Man with ties to S. Tahoe arrested in Mass. on burglary charges

By Union Leader

GILFORD, Mass. — Authorities arrested a 34-year-old man in Brookline, Mass., on Tuesday and implicated him in at least 15 burglaries in the Gunstock Acres area of Gilford, police said.

Kolby D. Fenner, whose last known residences were in Brookline and South Lake Tahoe, was charged with six burglaries and fugitive from justice, as well as a probation violation from California.

Gilford police said the burglaries took place in January and February, and the investigation and search for Fenner took four months. Police said they identified Fenner using cell phone data, online resources and physical evidence.

“DNA, footwear impressions and fingerprint impressions taken from the scene were significant contributing factors in linking Fenner to the individual crimes and linking the crimes together,” Gilford police said in a statement issued Wednesday.

Read the whole story

Sugar pine planting in

Truckee

The Sugar Pine Foundation will be planting healthy, fungus-resistant sugar pine seedlings in Truckee on June 4 starting at 10am to restore the Alder Creek area. Seedlings, tools, instruction and refreshments will be provided.

Meet at the intersection of Alder Creek Road and Schussing Way in Truckee.

For more information, call (650) 814.9565.

Homeowner maintenance help meeting

Granlibakken Resort in Tahoe City is hosting an event about maintenance challenges for year-round and second home owners. The event is geared toward people living on the West Shore and in Tahoe City.

Contractors and material suppliers representing multiple trades will be available to answer questions and offer advice.

The meting is May 28 from noon-5pm.

The event is free.

For more information, call Kay Williams at Granlibakken Resort, (530) 581.7307 or email Kaywilliams@granlibakken.com.

Opinion: South Tahoe making mistake giving money to LTUSD

To the community,

It appears that on May 17, the city manager of South Lake Tahoe will advise the City Council to donate $250,000 of city reserve funds to the school district for upgrading the football field at South Tahoe High School. It is a mistake to do so.

The city manger came to town claiming that he would manage the city as a business. I know of no business model that gives money away. It seems that the city manager has forgotten that he, as does the council, has a fiduciary trust to honor. The city manager says this gift to the school district will create a partnership with the district. I say, well, to achieve what? The school district should run the district and the city should run the city. They should cooperate, but there should be no free exchange of tax dollars. In this deal what is the direct benefit to the city?



Bill Crawford

It is especially ill advised to give away the $250,000 under the circumstances. The city is hurting for revenue. The city manager and council have for economic reasons trimmed crew and staff reducing the number of city employees. The city has large unfunded liabilities. The city can’t fix the streets. But it will take reserve money for the school district.

And if citizens will look at their property tax bill, they will see three items that render money to the school district. So why should the city even think of giving money to another agency?

This is an example of undisciplined behavior by the city manager because this gift has nothing to do with meeting the needs of the city. He should receive a vote of no confidence on this subject. It is bad politics.

Bill Crawford, South Lake Tahoe

Nevada embracing Travel-Tourism Week

The Nevada Commission on Tourism will honor National Travel and Tourism Week, which runs through May 15, with an effort to enlist the state's tourism industry in the Power of Travel Coalition.

"The Power of Travel Coalition is a grassroots effort to unite those employed and affected by the tourism industry. Much of our tourism industry in Nevada is led by grassroots volunteers, so there is a natural parallel between the coalition and our industry," Lt. Gov. Brian Krolicki, NCOT chair, said in a statement. "This shows the power of volunteers and those who care deeply about the health of the industry and our state."

Tourism is Nevada's No. 1 industry, employing about 427,000 Nevadans. Nationally, tourism employs 10.1 million Americans, according to the U.S. Travel Association. Every employee in every restaurant, hotel, gift shop, transportation company,

airline, museum and special event can count himself or herself a part of the vast industry that drives Nevada's economy.

The U.S. Travel Association established the Power of Travel Coalition to amplify the voices of the millions of Americans employed by the tourism industry. It is the only national association tasked with promoting travel to the United States and working to elevate the importance of the industry among lawmakers.

To get involved with the Power of Travel Coalition, Nevadans simply have to go the website and enter their name and email address. This will enroll them to receive updates on legislation affecting tourism, issues facing the industry and efforts made nationally and locally to protect and promote the tourism industry.

Critics, Nev. Wildlife Commission still at odds over mule deer

By Jeff Delong, Reno Gazette-Journal

The war of will between wildlife biologists and the Nevada Wildlife Commission over management of the state's mule deer continues, with the panel appointed by Republican former Gov. Jim Gibbons poised to adopt policy critics insist lacks scientific support.

Commissioners are pursuing changes Chairman Scott Raine of Eureka said are needed after years of inaction to boost mule deer numbers across Nevada.

But critics, including Ken Mayer, acting director of the Nevada Department of Wildlife, say that proposed policies to be considered by commissioners later this month encourage livestock grazing and widespread killing of predators such as mountain lions and coyotes with little proven benefit to mule deer.

“They’ve been at this for some time. This is kind of the culmination of things,” said Mayer, who was fired by Gibbons as wildlife director in November 2010 and subsequently rehired on an acting basis by newly elected Republican Gov. Brian Sandoval.

Mayer and some members of the nine-member commission have been at odds over deer and predator management, with that disagreement showing little sign of dissipating.

Read the whole story

Class to help parents learn how to lessen children’s stress

Children experience more stress today than ever before, living in a world that often seems to move at a dizzying pace. Does your child experience:

*fears

*shyness

*test anxiety

*difficulty dealing with change

*sadness

*negative effects from being bullied.

If you answered yes, then consider learning practical coping strategies and the method Emotional Freedom Technique.

The class will cover:

*how EFT works

*the best language to use with children

*when to use EFT

*using EFT when everything is going great – to make things even greater

*using EFT with children of all ages.

Two workshops are offered May 22 – 9am-noon and 1-4pm.

Both are Balance Body Fitness Studio, 276 Kingsbury Grade, Ste. 107 (next to the 7-Eleven), Stateline.

Cost is $20 per person or $30 per family (two adult family members). It includes a workbook.

Register by going online or call Balance Fitness (775) 580.7267.

Pre-registration ends May 20 at 5pm. If space is available, registrations will be taken at the door.

Free childcare available on site as this is a workshop for adults only.

The workshop will be taught by South Shore mind-body therapist Rosemary Manning.

Changing teams part of the job for professional cyclists

By John Schumacher, Sacramento Bee

Cycling's version of free agency plays out every year. As riders seek their best opportunities, team management searches for the right mix in building rosters.

With most cyclists on one- or two-year contracts, change and uncertainty are givens. Throw in a team disbanding or merging with another and the deck shuffles even more.

Christian Meier, the 2008 Canadian national road champion, rode for Team Garmin-Transitions last year. But when Garmin and Cervelo Test Team merged, Meier found himself looking for a job.

He landed one with UnitedHealthcare, one of 19 teams set to race in the sixth annual Amgen Tour of California, which begins Sunday at Lake Tahoe.

"I actually knew a lot of the guys," Meier said of UnitedHealthcare personnel. "It's that familiarity of knowing all the riders.

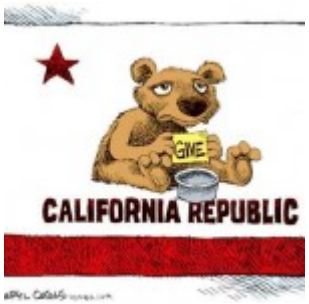
"A lot of times, if you're looking, you find a good team you're very comfortable with; you want to stay as long as possible.

Read the whole story

Release of state budget has LTUSD, S. Tahoe on edge

By Kathryn Reed

The $15 million question is: What will Gov. Jerry Brown's 2011-12 budget look like when it's unveiled Monday?



Some people in the 325,000-member California Teachers Association have been in Sacramento all week lobbying lawmakers to not further slash the education budget. Lake Tahoe Unified School District personnel are there, with more going down today for Friday's rally at the Capitol.

(The CTA website has more information.)

Not knowing if the state will abolish redevelopment agencies, South Lake Tahoe on May 17 has scheduled a public hearing during the City Council meeting that would move most of the city's Redevelopment Agency's assets to the city proper. This is a pre-emptive strike to protect what belongs to the city. (The meeting starts at 9am at Lake Tahoe Airport with a workshop about the General Plan.)

While LTUSD and the city won't go unscathed in whatever the governor comes out with, they are not alone. Lake Tahoe Community College is likely to take a hit, as are social service programs throughout the area.

The compounded ripple effect to the South Shore and throughout the Lake Tahoe Basin is hard to pinpoint because of the moving parts, potential spike to the already 17 percent unemployment rate in South Lake Tahoe, and the unknowns of what voters would do if the tax extension makes the ballot.

And what comes out May 16 is not likely to be the final budget because the Legislature needs to go through it with a red pen adding and deleting what it believes are necessary components.

One piece of good news is when Brown took office the deficit was at $26 billion and making cuts and other financial moves has eliminated about $11 million of that.

Another bright spot is the state controller reported revenue from July 1 (the start of the fiscal year) through April 30 is up $1.3 billion, or 1.9 percent, from Brown's initial budget.

Gains are attributed to personal income taxes being on the rise.

"Personal income taxes continue to lead the charge – rising 8 percent over estimates and 13 percent over last fiscal year," Controller John Chiang said in a statement.

Although the state budget is supposed to take effect July 1, for years the Legislature and governor have not done their jobs in the specified time line. This will be Brown's first budget as governor this term.

LTUSD concerns

"CTA/STEA in conjunction with the Education Coalition and the support of the LTUSD school board is participating in a Week of Action to bring awareness to the public regarding the budget crisis that our public schools continue to face," said Jodi Dayberry, South Tahoe Educators Association president.

At the May 10 LTUSD board meeting district officials, including the elected body, and many in the audience wore buttons showing solidarity.

Teachers handed out informational flyers at schools this week asking parents and others to contact lawmakers to encourage them to pass the governor's tax extension proposal.

With fewer employees than anticipated taking early retirement and LTCC not renting classroom space from LTUSD, the K-12 district has immediate budget revisions without the state even taking action.

However, Lake Tahoe Unified is in better shape than many districts.

Deb Yates, CFO for LTUSD, told the board, “Thirty percent of the students in the state are in a district that is negative or qualified.”

This means the districts are near bankrupt status. Four California districts, with the nearest being Natomas, are without cash. This means they won’t make payroll.

If the tax extension is not approved, it could be a $3 million hit for LTUSD.

“We can’t handle that,” Superintendent Jim Tarwater said.

South Tahoe’s dilemma

Across town, South Tahoe officials are doing what they can protect assets that are under the purview of the Redevelopment Agency. Even though the five members of the City Council also oversee the Redevelopment Agency, they are two distinctly different organizations. There was a time when the city had notable different meetings for the two and the RDA chief has not always been the mayor as is the case now. Those days allowed transactions to be more transparent and easier for the public to understand what was going on.

A redevelopment agency has to be approved by the state, that is why the state can dissolve the agencies and in turn try to grab the money in the accounts.

South Lake created its RDA in the 1980s, while the state Redevelopment Act was adopted in 1945, changed to the Community Redevelopment Act in 1951, with tax increment

financing added in 1952. Assembly Bill 1290 made further changes to the legislation in 1993.

What the council will be asked to do on Tuesday is to transfer all redevelopment assets except for the parking garage and Heavenly Village amenities to the city.

City officials are not anticipating the redevelopment component being in the proposed budget that will be released Monday, but it could be.

“The state is trying to take everything and sell-off everything, and pay off the debt with the sale and keep the remaining cash,” explained Nancy Kerry, the city’s spokeswoman who used to be No. 2 in the city’s Redevelopment Agency. “They didn’t think about all the agencies with the debt.”

Many locations, including South Lake Tahoe, are paying for redevelopment through the sale of bonds. The people who own those bonds would have a right to be paid their money. That’s part of the issue the state did not think through when it initially proposed dissolving RDAs and taking assets. Many assets aren’t worth much throughout the state because of what is still owed on them.

As of Sept. 30, 2010, the most current figures Finance Director Christine Vuletich provided, the principal balance outstanding on debt for RDA is $106 million, plus another $8 million for the parking garage.

Of the $7.2 million the RDA pilfered from the general fund per council approval to pay for Heavenly Village, half has been paid back. That comes in $500,000 annual payments.

Kerry said the city’s argument to the state would be that the remaining $3.6 million owed to the general fund is a continuing obligation the state cannot wipe off the books.

The land/projects the city is proposing to transfer are these

RDA properties. The value of them was not available because they have not all been recently assessed.

In RDA law is also a component for moderate and low-income housing cities must build. South Tahoe has committed a total of $2.5 million to the Aspens project near the fire station at Ski Run Boulevard and Pioneer Trail. That would be something the city would fight for, Kerry said, adding that $1 million of that total will come from tax increment.

Even if the state decides to eliminate the nearly 400 redevelopment agencies, it's likely millions of taxpayer dollars will end up going to attorneys to fight it.

Caesars Entertainment quarterly loss narrows

By Matt Jarzemsky, Dow Jones Newswires

Caesars Entertainment Corp.'s first-quarter loss narrowed as a positive swing in debt extinguishment impacts masked lower revenue amid lower visitation and U.S. flooding woes.

Caesars, which changed its name from Harrah's Entertainment Inc. last year, has written its bottom line in red ink lately, though it had seen revenue grow slightly in recent quarters, propped up by its February 2010 purchase of the Planet Hollywood resort. Las Vegas, where it has a notable presence, remains a tough town for casino operators, but has shown signs of stabilization.

Recent flooding of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers has caused some of its facilities to close. Horseshoe Southern Indiana,

near Louisville, Ky., reopened last week after flood-related closures. A handful of northwest Mississippi facilities as well as southern Illinois' Harrah's Metropolis are currently closed because of floodwaters.

Caesars reported a loss of $144.8 million, compared with a loss of $193.6 million a year earlier. Early debt extinguishment of debt boosted the latest result by $21 million, net of taxes, and hurt the prior-year result by $30.2 million.

Read the whole story