

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- There will be a memorial service for longtime Tahoe resident **Malcolm Pribyl** on July 17 at 3pm at the Meadow on Chinquapin Drive on the outskirts of South Lake Tahoe. Pribyl died on Jan. 19.
 - The fireworks display on the South Shore that is shot off near Edgewood Tahoe on July 4 will start at 9:45pm.
 - Barton Health Auxiliary volunteers are sponsoring a blood drive on July 29 from noon-5pm at the South Lake Tahoe Recreation Center, 1180 Rufus Allen Blvd. Bring a photo ID, eat well and drink plenty of fluids.
 - Kaya Williams and Bryn Anderson received the Tahoe Cross Country Ski Education Association's Kevin Mundane Scholarship in the amount of \$1,000 each.
 - Ben Carter, author of "Mastering the Potter's Wheel", is putting on a workshop July 23-24, 9am-5pm at the Holman Arts and Media Center, 1008 Tahoe Blvd., Incline Village. Go **online** to register.
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Loop road question to be put before voters

By Kathryn Reed

Voters on the California side of the South Shore have yet another decision to make in November – an initiative regarding the loop road.

The measure brought forward by a group of locals has the requisite number of signatures to place on the ballot. At the July 19 South Lake Tahoe City Council meeting the electeds can enact what the petitioners want or put it on the ballot. The latter is the likely course of action based on stances and comments they've made in the past.

"This particular initiative is saying the city of South Lake Tahoe shall not approve or support the realignment of Highway 50, commonly known as the loop road, unless it gets the support of voters for a specific proposal," Bruce Grego told *Lake Tahoe News*. He is one of the main backers of the proposal and has long been an opponent of the loop road. "This particular initiative provides a choice ... that the city cannot approve a realignment without voters' approval."

A simple 50 percent majority is needed for it to pass.

"If this passes, then the city will have to put on a future ballot a specific realignment," Grego said.

The Tahoe Transportation District, which is the lead agency for the project, is in the process of developing environmental documents. From those a preferred alternative will come forth. It is that alternative that voters would weigh in on via a second ballot measure down the road – assuming the first ballot measure passes.

City Attorney Tom Watson told *Lake Tahoe News*, "Even if the vote is overwhelmingly against the project, the city can't do anything to prevent it because it is not the city's project. The City Council doesn't have any decision-making that impacts that project."

TTD does not have condemnation power, though. If eminent domain were needed to acquire property, the city or Caltrans would have to invoke it. The city today has a policy not to use eminent domain. That can be reversed if four out of the five electeds choose to do so.

If the measure passes, there is talk that a lawsuit would be filed challenging the legality of it. It's not possible to challenge it prior to the vote.

El Dorado County Elections Department could not tell *Lake Tahoe News* what it will cost the city to place the measure on the ballot.

Also on the Nov. 8 ballot will be two tax measures the city wants voters to approve. One would raise the hotel tax and the other the sales tax. Raising the current TOT by 2 percent is projected to generate \$2 million annually. Upping the sales tax by one-half percent to 8.25 percent would likely bring in \$2.5 million each year.

The current transient occupancy tax is 10 percent throughout much of South Lake Tahoe, 12 percent in the redevelopment area. The former goes into the city's General Fund, the latter mostly to pay off the bond debt. The Tourism Improvement District, which was formed in 2006, tacks on another \$3.50 or \$4 per night. TID uses that money for marketing.

South Shore residents will also be voting on:

- City Council (two seats)
- Lake Tahoe Community College (two seats)
- Lake Tahoe Unified School District (three)
- South Tahoe Public Utility District (two)
- Lake Valley Fire Protection District (three).

The filing period is July 18-Aug. 12. If an incumbent does not file, the deadline is extended to Aug. 17.

STHS grad ID'd as man found dead near Barton

The remains found over the weekend behind Barton Memorial Hospital have been identified.

It is still unclear how Inyowen John Shelton died or ended up at that location. Officials have called the case "suspicious."

Shelton was a 2004 graduate of South Tahoe High School.

"The cause of death is still pending as the investigation is on going," Jacob Groen with the El Dorado County Sheriff's Department told *Lake Tahoe News*.

People on a dog walk found the body on **June 25**.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Fire threatens West Slope residences

Updated June 29, 4:15pm:

A wildland fire that started Tuesday in Placer County has spread to El Dorado County. As of Wednesday afternoon it was 5 percent contained.

Mandatory evacuations have been issued for residents who live in some of the 400 structures that are threatened.

Smoke is drifting into Truckee.

The Trailhead Fire started near Todd Valley along the middle fork of the American River at about 1:55pm on June 28. The cause is under investigation.

The fire began on the north side of the river canyon in Placer County and spotted over to El Dorado County on the south side.

Part of this 650-acre fire is burning on the Eldorado National Forest north of Georgetown.

Foresthill High School is being used as a shelter.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Art helps heal the pain in South Carolina

By Denise Haerr

CHARLESTON, S.C. – When one approaches Charleston, S.C., you become aware of why this town is called The Holy City. Its skyline is defined by the spires of more than 400 places of worship.

When one of those holy places, the Mother AME Emanuel Church, was the target of a massacre one year ago, the entire town was rocked to its core. Nine souls were lost due to the hatred of one.

Upon an extended recent visit to Charleston, we were aware of the immense pain still being felt, yet also the healing that permeated its populace.

We were invited to an art gallery opening, The Holy City: Art

of Love, Unity & Resurrection, created in the immediate aftermath. The community needed to focus its pain somewhere and the survivors, victims and their families turned to art. The exhibit space is a sanctuary for the healing to begin.

We were given a glimpse of the raw emotions of a year ago through works that encourages healing, provokes thoughtful discourse, promotes peace, and reveals community.

While in the gallery, surrounded by the people touched by personal loss, we felt such love and forgiveness radiating from the space.

If “art is a wound turned into light,” as artist Georges Braque has said, then The Holy City: Art of Love, Unity & Resurrection has shed light on the tragedy while also providing hope and peace to its community.

South Lake Tahoe wins VHR lawsuit

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe is justified in charging the fees it imposes on vacation rental owners, according to a court decision.

El Dorado County Superior Court Judge Steve Bailey on June 28 released his decision regarding the lawsuit that was filed in June 2015 by Jim Morris, owner of Lake Tahoe Accommodations.

“We are delighted with the results. It fully justifies what the council has said all along and that they have acted appropriately in setting the fees for vacation home rentals,” Tom Watson, city attorney, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “It is clear

vindication for the city in this situation.”

The opposing parties had spent four hours in court in late April arguing their respective opinions.

Morris’ company manages more than 200 rentals on the South Shore. He filed the suit under the parent company of his business – Lake Tahoe Properties. His contention a year ago was “they violated the law in how they passed the ordinance. And they didn’t justify the money and how it is generated.”

Morris was unavailable for comment. However, his Sacramento-based attorney, Brigit Barnes, said, “I do not agree with the court that the city ever established a revised fee structure that matched what their anticipated costs were. And that was the basis of our case.”

The city has been tweaking the VHR ordinance almost since its inception, and even since the lawsuit was filed. Part has had to do with fees, and part with appeasing permanent residents.

In the court ruling Bailey said, “After reviewing and considering the administrative record, there is nothing in the record to suggest the City Council acted arbitrarily, or that its decision is devoid of evidentiary support. Instead, the record demonstrates that in adopting the VHR ordinance and resolution, the City Council exercised its best judgment based upon the evidence presented to them.”

Another part of the case is still to be decided. According to Barnes, this has to do with if it’s constitutionally allowable for VHR owners to be saddled with the fees as a penalty, so to speak, when VHRs are only responsible for 27 percent of the complaints.

Watson believes based on how Bailey has ruled so far that the city will prevail going forward.

Barnes had not spoken to her client as of Tuesday afternoon,

so Morris' exact course of action going forward is unknown. He could appeal.

Opinion: What it means to be 'California's Bank'

By Joe Mathews

If California were a bank, what sort of bank would it be?

Banc of California has a new, intriguing answer. In just six years, "California's bank" has emerged as one of America's fastest-growing banks—from \$700 million in assets in 2010 to nearly \$10 billion today. Since the end of 2014, it's been the best performing bank stock in the country, while pursuing a banking strategy even Bernie Sanders might love: serving the state's diverse array of small and mid-sized businesses.



Joe Mathews

More than 100 banks have branches in California, and many of them are community banks that seek to serve the same people as Banc of California. But the intensity of Banc of California's focus on defining itself by its Californianness is unmatched—and noteworthy for any enterprise, especially a bank in a globalized era when consolidation across borders is all

the rage in the financial industry.

Banc of California has billed itself as “California Strong” and “the bank for those seeking, supporting and living the California dream.” It has touted California icons among its customers (Wolfgang Puck to Vin Scully), and built partnerships with USC, San Diego State, Pepperdine, and the L.A. Unified School District “Partnership” schools associated with former Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, an advisor to the bank.

In so doing, Banc of California is betting that a grounded-in-the-Golden-State enterprise can prosper in this new and different California era, when, for the first time, the majority of Californians are born and raised in California.

“What’s good for California is good for the Banc of California,” the bank’s chairman and CEO Steven Sugarman told me recently at the bank’s headquarters in Irvine. Sugarman, 41, is himself a homegrown Californian—from Fullerton, where his mother serves on the school board.

Banc of California is making an argument that California’s economy is so varied and peculiar that it needs banks with deep local knowledge to serve it effectively. While bigger corporations dominate many American urban economies, California’s business base is “very democratic,” in Sugarman’s words, with properties owned by individuals and families. Since so many Californians work for themselves, even very credit-worthy people don’t qualify for traditional mortgages.

Sugarman says the bank’s data also suggests that California businesses—particularly those owned by Latinos and women—are far more credit-worthy than many lenders have recognized. To better reach those customers, Banc of California in 2014 acquired Banco Popular’s 20 Southern California branches (including \$1.1 billion in deposits).

In this context, California is not just a state but a business

model; to attract diverse businesses, Banc of California needs to show commitment to communities. This is one reason why the bank has prioritized its Community Reinvestment Act lending—to community development projects like affordable housing—and trumpets its “outstanding” rating in such lending at every opportunity.

Such a strategy has its critics; many banks consider CRA lending an unprofitable chore. And in a conservative commercial banking world that holds that “anything that grows fast is a weed,” Banc of California’s rapid success can be seen as suspicious, perhaps predicated on ill-advised pricing or risky lending.

Sugarman says the bank invests heavily in risk management and in hiring people who really understand the state’s markets. The rapid growth is in part a function of launching a bank in the wake of a massive recession that left an enormous void in lending and liquidity as California-based banks failed and consolidated.

Sugarman makes a strong case for a sort of California patriotism in matters of banking. After all, when Californians bank with national or multinational banks, their deposits are loaned or invested outside California. Banc of California is busy pointing this out to governments and nonprofits across the state that are still banking with multinational banks less focused on our own communities. The bank also wants to continue expanding in Northern and Central California, and to partner with California-based online lenders and technological innovators.

Will this California model endure? A bank tied to a state as volatile as California can expect a bumpy ride in the long term. But the Banc of California is, for now, making a compelling case that it pays to bank on California.

I dropped by its Pasadena branch recently, to find out about a

bank program that allows children to open no-fee savings accounts (that pay a relatively generous 3 percent interest for accounts below \$10,000). Within 30 seconds of my walking through the door, I'd been offered coffee, a freshly baked cookie, and a comfortable chair. As well as a comforting question from the young banker assisting me: "Where are you from in California?"

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

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- Comedian, writer and actress Heather McDonald will be at The Loft Theatre in South Lake Tahoe on July 3 at 9pm. Go **online** for tickets.
- Learn which native plants are easily grown in the Tahoe garden and can provide homegrown teas for the kitchen at a free lecture on July 30 at 11am at the Tahoe City Demonstration Garden, 2400 Lake Forest Road, Tahoe City.
- Barton Health is putting on a boot camp for new dads and dads-to-be. The workshop is designed to inspire and equip men to become confidently engaged with their infants, support their mates, and navigate their transformation into dads. Dates are July 14, 6:30-9:30pm; July 30, 9am-noon; Aug. 11, 6:30-9:30pm; and Aug. 27, 9am-noon. The free classes are at 1077B 4th St., South Lake Tahoe.
- Mystic Roots will be at Whiskey Dicks in South Lake Tahoe on July 3. Doors open at 9pm. Must be 21 to attend. Advance tickets are available for \$13 at The Spot and Whiskey Dicks in South Lake Tahoe or **online**.

· Barton Health's care team continues to grow – Danielle Priem, a pediatrician, will provide care for babies, children, and adolescents at Barton Pediatrics, while Saul Zelan will offer psychiatry services to adult patients. Both will begin seeing patients in August.

Fire, drinking rules for July 4 in the basin

Wildfire prevention is everyone's responsibility, according to the U.S. Forest Service.

Possession of fireworks of any kind, including firecrackers and sparklers, is illegal in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Campfires and portable charcoal grills are not permitted on National Forest beaches or in the general forest. If planning to barbecue on the beach, bring a portable gas grill instead of charcoal.

Fire restrictions on National Forest System land in the Lake Tahoe Basin begin July 1. For complete information on fire restrictions, go **online**.

The annual alcohol ban will be in effect at Nevada Beach, Zephyr Cove Resort, and Zephyr Shoals (the former Dreyfus Estate) from 6am to midnight on July 4. In addition, county and state laws ban the possession or consumption of alcohol on the Truckee River from Tahoe City to Alpine Meadows and Chamber's Landing Beach on the West Shore, beginning July 1 and continuing through July 6.

Day-use parking fees for July 4 at Pope, Baldwin, and Nevada

beaches will be \$20 and at Zephyr Cove Beach \$25 to cover increased security and facility maintenance costs of the holiday.

Trash cans may become full, so plan ahead and pack out all garbage.

EDC working to solve West Shore road issue

Definitive solutions elude El Dorado County officials when it comes to fixing the road debacle in Tahoe.

County reps met with residents last week to discuss the ongoing problem on the more than 20 miles of roads that are crumbling because of a bad repair job in 2015.

To date 323 tons of the tiny black rocks have been collected. The county has been sanding the oily areas in an attempt to lessen the sticky, messy situation.

Test strips will be placed in some areas after the July 4 holiday week to cover the slick spots. The county hopes this is will hold through the winter so the roads don't have to be completely resurfaced.

It is still unknown what caused the road to not seal correctly.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report