Juveniles suspected of vandalizing magnet school

The names of the suspects in the Dec. 14 doughnut-spinning, wall demolition incident at the magnet school in Meyers are not being released because they are younger than 18.

California Highway Patrol Officer Jeff Gartner told *Lake Tahoe News* his office believes they know who is responsible for the vandalism, but will not make arrests because there are no known witnesses. He added that the names of the offenders – ages and genders were not released – have been forwarded to the probation department.

An El Dorado County Probation Department employee said Greg Sly, who runs the department, is the one to talk to. Sly did not return a call so it is not known what will happen to the accused if anything. It's also not known how many people may have been involved and why they are on probation to begin with.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Truckee resident, Olympian to teach skate skiing class

Olympian Marcus Nash will teach an intermediate to advanced skate skiing clinic at Royal Gorge on Dec. 29.

Nash is a nine-time national champion in cross country skiing

and competed in the 1994 Winter Olympics in Lillehammer, Norway, and the 1998 Winter Olympics in Nagano, Japan.

Nash is a Truckee resident, and experienced and well-respected cross country skiing coach.

The Marcus Nash clinic will begin at 9am Saturday at the Summit Station Lodge. The cost is $35.

For more information, go online.

Brown wants to overhaul education funding in California

By Kevin Yamamura, Sacramento Bee

After California schools eliminated art programs and increased class sizes to survive budget cuts, they are finally on the verge of getting more money thanks to voter-approved taxes and economic recovery.

But K-12 districts may not share equally in the expanding budget pie.

Gov. Jerry Brown is pushing hard to overhaul California's convoluted school funding system. His plan has two major objectives: Give K-12 districts greater control over how they spend money, and send more dollars to impoverished students and English learners.

Studies show that such children require more public help to

reach the same level of achievement as their well-off peers. But as rich and poor communities alike clamor for money in the wake of funding cuts, Brown's plan could leave wealthy suburbs with fewer new dollars than poorer urban and rural districts.

That makes perfect sense, said Michael W. Kirst, president of the state Board of Education and a Stanford University professor who co-wrote a 2008 paper that became the model for Brown's proposal.

"Low-income people have less resources to invest in their children," Kirst said. "A lot of investment comes from parental ability to buy external things for their kids that provide a better education. In the case of low-income groups, they can't buy tutors, after-school programs or summer experiences."

The Democratic governor wanted to install his plan as part of the last budget, but changes were so dramatic that education interests balked. Brown is reworking his proposal for his January budget, hoping that passage of his tax hike has given school officials confidence they will all receive sufficient money.

Brown officials had three workshops this fall to solicit input, as well as build good will with education groups.

One example from the Sacramento region shows how Brown's proposal would shift dollars to students in need.

In Brown's last proposal, Buckeye Union School District in affluent El Dorado Hills and neighboring communities would receive $7,757 per student in 2018-19, according to analysis by the Public Policy Institute of California. Robla Elementary School District in working-class North Sacramento would get $10,554 per student.

Nine in 10 Robla students in 2010-11 qualified for subsidized school meals. At Buckeye, only one in eight students

qualified.

Robla Superintendent Ruben Reyes is cautiously optimistic the governor's plan will result in more funding, but he isn't counting on the money. Students speak 26 languages at Robla's five campuses, and a significant number have to share homes with other families.

"This could be a very positive thing for Robla," Reyes said of Brown's proposal. "We work very hard to meet the needs of both of these (English-learner and low-income) groups of students. They come to school less prepared, and often times the school has to make those things up."

He said the district tries to provide field trips and activities that families may not be able to afford. Robla has translators to help English learners communicate. More money could buy training, new materials or extend learning time, he suggested.

Buckeye Superintendent David Roth agrees that districts serving low-income students need more funds. But he notes that all districts have suffered cuts, and even the best-performing California schools such as his remain at a competitive disadvantage against those beyond California.

"We have some of the most poorly funded schools in the country, and the state needs to redesign our funding model in a way that brings all districts up to the national average," Roth said.

One of the most controversial parts of Brown's proposal last year gave districts an additional boost if more than half of students qualify as low-income or English learners. The idea was that a concentration of at-risk students dramatically increases need.

"There's a greater totality of needs if you have a school with 95 percent of students that need intervention than if you have

2 percent of students," said Brooks Allen, director of education advocacy for ACLU of Southern California, which has been fighting to ensure low-income schools receive additional aid. "We thought that was a strength of the proposal."

But suburban districts think the "concentration grant" goes too far. In Ventura County, Conejo Valley Unified School District Superintendent Jeffrey L. Baarstad said an initial version of the plan would have given one low-income area as much as $5,000 more per student than his district.

"The concern out there is that there's a problem with winners and losers," Baarstad said. "Everyone has been a loser the last five years. Even though someone like me absolutely agrees with putting money behind (low-income) kids, at the same time I want to rebuild my district, too."

As Brown found last spring, the challenge with overhauling any decades-old finance system is that losing Capitol interests will resist change. The rich-poor divide is not the only one.

Brown's proposal would eliminate most earmarks called "categoricals." For years, the state has provided schools with general-purpose money as well as earmarks that must be spent on specific programs.

Categoricals emerged over decades after lawmakers and special interests identified one problem or another and wanted to encourage school districts to correct them. The California Teachers Association, for instance, has backed incentives for districts to reduce class sizes – and hire more teachers.

In the wake of recent budget cuts, the state temporarily relaxed most earmarks, telling districts they could still receive funds without spending on state-driven priorities.

That riled advocates for specific programs, particularly adult education. Since the state relaxed earmarks, 82 percent of districts have cut some or all adult education, according to

the Legislative Analyst’s Office.

Supporters say their programs help adults find jobs and learn English, and they want to restore protections they had before budget cuts.

“It’s a tenuous situation when you pit adult learners against K-12,” said Dawn Koepke, a lobbyist for the California Council for Adult Education.

The state has earmarks for items as small as notifying parents of kindergartners and first-graders that their children must obtain a dental examination before they start school. That requirement came from a 2006 bill by then-Assemblyman Bill Emmerson, an orthodontist. It, too, might disappear under Brown’s proposal.

In workshops, the CTA has asked that Brown preserve money for class-size reduction. The more Brown maintains funding protections for any group, however, the further he strays from his original goal.

Without describing specifics, Brown’s Department of Finance spokesman, H.D. Palmer, said the governor’s desire is “to move decision-making responsibility and accountability to the local level.”

Stamate – figure in landmark forfeiture law dies

Local resident Byron Stamate has just passed away and will be remembered as the key figure in a landmark case that helped

upend California's asset forfeiture laws.

In 1994, when he was 74, Stamate was charged with cultivating marijuana in his El Dorado County home. He said that the marijuana was used by his live-in companion, Shirley Dorsey, 70, to treat chronic pain from arthritis. Prosecutors relentlessly sought to forfeit Byron's home and life savings of $400,000 under a new state law modeled on the federal one, which did not require a conviction for forfeiture.

Dorsey committed suicide rather than be forced to testify against him. The text of Shirley Dorsey's suicide note follows:

> *"They want to take our property, security and herbal medicine from us, even though we have not caused harm to anyone.*
>
> *"It is not fair or in the best interest of the people of society.*
>
> *"I will never testify against you or our right to our home. I will not live in the streets without security and a place to sleep.*
>
> *"I am old, tired and ill, and I see no end to the harassment and pressures until they destroy us."*

The prosecution backfired, generating intense adverse publicity against forfeiture abuse. Stamate's case was settled for a nominal $1,000 fine. Subsequently, California's forfeiture law was repealed and radically reformed thanks to a lobbying campaign led by Stamate's attorney, Brenda Grantland, and an expose on forfeiture abuses by *San Jose Mercury News* reporter Gary Webb.

– Steve Kubby

7-Eleven stocking shelves with healthier items

By Stephanie Strom, New York Times

7-Eleven, the convenience store chain, is restocking its shelves with an eye toward health. Over the last year, the retailer has introduced a line of fresh foods for the calorie conscious and trimmed down its more indulgent fare by creating portion-size items.

The change is as much about consumers' expanding waistlines as the company's bottom line. By 2015, the retailer aims to have 20 percent of sales come from fresh foods in its American and Canadian stores, up from about 10 percent currently, according to a company spokesman.

"We're aspiring to be more of a food and beverage company, and that aligns with what the consumer now wants, which is more tasty, healthy, fresh food choices," said Joseph M. DePinto, the chief executive of 7-Eleven, a subsidiary of the Japanese company, Seven & i Holdings.

Convenience stores have typically been among the most nimble of retailers. In the 1980s, they added Pac-Man arcade games as a way to keep customers in stores longer and to buy more merchandise. They installed A.T.M.'s a decade later, taking a slice of the transaction fees. More recently, they built refrigerated dairy cases, with milk, eggs, cheese and other staples.

But just as they have taken business from traditional supermarkets, convenience stores have faced increased competition from the likes of Dunkin' Donuts and Starbucks,

which offer a basic menu of fresh foods for consumers on the go.

At the same time, a major profit driver for convenience stores – cigarettes – has been in steady decline over the last decade as the rate of smoking has dropped in the United States.

Fresh foods can help offset some of those losses. The markup on such merchandise can be significant, bolstering a store's overall profits. It's also a fast-growing category.

"If you can figure out how to deliver consistent quality and the products consumers want, fresh food is attractive because margins are higher, and it addresses some of the competitive issues you're facing," said Richard Meyer, a longtime consultant for the convenience store industry. "But it's not easy to do."

7-Eleven has been selling fresh food since the late 1990s. But much of its innovation has been limited to the variety of hot dogs spinning on the roller grill or the breakfast sandwiches languishing beneath a heating lamp.

As 7-Eleven refocuses its lineup, the retail chain has assembled a team of culinary and food science experts to study industry trends and develop new products. Such groups have been around for a while at fast-food restaurants like McDonald's and packaged-goods manufacturers like Kraft. But it's a relatively new concept for players like 7-Eleven, which have typically relied on their suppliers to provide product innovation.

"We're working to create a portfolio of fresh foods," said Anne Readhimer, senior director of fresh food innovation, who joined the company in May from Yum Brands, where she had worked on the KFC and Pizza Hut brands. "Some will be for snacking, some for a quick meal, but we hope everything we offer our guests is convenient and tasty."

One new menu item just hitting stores is a Bistro Snack Protein Pack, which includes mini pita rounds, cheddar cheese cubes, grapes, celery, baby carrots and hummus. The meal in a box, similar to one carried by Starbucks, is part of a broader menu with healthier items under 400 calories.

The company is also taking existing products and retooling them for single portions. For example, customers can now buy jelly doughnuts and tacos, in mini sizes.

“There are definitely customers who want healthy options, but there are also lots of customers who are excited about the new sandwich options that aren’t low calorie – and minidoughnuts are doing very well,” said Lori Primavera, senior manager of fresh food innovation at 7-Eleven, who previously worked for Food and Drink Resources, a consulting firm for restaurant companies.

Norman Jemal, a franchisee, said sales of the new products are growing steadily in the three 7-Eleven stores that he owns in Manhattan. “At first, people are surprised when they come in here and see a bag of carrots and celery,” Jemal said. “They say, ‘I came in here for a bag of chips – I can’t believe you have fruit cups or yogurt cups.’ ”

He said the Yoplait Parfait, a cup of vanilla yogurt topped with fresh strawberries or blueberries and granola, is his best-selling fresh food item, while the 7 Smart turkey sandwich is his top sandwich.

The fresh food in Jemal’s stores and other locations around the country are supplied from a system of 29 commissaries and bakeries that fulfill orders from 7-Eleven. They tailor menu items for specific markets. In the Miami area, they produce a hot Cuban sandwich with ham, cheese, pickles and mustard. The Turkey Gobbler with turkey, stuffing and cranberry sauce sells in Northeastern stores around the holidays.

Each store has a data system that allows it to see exactly

what is selling, which helps manage waste. Stores can track consumers' purchase habits over a month, and adjust their orders based on those behaviors.

"In this 28-day cycle, I know I sold 3,563 bananas to customers in this store," said Tom Ferguson, who owns five 7-Eleven locations in Las Vegas.

Ferguson has owned 7-Eleven franchises since 1986, and he said the variety of fresh food options in the stores is far better than before. The category already accounts for 20 percent of his sales, and his goal is to reach a quarter of sales volume.

"We used to be a place for people to buy beer, wine, cigarettes, candy and chips, and people would occasionally ask where they could go to get something to eat," Ferguson said. "We're no longer getting that question because now you can get something to eat right here."

Videos about water could earn students cash

By Diana Lambert, Sacramento Bee

High school students can win cash and the chance to be part of a television advertising campaign in the 2013 Water Spots Video Contest.

The contest, sponsored by the Regional Water Authority and the Sacramento Bee Media in Education program, challenges teens to create a 25-second public service announcement on water efficiency.

The theme is: "Check sprinkler systems every month for water-

wasting problems and make repairs within 48 hours.”

The contest is open to high school students in Sacramento, Placer and El Dorado counties, as well as in the city of West Sacramento.

The spots will be judged on creativity, entertainment value, accuracy and originality. Winners will be announced at a Sacramento River Cats game in the spring. The winning spots will be displayed on the big screen at Raley Field.

To submit entries or to get more information, go online.

Youth and seniors to be highlighted at Community Needs Forum

The Women’s Fund El Dorado is hosting its annual Community Needs Forum on Jan. 24 from 6–8pm at the Cold Springs Country Club, 6500 Clubhouse Drive in Placerville.

The topics to be covered include youth development, health and mental health issues and senior support services.

This year’s presenters will be:

Jeremy Meyers, the deputy superintendent of Educational Services and Instructional Technology out of the El Dorado County Office of Education;

Patricia Charles-Heathers, the Health and Human Services Agency program manager II from El Dorado County Mental Health;

Karen Shelnutt, the nurse case manager for Family Connections and Faith Community Nurse for Federated Church.

The event is open to all members of the community. A light dinner will be served.

For more information or reservations, call (530) 622.5621.

Ski report: White stuff keeps falling



A winter weather advisory in place for the whole ski day. That means more snow, along with possible wind issues up top.

Here is the Dec. 26 ski report.

— Curtis Fong

40,000 expected to attend 3-day SnowGlobe Music Festival in South Lake Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

While SnowGlobe should still be a bass-driven event, the music lineup for the three-day South Lake Tahoe festival has been altered to help appease the neighbors who last year made as much of a ruckus as the musicians.

Plus, when the first act takes the stage at 3pm Dec. 29, the direction of the sound won't be the same as in 2011. The stage and speakers will be set up in such a way to lessen the reverberation into neighborhoods.



The Dec. 29-31 SnowGlobe Music Festival in South Lake Tahoe is expected to bring thousands of people to town. Photo/LTN 2011

Still, it's a lot of techno acts that fill the main stage and two tent performance areas.

Headliners include deadmau5, Wiz Khalifa, Chromeo Live, Beats Antique, Big Gigantic, Laidback Luke and MiMOSA.

But it’s not just music and a smattering of vendors who will fill the community ball field adjacent to Lake Tahoe Community College.

“We’ve added so much, from décor to heating to action sports elements,” Chad Donnelly, SnowGlobe creator and general manager, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “There are so many new touches the fans will get to experience firsthand.”

The local non-food vendors include Tahoe Made Attire, Enlightened Jewelry, Luna Lobo Creations and UKY The Spot. Nonprofits that will be there are the Boys and Girls Club of Lake Tahoe and Sierra Avalanche Center.

LTCC involvement

Lake Tahoe Community College will have two booths on the field to be able reach out to music fans about what the institution is all about. LTCC is hoping this won’t be the only time some of the concertgoers are on campus.

“We are partnering with SnowGlobe this year to gain benefit from their marketing campaign worldwide. Basically, instead of renting the facilities we get marketing, booths, and some other perks for the use of our facilities,” LTCC President Kindred Murillo told *Lake Tahoe News*. “We are very optimistic that this will be a benefit for our community by having a structured event for young people on New Year’s, and by the marketing to the SnowGlobe target audience 18-34 age group, which is where we want to reach out in developing our destination market.”

Organizers have to pay for snow removal costs, which with the forecast could be an issue this year. But snow on the ground could be a good thing because it will help absorb the sound. Plus, it means the field should not be trashed as much as it was a year ago.

City’s concerns

South Lake Tahoe makes money off the event primarily through more people being in town – as in hotel and sales taxes.

Will SnowGlobe return in 2013? That remains to be seen. City officials say they won't start talking about that until they see how this year's event goes. Promoters have said they would like a multiyear contract and would entertain the possibility of moving the date. But dates would have to be coordinated with the college to ensure school is not in session.

"The police plan is essentially unchanged from last year as it went very well," Police Chief Brian Uhler told *Lake Tahoe News*. "We will have amnesty bins and we will have undercover presence."

Both of those were in place in 2011, too. The amnesty bins are where people can deposit (no refund) any drugs without question. The theory is officers would rather dispose of unused drugs than have people using during the concert.

In addition to local law enforcement, event organizers also provide security staff.

They have also increased the list of items not allowed at the festival; specifically glass containers. A complete list of items is online.

"SnowGlobe event promoters have been very supportive of community concerns from last year's event and are taking extensive measures regarding a sound management plan, increase in the number of shuttle stops, waste management, and local business integration," Tracy Franklin, spokeswoman for the city, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Bus service

At the Dec. 14 Tahoe Transportation District meeting, the board agreed to enter an agreement with SnowGlobe organizers to increase bus service.

The music festival will pay for more buses to be on Route 53 Dec. 29-31.

TTD staff anticipates between 60 and 80 hours of additional service will be required to accommodate the festival demand.

Like last year, the festival will also provide chartered bus service for people to get to the Lake Tahoe Community College campus.

According to TTD, the plan is to add one to three Route 53 buses before and during the festival times, with an additional seven buses operating for 90 minutes when the festival ends each night.

Donnelly expects more people to attend this year – with about 40,000 people throughout the three-day festival. This compares to the approximately 10,000 who attended each day in 2011.

He expects to sell out on Friday or Saturday.

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Things to know:

• Dec. 29-30 3-10pm

• Dec. 31 3pm to Jan. 1 12:30am

• Fireworks will be shot off New Year’s Eve

• Jan. 3 field will be cleared

• South Lake Tahoe has a webpage dedicated to SnowGlobe

• Dedicated SnowGlobe phone line – (530) 542.7429.

Here is a video from 2011:

Lahontan wants input on Upper Truckee River project

Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board is taking comments until Jan. 16 on the U.S. Forest Service Upper Truckee River Reach Five Restoration and Utility Relocation Project.

At the Feb. 13-14 meeting, the Lahontan board will consider granting an exemption to the basin plan to allow this project in El Dorado County to go forward.

More information is online.