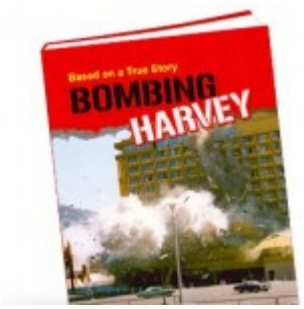
‘Bombing Harvey’ – a son’s role in Stateline incident

By Kathryn Reed

When I first saw the title of the book I thought there should be an S at the end Harvey. After reading “Bombing Harvey” I understood more fully how the man responsible for the explosive device going off at the Stateline casino in 1980 had a vendetta against casino owner Harvey Gross, so the title was appropriate.



While I had already read much that is included in the book by John Birges Jr. and Nina J. Arnold, I chose to read it because of the author. Birges was part of the bombing. It was his father John Birges Sr. – or Big John – who came up with the plan.

I was in high school in the Bay Area when the bombing took place. Honestly, I don’t have any memory of the news coverage from then. I can only imagine it was extensive.

However, I have read plenty about it in the years since then, especially at various significant anniversary dates.

“Bombing Harvey” is an easy to read 205-page paperback that came out in 2010. For anyone who lived through the incident, it’s doubtful anything new would be gleaned from reading the book. But for those who weren’t here or aren’t old enough to remember the event, it would probably be worth reading.

It delves into the family life of the Birges. Big John had his two sons and girlfriend working on various aspects of the plot.

Some of the names of people in the book will be familiar to

locals. For instance, Ron Pierini who is now sheriff of Douglas County was the captain of the Lake Tahoe substation at the time.

While Harvey Gross is no longer alive, plenty of his descendants reside on the South Shore. A bit of the book talks about his anxiety in knowing a 1,000-pound bomb was sitting inside his hotel-casino. One can only wonder with a corporation now owning the casino, if the same concerns for human life would be exhibited.

Ski day honors fallen Tahoe soldier

The 4th annual memorial celebration in honor of Sgt. Timothy Smith will be April 7 at Sierra-at-Tahoe.

This year we will also benefit Operation Rebound.

The celebration of life pot luck after skiing will be at the American Legion Post 795 starting at 4pm.

Music will be provided by the Cash Only Band.

Skiers will meet at 11am in the Aspen Room at the resort.

Reserve a spot by calling (530) 416.9100 or email mountainsbuddyblue@yahoo.com.

Are cockroaches the next lobster of the food world?

By Rene Lynch, Los Angeles Times

Take a good long look at these hissing cockroaches. What words come to mind? Meaty? Juicy? Downright succulent?

That’s what chef Gene Rurka thinks. And he’d like you to give them a try.

Rurka is serving hissing cockroaches at the annual dinner held at the famed Explorers Club in New York City. The black-tie dinner at the Waldorf-Astoria will draw an eclectic mix of modern-day adventurers and their wealthy patrons. Members have walked on the surface of the moon, as well as explored the ocean’s deepest trenches, Rurka told the *Times*.

If you were to randomly throw a pebble across the dining room, there’s a good chance you’d hit someone who has scaled Mount Everest once, if not twice.

That kind of crowd puts a lot of pressure on a chef. But Rurka — who raises his own livestock outside Manhattan and is dedicated to finding fare that is both sustainably raised as well as suitably exotic — loves the challenge.

That night’s diners would enjoy python patties with applewood smoked bacon in addition to dishes that highlight stir-fried jellyfish, scorpions, alligator and kangaroo.

Read the whole story

Opinion: California fosters bad business climate

By Bradley R. Schiller

In its most recent annual ranking of "business friendly" states, *Forbes* magazine had some blunt advice for investors: "Utah and Colorado have maintained strong business climates. Forget about California."

Californians like to dismiss such assessments of the Golden State and instead point to its natural beauty and quality of life. They tend not to worry what people in other states think. But they should. California is no longer the economic miracle it once was. Silicon Valley no longer has a monopoly on high-tech talent and innovation. Hollywood has to compete for movie locations with Utah and Morocco. Real estate investors see better development prospects in states with fewer foreclosed and abandoned homes. And SoCal porn producers know they don't need huge wardrobe containers to move to Nevada.

Californians tend to be complacent about these competitive risks. On the surface, things don't look too bad. Sure, the state's finances are in shambles and the Legislature in disarray. But median personal income ($42,578) is well above the national average ($39,945).

These things can't compensate for some disturbing recent trends. The growth of the state's $2-trillion economy has slowed dramatically. Since 2000, the state's economy has grown significantly more slowly than the rest of the nation. Last year, California ranked 34th in real GDP growth. That sluggish growth has burdened it with among the highest unemployment

rates (10.9 percent) in the nation. If businesses heed Forbes' advice to avoid the state, the situation will only worsen.

Bradley R. Schiller is a native Californian who lives in Lake Tahoe and teaches economics at the UNR. He is the author of "The Economy Today."

Read the whole story

Reno River Festival moves to mid-June, adds dog event

The 9-year-old Reno River Festival is changing dates – June 15-17.

Former Freestyle World Champion Ruth Gordon-Ebens has taken over as festival director.

The event includes freestyle, boatercross, and slalom kayaking competitions, as well as the Run Amuck fun run. Live music takes the stage throughout the weekend, along with Yoga in the Park and enough food and drink to satisfy most tastes.

This is the first year dogs will be part of the festival as competitors – with Splash Dogs and the Biggest Little Dog Jog.

For more details about the 9th annual Reno River Festival or the Run Amuck, including registration, vendor, volunteer and sponsorship information, go online or call (775) 784.9400, ext. 119.

The festival is at the Truckee River Whitewater Park at Wingfield located in the heart of downtown Reno.

Feds threaten to seize property where South Lake Tahoe pot clubs do business

By Kathryn Reed

The federal government has written letters to the property owners of the three South Lake Tahoe medical marijuana dispensaries threatening to seize their property, fine them or send them to jail if they keep those particular tenants.



"The letter didn't direct us to shutdown. It put the landlord on notice about the dispensary," Cody Bass, who runs Tahoe Wellness Collective, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "We are open every day and we'll remain that way. We have no intention to close."

What his landlord Patty Olson does remains to be seen. In a terse conversation with *Lake Tahoe News* on March 21, Olson said she wants to talk to Bass about what his collectives in Sacramento and Berkeley are going to do. She could not explain how that would be relevant to what she, as the property owner in South Lake Tahoe, would do.

Darcy De Tarr of De Tarr Properties in Burlingame was sent a letter dated Feb. 27 from the U.S. Attorney's Office in Sacramento that says, "This letter is formal notice that continued use of the property in violation of federal law may result in forfeiture and criminal or civil penalties. You

should consult an attorney concerning this letter."

De Tarr was not reachable and Gino DiMatteo, who operates City of Angels 2 on De Tarr's property, did not return a phone call.

Kevin Khasigian, assistant U.S. attorney, who co-signed the letter with U.S. Attorney Benjamin Wagner, provided his number in the body of the letter to De Tarr. He did not return a phone call from *LTN*.

Erika and Matt Triglia run Patient2Patient and own the property.

"We are always concerned about being shut down, but we are committed to patients getting plant based medicine," Erika Triglia told *Lake Tahoe News*.

She believes the three South Tahoe dispensaries are on the fed's radar because city officials have legalized the businesses by issuing them business licenses and having created an ordinance that will permit each facility.

City Attorney Patrick Enright said he was not surprised the letters were sent after the federal government sent the first batch of letters in October to larger collectives in bigger cities. But the city also was not given a heads up the letters were in the mail.

Enright said he does not foresee South Lake Tahoe being threatened by the feds even though the city has approved medical marijuana being cultivated, sold and possessed. The city is going with state law under the voter approved Proposition 215. It's the federal government that believes all marijuana is illegal.

Police Chief Brian Uhler echoed Enright's belief, saying he had been talking to federal authorities while the city was writing its ordinance.

El Dorado County Assistant District Attorney Hans Uthe had heard about the letters, but had neither seen one nor had his federal counterparts contacted him.

The letter to property owners says, “It is also a felony for a property owner to rent, lease or otherwise make a place available for cultivation or distribution of marijuana. Violation can result in imprisonment and a fine up to $500,000; or a civil penalty of $250,000 or twice the gross receipts, whichever is greater.”

Lauren Horwood, spokeswoman for the Sacramento U.S. Attorney’s Office, said follow-up with landlords would be done on a case-by-case basis. She said the intent of the letter was to get people to “comply on their own” and not have her office file a forfeiture complaint with the court.

Triglia doesn’t believe the feds can do much more than write threatening letters at this point because of a lawsuit filed late last year by NORML against the four U.S. attorneys in California, Attorney General Eric Holder and DEA Administrator Michele Leonhardt to keep them, as the suit says, “from arresting or prosecuting plaintiffs or those similarly situated, seizing their medical cannabis, forfeiting their property or the property of their landlords or threatening to seize property, or seeking civil or administrative sanctions against them or parties whose property is used to assist them.”

Triglia said, “We are here to help people and we’re going to continue to do that.”

‘Basics of Prayer’ classes in South Tahoe

Unity at the Lake is offering “Basics of Prayer” classes.

The class will be taught by Stew Bittman, Unity’s co-spiritual leader, and will be offered March 25 from 11:30am-1pm and March 29 from 6:30-8pm.

Classes will be in the annex at Unity’s spiritual center, 1195 Rufus Allen Blvd., South Lake Tahoe.

For more info, call (530) 544.2266.

Report: Nevada airports good for regional, state economies

By Richard N. Velotta, Las Vegas Sun

Nevada airports are better economic drivers than those in nearly every other state in the country, a report prepared for Airports Council International-North America says.

“The Economic Impact of Commercial Airports in 2010” quantifies the contributions of 490 commercial airports in the United States.



Reno-Tahoe airport adds to Nevada's economy. Photo/LTN

The analysis, prepared by Cincinnati-based CDM Smith, says airports multiply a community's economic output – particularly at a facility like McCarran International Airport. McCarran stands out because it has more airlines than most other airports, more employees to handle large volumes of customers and serves a tourism economy that includes hundreds of jobs spun off from airport operations.

The report says California airports produced the most economic output in 2010, at $158 billion. That state's 29 airports provided 1.4 million jobs with an annual payroll of $47.1 billion.

Nevada was ninth on the 50-state list, with economic output of $40.5 billion. The state's five commercial airports provided 313,640 jobs with an annual payroll of $11.8 billion, the report said.

But on average, Nevada's airports produced economic output of $8.1 billion per airport, second only to Georgia, which had nine airports that produced $8.9 billion per airport on average.

Georgia is home to Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, the nation's busiest.

The five Nevada airports included in the CDM study were

McCarran, Reno-Tahoe International Airport, North Las Vegas Airport, Elko Regional Airport and Boulder City Municipal Airport.

Read the whole story

Lovell calls it quits after 30 years with sheriff's office

By Kathryn Reed

Lt. Les Lovell's last day on the job is Thursday.

After more than 30 years with the El Dorado County Sheriff's Office, he is turning in his badge – at least until the summer. Then he returns to the seasonal boat patrol with Larry Olsen, who was a detective with the agency until he retired last fall.

"Thirty-one years is a long time to give to an agency," Sheriff John D'Agostini said of Lovell. "He has done a fantastic job. I relied on him immensely for the knowledge and wisdom he has for the basin."



Lt. Les Lovell

is retiring March 21. Photo/Lisa J. Tolda

Lovell, 52, started his career with the department in 1980.

“I just had such a varied career and wonderful opportunities that other law enforcement officers don’t get. I did everything I could do,” Lovell told *Lake Tahoe News*.

He started in the jail, worked boat patrol, patrolled the streets, was a canine officer for 11 years, an undercover narcotics officer, investigated person and property crimes, graveyard watch commander, internal affairs, jail commander, and finishes as commander of the Tahoe substation after a little more than nine years.

At one time he had aspirations of moving farther up the ladder, but others thwarted those dreams.

In an unusual ploy, sheriff candidate Stan Perez essentially ran with Lovell as No. 2 even though it is an appointed position. Perez quit the race under a dark cloud in February 2010, giving Lovell an hour’s notice this was about to happen.

Still, Lovell says he wouldn’t change a thing about his career.

In 1989, Lovell was working undercover. He didn’t look like the clean-cut officer he is today. His efforts helped bring down then Mayor Terry Trupp and 19 others in the federal investigation that was called Operation Deep Snow – so named because the drug of choice was cocaine. Lovell was an undercover cocaine buyer in the multifaceted case.

Two years later he was in the thick of the investigation of the Jaycee Lee Dugard kidnapping. He had recently finished a stint with the DEA, so the leads he followed had to do with

drugs.

He supported Soroptimist International South Lake Tahoe when it created the Fighting Chance program after Dugard was abducted in June 1991. Lovell also brought change to his department.

Lovell was there 18 years later when the call came that she had been discovered. He was there Sept. 6, 2009, when the community came together in a parade to celebrate Dugard's escape from captivity.

He missed the brunt of the Angora Fire in June 2007 because he was in a remote area of Alaska fishing. When the operator of the outpost powered up the generator to get online he saw Tahoe was on fire and told Lovell about it. He was back in Tahoe in a few days, but not before his wife, Kathay, had to evacuate.

In fall 2005, he graduated from the FBI Academy, and in May 2010 he graduated from the state's command college.

It was in 2009 that Lovell obtained his associate's degree from Lake Tahoe Community College.

"I was on the extended plan. I literally have hundreds of units," Lovell said of the degree he started in 1979.

It's not that Lovell really wants to call it quits, but with how retirement dollars work, he has actually been losing money the last six months. Thirty years is the maximum someone can pay into CalPERS.

While he plans to spend time "vacationing" in Tahoe – something he hasn't done in the last 30 years, traveling to national parks, and fishing, he might not be done with having a title before his name.

"If it looks like there is a void in leadership for the (El Dorado County) Board of Supervisors, I might step up for that.

I don’t want Tahoe not to have the representation it needs,” Lovell said. (Norma Santiago will be termed out when the next election comes up in November 2014.)

Besides being in law enforcement for three decades, Lovell has been on the board of the Tahoe Area Coordinating Council for the Disabled for nine years, an instructor at Lake Tahoe Community College for 12 years, and in Kiwanis for 10 years. Those endeavors he plans to continue.

——

Lovell’s departure is not the only change.

Pete Van Arnum has been promoted from sergeant to lieutenant. Van Arnum’s position will not be filled. When there is a staffing shortage in Tahoe, a sergeant from Placerville will be sent down, D’Agostini said.

Randy Peshon, who had been lieutenant in the Tahoe jail for years, has been promoted to captain for the county’s two jails. He spends most of the week in Placerville.

Lt. Terri LeDoux has taken over for him in Tahoe, however she is out on leave. D’Agostini would not say why she is off work.

Savvy coupon users can save a bundle on groceries

By Toni House

More people than ever are clipping coupons for their supermarket trips, but they're often not saving as much as they could.

You can easily shave $5 to $20 off your weekly grocery budget with a minimal investment of time. Cutting your bill just $10 a week will save you $520 over the course of a year.

Taking a couple of extra steps to ensure you can use all the coupons you clip will save you more money – and protect your investment of time in clipping them.

Here are ways consumers can take advantage of coupons without becoming consumed by them:

• Learn different stores' rules. Call the grocery stores that are convenient to you (near home or work), ask these questions and write down the answers: Do you have double or triple coupon days? (If so, what are they?) Do you accept other stores' coupons? Do you allow "stacking" coupons – using them on sale items?

• Seek coupons far and wide. Most households also get coupons through direct mail. And you can find coupon deals at SaveYourMoneySaveYourFamily.com, Coupon-Lady.com and a host of other sites. If there are brand-name products you just have to have, try Googling the name and "coupon."

• Plan meals around your coupons. Say you have coupons for 30 cents off a box of pasta, half-off spaghetti sauce (a type you

normally buy – not a pricey splurge), buy-one, get-one canned mushrooms and $1 off a pound of ground chuck. Can you smell dinner simmering? For less than $4?

• Organize your coupons. An expandable folder, like you might use for taxes, is a convenient place to store coupons at home. You might organize it by product – frozen foods, snacks, meats, or by expiration date. If you're going to do some meal planning around coupons, you might want a section for those. As you clip, sort the coupons immediately so you don't end up with a big pile that never gets sorted or used. Clip the meal coupons together and drop them in either the meals section or, if you're organizing by date, the date the first one is set to expire

• Save up to 30 percent to 50 percent with "shopping club" cards. Many supermarkets now offer "shopping clubs" that provide members with special in-store discounts. These are no-clipping-required coupons that never expire! Sign up for free and get a "membership" card that clips to your key ring. When the cashier swipes it, the discounts are applied to your grocery bill. Some stores have an associated website where you can log in while you're planning your shopping list and see what discounts are available that week.

• Upload coupons directly onto your shopping club card. Stores that have a shopping club website may also post manufacturer and brand coupons there. Log into the site with your card ID number, then click on the coupons you want and they'll load right onto your card! Instead of carrying coupons to the grocery story, you get your discounts when the cashier swipes your card.

• Organize your shopping club cards and coupons with your smart phone. If you shop at a lot of stores, you may be carrying around a lot of shopping club cards.

Planning ahead is the most effective way to use coupons. Since

we know you would never dream of heading to the supermarket without a list – because that's a huge money waster – just match your coupons to your shopping list before you head out the door.

Be sure to check expiration dates, brand names and quantities on the coupon (if it says "8-ounce tub of lard," don't grab the 24-ounce tub of lard!)

Imagine, if you save just $1 a week with coupons, you'll have $52 extra at the end of the year. And then you can get that splurge spaghetti sauce – and the 24-ounce tub of lard.

Toni House has a bachelor's in accounting and a master's in business administration and was most recently the senior consultant and owner of an accounting firm. "How to Reduce Your Grocery Bill" is her second "Savvy Shopping" book.