and three from the city met again on Oct. 4. Davis was there as the bridge since he is the city's rep on the CTC board. Davis said it didn't go well.



The area in green represents the Knights Inn parcel, while the gold are is the southwest corner property at Ski Run and Highway 50. Map/South Lake Tahoe

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and League to Save Lake Tahoe told *LTN* they are still hopeful a project that benefits

the environment and economy will come to fruition – it just might take different players. It will be necessary that everyone's vision is stated at the get-go so compromise can come before contracts are signed.

Ironically, the city ended up not needing the Conservancy's money. It had \$5.1 million from Halferty Development, \$800,000 from Placer County from the sale of onsite tourist accommodation units, and the city contributing \$100,000.

But the contract the city had with the hotel owner was so poorly written that not only did it give the city an out, it gave Patel an out. He exercised it and said he would not sell.

Even so, the city at its Oct. 18 meeting is likely to have closed session items pertaining to potential litigation involving Patel allegedly breaking the contract and possible litigation with the Conservancy. Patel never told the city why he is not selling. He didn't ask for more money.

Patel is now talking to a developer from the Bay Area. He wanted to work directly with Whole Foods, but that company already had a deal with Halferty. Plus, Whole Foods requires an ingress/egress to its stores where a stoplight exists. This could have worked via the southwest corner site. Caltrans has said it won't allow a light at Herbert Avenue, which is at the western edge of the hotel complex. This means Patel can't have his Whole Foods.

Patel chose not to talk to *Lake Tahoe News*. His attorney, Mike McLaughlin, also did not return a call.

About a decade ago Patel was in negotiations with the Conservancy to sell the property for about \$8 million. No formal offer was made by the state agency.

Patel has little incentive to sell. Real estate 101 says no one is going to sell if they don't have to. He has two kids in high school, so he wants to stay here. His family's home is on

the back of the property. Plus, he's making a decent living operating the 100-plus room hotel. That is not to say if the price is right, he wouldn't start packing.

Halferty Development out of Southern California has been waiting patiently to develop that site in conjunction with the neighboring parcel known as the southwest corner at Highway 50 and Ski Run Boulevard. The firm has invested hundreds of thousands of dollars. And today the cost to build is much greater than what it was just a couple years ago.

Halferty is in escrow on the corner lot, which is expected to close in the spring. Those close to the deal believe the sale will go through even though the greater vision has been eclipsed by circumstances outside of Halferty's control.

Insiders say Halferty could still recoup what it has paid out to date and make a profit with a project on the corner.

Chris Peto, COO for Halferty, would not talk to *Lake Tahoe News* about the company's plans for the southwest corner nor would he confirm that his company is now looking at other property on the South Shore to develop.

Halferty had Whole Foods lined up to open one of its new concept grocery stores. Other possibilities had been REI and Trader Joe's. Because the latest plans were to build on both sites, what becomes of the southwest corner remains to be seen.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

• The El Dorado County Board of Supervisors at the Oct. 10 meeting will consider declaring that a state of emergency

continues to exist in the county as a result of unprecedented tree mortality due to drought conditions and related bark beetle infestations.

- “Wolfdale’s Cuisine Unique” is an autobiography written by Tahoe City chef and restaurant owner Douglas Dale. It is available **online**.

- State Sen. Ted Gaines, R-El Dorado, received a perfect score from the National Federation of Independent Business/California for his 2016 legislative voting record.

- North Tahoe Public Utility District this summer installed 4,372 linear feet of 8-inch water main, 100 services, and six fire hydrants in Kings Beach.

- The 63rd annual Truckee Awards Dinner is Oct. 14 at the Resort at Squaw Creek. Tickets are available **online**.

Ski film shorts coming to Tahoe City

Alpenglow Sports and DPS Skis are putting on the first national screening of “DPS Cinematic”, a collection of inspirational ski film shorts designed by industry-leading filmmaker Ben Sturgulewski.

The event is Oct. 26 at 7pm at the Tahoe Art Haus & Cinema in Tahoe City.

Cinematic’s mission is to create an annual offering of fresh, festival-worthy film shorts with meaningful storytelling amidst storm-chasing and deep powder riding.

Tickets are \$11 **pre-sale** and \$13 night of.

Disappearing Yosemite glacier a symbol of climate change

By Brad Branan, Sacramento Bee

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK – When naturalist John Muir explored Lyell Glacier in Yosemite National Park about 150 years ago, the river of ice stretched as far as 10 football fields between the peaks of the Lyell Canyon, a glacier one might expect to see in Alaska, not California.

Today, it's a sliver of the natural feature Muir called a "living glacier." Over the last 130 years, the glacier has lost 78 percent of its surface, shrunk from about a half square mile to 66 acres.

Stand on the glacier and it's hard to hear anything except the sound of melting water rushing underneath. A big patch of bedrock is exposed in its middle.

Read the whole story