

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- The South Lake Tahoe Senior Center is having a pancake breakfast (8-11am) and rummage sale (8am-3pm) on May 21 at 3050 Lake Tahoe Blvd. Cost is \$5 for adults, \$3 for children.
 - Douglas County Public Library is having story time at Lampe Park starting June 1 at 10:30am. It will continue every Wednesday through July 27. All ages are invited. The program includes stories, music and crafts.
 - The U.S. Ski and Snowboard Association recognized physician Terry Orr of South Lake Tahoe as the 2016 recipient of the John J. Clair Jr. Award. This is given annually to a person who provides exceptional service to the U.S. Ski Team or U.S. Snowboarding.
 - The Truckee Town Council this month approved the first building – artists lofts – of the Truckee Railyard project.
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Is drought new norm for water use?

By Denis Cuff, Bay Area News Group

With the drought fading and temperatures heating up, it's no wonder more sprinklers are popping up. But is it too soon?

Some homeowners and environmentalists worry water restrictions are coming off too fast in a state struggling to have enough water for people, businesses, fish and wildlife.

Water industry officials, however, say Californians have

proved that once they learn to conserve, they don't forget those habits.

Officials say new technology with more efficient sprinkler controls, toilets, and clothes and dish washing machines also factor in. Landscaping changes also made a difference in holding down water use as homeowners replaced thirsty lawns with drought resistant plants, officials said.

Read the whole story

Douglas libraries putting on summer programs

The Douglas County Public Library invites all kids and teens to participate in its 2016 Summer Reading Program.

On Your Mark, Get Set, Read is the theme of the children's program for ages infant to 11, and Get in the Game is for ages 12 to 17. Both run from June 1 to July 30 at the Minden and Zephyr Cove branches.

The goal is to encourage young people to read during summer vacation with a magic show, a wild animal program, story times, reading prizes, and much more. Register **online** or at either branch.

The kick-off event will be June 14 at the Douglas County Community and Senior Center, 1329 Waterloo Lane in Gardnerville. Tony Borders, the magical ventriloquist, will perform at 6:30pm. From 7:30-8pm the Douglas County Public Library Foundation will host an ice cream social. Both events are free and open to all ages. New books and educational toys

will be available for purchase at the Books are Fun fair from 5-8pm. A percentage of proceeds from the sale benefits the library.

To learn more about the library's summer event schedule, call 775.782.9841.

Night bike races to resume in Meyers

Tahoe Games Bike Night series returns May 27 at Lake Tahoe Golf Course in Meyers.

On Course Events plans to use lights, themed bridges and music throughout to transform the golf course into a family-friendly, cross country course that will challenge every rider. The course will be designed for ages 10 and older.

The event series will be the last Friday of the month through September.

Registration will open at 7pm, with races set to begin about 9pm. Races will be conducted in three heats. Awards and an after party in the clubhouse will follow the race.

Keeping pets, children safe

in warm temps

By Nancy Williams

With warmer weather right around the corner, health officials are reminding residents never to leave children or pets unattended inside vehicles, even for a few minutes.

Each year, children and pets die in hot cars. It is important that everyone take precautions in order to avoid these injuries and deaths.

Temperatures inside vehicles can climb quickly, especially on hot days, and even with the windows partially down.

Heat stress or stroke, irreparable brain damage and death can follow shortly thereafter. Parking in the shade is also not recommended because the sun can move and directly expose a vehicle.

California law allows law enforcement and animal services officers to take swift action to remove a child or animal in distress inside a vehicle. The individual(s) responsible for leaving a child or pet in danger in a motor vehicle can be cited, and they can face fines and jail time. Felony charges can apply if the child or pet is seriously injured or dies. In addition to heat-related injuries, children and pets left unattended in vehicles can be subject to carbon monoxide poisoning, runaway vehicles, abduction and other dangers.

These safety rules can help prevent heat-related injuries and other vehicle dangers:

- Never leave a child, pet or vulnerable person (such as an elderly or medically frail person) alone in or around a vehicle.
- Check to make sure all children leave the vehicle when you reach your destination, particularly when loading

and unloading. Do not overlook sleeping infants.

- Place a reminder of your child or pet's presence where you would be sure to see it before leaving the vehicle.
- Never leave a child in a vehicle with the motor running or the key in the ignition.
- Keep car keys away from children at all times.
- Always lock your car, even at home, and remind your friends and neighbors to do the same. Children die every year when they get into unlocked cars on their own and cannot get out.
- Teach children not to play in, on or around cars.
- Remove your pet from your vehicle when returning home.
- Do not transport an animal in a trunk of a vehicle nor in the bed of a pickup in hot weather. Animal's paws can burn on an extremely hot day.
- Call 911 if you observe a child or vulnerable person in distress in an unattended vehicle.

Contact El Dorado County Animal Services at 530.621.5795 on the West Slope or 530.573.7925 in South Lake Tahoe if you observe a pet in distress in a vehicle.

Nancy Williams is El Dorado County's health officer.

Latino history film to be shown at LTCC

"Episode 5: Prejudice and Pride" from the multi-part documentary "Latino Americans: 500 Years of History" will be shown at Lake Tahoe Community College on May 24.

The screening will be followed by a talk led by Albert Ponce, who teaches history, political science and ethnic studies at LTCC. This bilingual event is free and open to all.

“Latino Americans: 500 Years of History” was produced by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the American Library Association. It is a nationwide public programming initiative that supports the exploration of the history and experiences of Latinos, who have helped shape the United States over the last five centuries and who have become, with more than 50 million people, America’s largest minority group.

It will be shown at noon in the Aspen Room.

SLT council tightens screws on VHR owners

By Kathryn Reed

It seems like every time the South Lake Tahoe City Council makes some change to the vacation rental ordinance, another group of people becomes disenfranchised.

On Tuesday it was those who have the tourist rentals in a multi-family dwelling.

The staff report says, “There will be no VHR permits for multi-family properties one year from the effective date of this ordinance.”

Eleven people spoke at the meeting; most not happy with the changes – and certainly not understanding of them.

Mayor Wendy David said, “We have a housing crisis. As the City Council we need to think of the community. We are facing a substantial crisis with those who want to live here and can’t find adequate housing.”

The change means people who have a second dwelling on their property, own a duplex, or larger multi-family dwelling will no longer be able to rent them to tourists.

These people believe they are being discriminated against. Those who voiced their opinions said they ought to be grandfathered in, spoke of how their properties had no violations, and that the money pays their bills and helps with retirement income.

The council didn't budge.

While the staff report from the May 17 meeting said the ordinance was designed to be more user friendly and easier to follow, that wasn't the case for everyone reading along.

Councilman Austin Sass, who with David, was on the subcommittee to come up with the changes. He said at the get-go only three things changed. The staff report had 11 significant bullet items, and the actual ordinance is full of lined-out language and additional verbiage.

It used to be that owners could pay a reduced permit fee if they opted to rent to fewer people than the maximum allowed. Not so going forward. The VHR permit will be for the top number, thus further increasing the city's bottom line.

One item that didn't get any attention is that all types of vacation rentals will now have to collect/pay transient occupancy tax.

The staff report says, "... TOT payment is required for all rentals of 30 days or less and it is collected through an issued VHR permit." This includes people renting a room and staying on the premise. A chart in the actual ordinance says as much, too.

However, to add to the confusion, City Attorney Tom Watson told *Lake Tahoe News* those types of rentals don't require a

VHR permit, but instead people will need a business license. Further clarification was sought early today, but no answer has arrived.

The second reading of the ordinance is expected at the June 7 meeting. The ordinance would be effective 30 days later.

One thing that could ease the housing crunch is that on Monday the California Senate passed SB1069, which would allow people to add a second dwelling to their property. Watson said this would have no bearing on South Lake Tahoe's VHR ordinance.

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency normally says no to such units.

"As far as how this state legislation would affect TRPA rules, we would have to wait and see what if anything passes at the end of the day, how that compares with our rules and our policies and goals for the region, and update things accordingly," Tom Lotshaw, spokesman for the bi-state regulatory agency, told

2 tax measures before SLT voters in Nov.

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe voters in November will decide if the hotel and sales taxes should be increased.

The City Council on May 17 agreed to go forward with the ballot measures. What to spend the added revenue on remains to be decided.

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.

The city briefly raised the hotel tax via Measure Z in November 2002. This added \$1 to every hotel room. It was in place from Feb. 1, 2004, to Oct. 31, 2006. It brought in about \$1.1 million a year.

Raising the current TOT by 2 percent is projected to generate \$2 million annually.



Privacy is lacking at the South Lake Tahoe Recreation Center. Photo/LTN file

The plan is to have the money go toward recreation. It will require a two-thirds majority to pass this tax because the money is earmarked for something in particular.

Defining recreation, though, is what could be a hiccup in the process. Two members of the South Lake Tahoe Lodging Association spoke Tuesday, saying they want the ballot language to dictate a state-of-the-art recreation complex will

be built. A member of the public who could not stay for the whole meeting earlier that day told *Lake Tahoe News* she wants bike trails to be the priority.

The ballot language is bound to be broad. The resolution supporting it can get into more details.

The city also sees renovations to Regan Beach being part of the bigger recreation improvement picture.

As for the sales tax, the plan is to ask voters to raise it by one-half percent, with the hope it will generate \$2.5 million annually. This would make it 8.5 percent.

Raising the sales tax was already done once. It went from 7.25 percent to 7.75 percent after voters gave the go-ahead in November 2004. All of this "extra" revenue goes right to South Lake Tahoe, whereas the bulk goes to the state.

What the council could not decide on is whether to go for a 50 percent, plus one vote where the money raised goes to the General Fund, or have it dedicated to something like roads, which requires a 66 percent vote. The five discussed the merits of requiring the lesser vote total and putting an advisory vote with it asking people to choose among two or three areas of where to spend the money. Most likely roads, facilities and housing would be the options. Those priorities came out of a survey the city did earlier this year.

However, the city would not be obligated to follow the wishes of voters. To better ensure the electeds comply with voters' wishes, the idea was floated of passing a resolution stating that to deviate from the voters' desires would take a 5-0 vote of the council.

Everything regarding the sales tax will be back before the council on June 7. To qualify for the Nov. 8 ballot, the council must have the resolution done by June 21.

The council is confident about asking voters to approve both tax measures because the survey showed only 5 percent of respondents saying no to any tax, with 8 percent undecided. Forty-five percent said they would support both taxes.

Recreation and roads are the two main areas on which people want money to be spent, according to survey results.

While an amusement tax had been bandied about, the dismal survey results removed that from the discussion.

The council members admitted they have their work cut out to convince voters to say yes to both taxes even though it will be tourists who are most impacted.

Opinion: GOP upset with Facebook for 'censoring' news

By Dan Gilmore

America's right wing is in a froth this week following allegations that Facebook has tweaked its "trending news" feed to reduce the visibility of conservative news sites. Maybe it's true, maybe not. As of now, this report from *Gizmodo*, which is owned by Gawker Media, is based on anonymous sources, making it impossible to trust.

Nonetheless, conservatives and Republicans in Congress have seized on the report as only the latest evidence of overall liberal media bias against their cause. Sen. John Thune, the Republican chairman of the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, has demanded answers from Facebook and, no doubt, will invite Mark Zuckerberg and/or his minions to

explain themselves.

But the deeper issue is undeniably real: Facebook is the dominant member of a small number of giant entities—corporate and governmental—that are gaining control over the flow of news, freedom of expression, and a lot more in our digital lives. Yet the conservatives who dominate the Republican Congress and big-business groups have done their best to thwart policies that would encourage the kind of competition we need to challenge that increasingly centralized control.

Almost no one wants to address the fact that Facebook is becoming a monopoly in the antitrust sense of the word. No, it doesn't control all conversation[AM1] . But Facebook is by far the most widely used venue for these conversations, and its power grows daily. Along with Google, it dominates online advertising; Facebook especially does so on mobile devices, which are the way many people connect to the Internet. If you offer news and information online, you have almost no choice but to play on Facebook's field, because so much of your audience is there. (In some parts of the world, Facebook essentially is the Internet because mobile devices are pretty much the sole means of online access and in some cases the company has made deals with local telecommunications companies and/or governments.

Facebook has been buying everything that presents even a whiff of competition: Instagram, WhatsApp, Oculus, among others. This is smart—no one can dispute that Zuckerberg and the others on his team are brilliant technologists and strategists—but it's also a red flag. As Zuckerberg famously said several years ago, he wants Facebook to be “like electricity” in terms of ubiquity and people's needs. Well, electricity is a utility. And we regulate utilities.

Monopolies and cozy oligopolies never turn out well in the long run for anyone but the monopolists or cartel members. They end up controlling markets and do their best to thwart

genuine competition. It's their nature.

Which is why capitalism, plainly the best system when it's working right, needs rules to promote competition. It's why we have antitrust laws and other processes, including regulation, designed to blunt the dominant companies' normal predations. Yes, the dominant players tend to capture the regulators, but that's a failure of function, not of pro-competition theory.

Yet Republicans in general think the government should play little to no role in promoting competition. They consider antitrust inquiry and enforcement to be counterproductive, at best—except, of course, when a powerful constituent (a corporation, usually) is in danger from predatory behavior.

That attitude accounts for the GOP's cheerleading for corporate dominance of Internet access. Republicans in general are fine with the idea that one or two companies (say the leading cable provider and another telecom) should control access in most communities, and utterly opposed to a remedy—what we call network neutrality—to ensure that people at the edges of networks, not dominant Internet service providers, should decide what information they want and at what priority.

I don't want the government to tell Facebook what it can publish, and don't look forward to much more than posturing from Thune and his compatriots. But I do want the government to start paying extremely close attention to the way the company is becoming a monopoly, and what it means for freedom of expression when a single company has so much power over what people say online. I want government to use antitrust and other pro-competition laws to ensure that Facebook doesn't abuse its dominance in a business sense. I want government(s) to promote open technology and communications, and fierce competition at every level. Kudos to Zuckerberg for making Facebook so appealing to millions of users; that's an amazing achievement. But we can't allow Facebook to leverage that

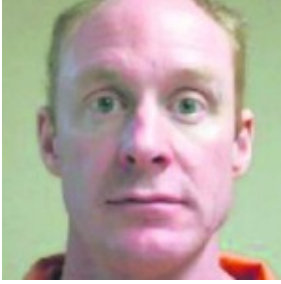
success to block the emergence of alternatives to its service, or use its market power to influence or alter the content of publications and others trying to communicate with Facebook users.

We all need to wake up to the potential threat Facebook poses to freedom of expression. Once you are in its enclosed online space, it is the corporation's terms of service, not the First Amendment that determines what you can say. If it decides to downplay speech it doesn't like, Facebook has the right to do so.

So I'm glad that conservatives are concerned, even if the allegations prove overblown. (Last Tuesday, Facebook modified its outright denial from the day before to a "we're looking into it" stance; stay tuned.) I'd be even happier if conservatives realized that government does have a role in promoting genuine competition—and that we're in uncharted information-freedom territory under the new control freaks of Silicon Valley.

Dan Gillmor teaches digital media literacy at Arizona State University. He is the author of "Mediactive".

Tahoe man behind bars after leaving work crew



Michael David
Lillie

A 37-year-old Stateline man serving time for a felony DUI faces even more time behind bars after walking away from a work crew.

Michael David Lillie was caught May 17 in Woodland.

He had been sentenced to up to 10 years at the Steward Conservation Camp in Carson City. While there he was assigned to a work crew in the capital city, which he left May 11.

The latest crime could add six years to his sentence.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*