Thief takes off with South Lake Tahoe campaign signs

Late the night of Sept. 16 someone stole approximately 20 re-election campaign signs for Bruce Grego.

These signs were located at various points along Lake Tahoe Boulevard throughout the city limits. Most of the signs had been secured by wire rods pushed into the ground to support the signs, but at least one of the signs was pounded into the ground with wooden stakes.

Theft of political campaign signs is a local issue, and not mentioned in the California Elections Code. While the city code of South Lake Tahoe has no ordinance prohibiting the theft or vandalism of political campaign signs specifically, such actions still amount to a property crime and may be criminally prosecuted as such.

Snowboarder Shaun White charged with vandalism

By Devon O'Neil, ESPN.com

NASHVILLE – Authorities say two-time Olympic gold medalist snowboarder Shaun White has been charged with public intoxication and vandalism after an incident at a Nashville hotel.

According to a police affidavit, White tried to attack a hotel guest who had followed him out of the hotel. When the guest told White he had called the police, the skateboarder "attempted to attack the man and fell and hit his head."

The report says White appeared to be drunk.

A separate affidavit states that White, who trains at Northstar in Truckee, deliberately broke a phone belonging to the hotel.

Police say he was given the opportunity to sign misdemeanor citations and refused.

Read the whole story

K's Kitchen: Fresh ingredients make for special pizzas

By Kathryn Reed

I'm not sure if I could ever get tired of pizza. It's one of those foods where there are so many toppings, sauces and crust combos available that you would never have to have the same one twice.



But there is one we have with regularity in our household. It's Sue's pesto-spinach pie.

I make fresh batches of pesto this time of year and then freeze them so we can use them year-round.

We “cheat” on the crust by buying Boboli. But feel free to make your own.

For Sue’s pizza, she spreads a layer of pesto on the crust, covers it with thawed spinach, and then adds feta cheese, sliced olives, pine nuts and sun-dried tomatoes. I like marinated artichoke hearts on my half. Then she bakes the pizza at 450 degrees for 15 minutes.

I decided last weekend to try my hand with pizza – not the dough, though. I was a bit inspired by needing to find more uses for all the zucchini and eggplant that keep arriving in my community supported agriculture box.

I don’t have measurement because I just kept adding to the pan as I was cooking and I wanted to use all the veggies I had. I cooked enough veggies for two pizzas, with leftovers that were used the next day as part of a nacho topping.

I thinly sliced squash, eggplant and red onion.

I cooked these in butter and Madeira, and then added some of the oil from marinated artichokes. I made batches of the veggies; putting the cooked ones aside in a bowl. By the time I was done I had used a stick of butter.

Then I put all of the veggies back in the pan to toss them together to warm them and blend the flavors.

I brushed the pizza crust with a mixture of olive oil, minced garlic and chopped fresh rosemary.

Then I put a single layer of the veggies onto the crusts. I also added marinated artichoke hearts that I had chopped.

I baked each one separately at 450 degrees for 20 minutes.

Not only did the pizza pass muster with Sue and me, but a teenager devoured the second pizza. To me, that is the greatest compliment.

Potential tree removal in Truckee sparks backlash

By Ed Fletcher, Sacramento Bee

A plan to remove nearly two dozen lakeside trees at a Truckee housing complex has sparked a campaign by local residents to save some of the trees and has prompted the Sierra Club to get involved.

The proposal to cut down 23 Jeffrey pine trees to improve the marina area within the Tahoe Donner subdivision along Donner Lake has been approved by the neighborhood association's board of directors and is headed to the Truckee Planning Commission this week.

John Martin, a subdivision resident fighting to alter the plan, said cutting so many trees doesn't fit with the ecology of Donner Lake.

"We want them to preserve as many of the trees as possible and replace them with native trees," Martin said.

Built in the 1970s, the mammoth subdivision of 6,500 property

owners features a marina, a golf course and tennis courts on 7,000 acres.

Robb Etnyer, general manager of the complex, defends the plan as a responsible approach that will take out a limited number of trees. He said most property owners are excited about the project.

It would make room for an expanded picnic space that is compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act while preserving enough trees to maintain the shade canopy, Etnyer said.

“A lot of folks love trees and we do, too,” Etnyer said. “We take conservation, land management and open space pretty seriously.”

He said about half the trees are being taken down for forest health reasons.

And, he said, “there is not adequate ADA compliance there. We’re not being forced to, but it’s something that we want to do.”

Etnyer noted that the association planted 5,100 trees on its surrounding property last year. He said the opposition was coming from an extreme minority.

Patricia Schifferle, another resident fighting the plan, said the opposition is more than just a few tree-huggers fighting over a dozen trees. She said the site’s proximity to Donner Memorial State Park and to Donner Lake makes additional scrutiny appropriate.

She called it a microcosm of the larger fight to preserve the California environment and said that each intrusion adds up. She stressed that opponents are not looking to kill the project, just to scale it back to preserve more trees.

“I think the same purposes can be met with less destruction,”

she said.

Apparently, the Sierra Club agrees. On Friday, just a few days before the Truckee commission is scheduled to vote on the issue, the organization sent a letter asking for a full environmental review of the project. The commission determines whether the project is granted an exemption from environmental quality laws.

The letter, signed by Tahoe Area Sierra Club Chair Bob Anderson, cited potential impacts from “light pollution, logging, excavation, trenching, installation of pavers and hardscape.”

If the Planning Commission follows the Sierra Club’s recommendation and asks for a review, it could mean a significant delay for the project, which faces a narrow time window if it is to happen this year. Because of the rapidly shifting weather, town rules require projects to start before Oct. 15 or wait until the spring.

California water managers receive failing grade

By Damon Arthur, Record Searchlight

State and federal agencies in charge of managing California’s floodwaters and ecosystems received failing grades Wednesday night.

And the agencies in charge of planning and oversight of the state’s water and natural resources also got a failing grade from Ellen Hanak, an economist and senior policy fellow at the

Public Policy Institute of California.

Hanak was one of three guest speakers at a California Water Series forum in Redding sponsored by several North State water agencies, the city of Redding, Shasta County and CH2M Hill of Redding.

Holly Dawley, an engineer and Tehama County rancher, talked about the history of California water. And Brian Person, area manager for the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, talked about the proposal to raise the height of Shasta Dam.

Hanak was asked to talk about the economics of California water and the stressors on the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta.

The various state and local agencies are doing an “OK” job of managing the infrastructure of the state’s wastewater and its water supply, Hanak said. But the infrastructure management of flood control and ecosystems, as well as the oversight and planning of it all is inadequate, she said.

At the same time, local, state and federal agencies are spending $22 billion a year on water supply, $10 billion annually on wastewater, $1.7 billion of flood control, $500 million on ecosystem management and $100 million on planning and oversight.

Hanak pointed out that water use for agriculture and residential and urban use has been going down since the late 1980s. But the demand for water to preserve or restore wildlife habitat continues to increase, she said.

“The demand for environmental water has risen, for sure,” Hanak said.

Even while demand for ecosystem water goes up, the condition of the ecosystem continues to deteriorate, she said.

She pointed out the number of fish species listed as either

threatened or endangered has risen from 14 to 31 from 1989 to 2010. During the same period, the number of fish species given a “special concern” status because of dwindling numbers has risen from 50 to 69, she said.

Fish are an indicator of the overall health of the state’s environment, she said.

Environmental management in the state is too piecemeal with too many agencies going in different directions, she said.

“This is a recipe for conflict,” Hanak said.

Meanwhile, even with people using less water, it won’t be long before the demand for water exceeds the state’s ability to store it, Dawley said.

Much of the state’s water is either stored in reservoirs or in winter snowpack. But with demands on water and reduced snowpack due to climate change, Dawley said that “not long from now” the state will have an annual water storage deficit of about 5 million acre-feet, which is slightly more than Lake Shasta can hold.

“We have a system that is incredibly overtaxed,” Dawley said.

$7 mil. in gold found in deceased Carson City man’s home

By Cy Ryan, Las Vegas Sun

CARSON CITY – Walter Samasko Jr., a recluse, died at home in

May, but his body wasn’t discovered until June, when neighbors complained of the smell coming from his house.

There was only $200 in his bank account. But there was a $7 million surprise at home.

As the house was being cleaned for sale, officials discovered gold bars and gold coins stored in boxes in the garage and in the house.

The coins had been minted in such places as Mexico, England, Austria and South Africa. Some dated to 1872.

There were so many coins that Carson City Clerk Alan Glover used a wheelbarrow to haul the gold to his truck and deposit it for safekeeping.

Read the whole story

Dellinger Consulting working in El Dorado County without a license

By Kathryn Reed

A consulting firm that has come under tremendous scrutiny in the last year, including having a complaint filed against it by the El Dorado County District Attorney’s Office, is also operating without a county business license.

That wrinkle is not part of the charges filed against Dellinger Consulting, which is operated by Dan Dellinger and Cris Alarcon. However, county ordinance allows for a $500 fine

per day for those operating without a business license. It is also a misdemeanor in California, which if found guilty, could mean jail time up to one year and a maximum fine of $1,000.

The county's nonchalant approach to business license enforcement was the subject of a grand jury report in June. The grand jury found that in fall 2011 the non-compliance rate was 50 percent, while it was 10 percent by March 2012. The tax collector had been notified last fall.

Going after non-compliant businesses is a low priority for the district attorney.

However, he is pursuing a case against Dellinger to have the firm pay back the nearly $30,000 it received from Pioneer Fire Protection District.

The DA's office has said, "Under the terms of the agreement between defendants and PFPD it is abundantly clear that Dan Dellinger and Christopher Alarcon were hired and paid, at taxpayer expense, to expressly advocate a position in favor of a ballot measure to raise taxes."

Robert Laurie, who is working on behalf of Dellinger Consulting, issued a statement this month saying, "It is not up to me or Mr. Dellinger to try and guess the DA's motives. However, it seems to me that the Pioneer District acted very responsibly in taking the actions that they did and they are successful, in major part, because of the efforts of Mr. Dellinger. Nearly 80 percent of the voters are happy with the result. Why in the world would the district attorney have a problem with that?"

The Pioneer Fire Protection District hired the consultants after Dellinger listed Superior Court Judge Steve Bailey as a reference. The firm managed the political campaigns of Sheriff John D'Agostini and county Supervisor Ray Nutting. The consulting firm is now providing advice to Superior Court Judge Warren Stracener for his November election. Former Gov.

Arnold Schwarzenegger appointed Stracener to the bench. Dellinger is also in the same camp as Rico Oller, who represented Lake Tahoe in the California Assembly and Senate, and who is trying to be this area's assemblyman again.

A court hearing on the case is scheduled for January.

Pedestrian in critical condition after being hit on Hwy. 50

A 71-year-old Ohio woman was in critical condition in the ICU at Renown Medical Center in Reno on Monday morning after being hit Sept. 15 while crossing Highway 50.

Betty Petrick was crossing the highway – not in a crosswalk – about 11:47pm Saturday when she was struck by a Dodge Durango driven by Ronald Aubry, 42, of Magalia. Alcohol is not a factor, according to officers.

Lt. Brian Williams told *Lake Tahoe News* that Aubry was driving at or below the speed limit.

Petrick, who was pulling a suitcase, was walking from near Mc P's toward Heavenly Village at about a 45-degree angle, Williams said. She made it to the center lane and then started into the eastbound lanes of traffic.

Witnesses told South Lake Tahoe police officers Petrick's head was down and she never looked in either direction.

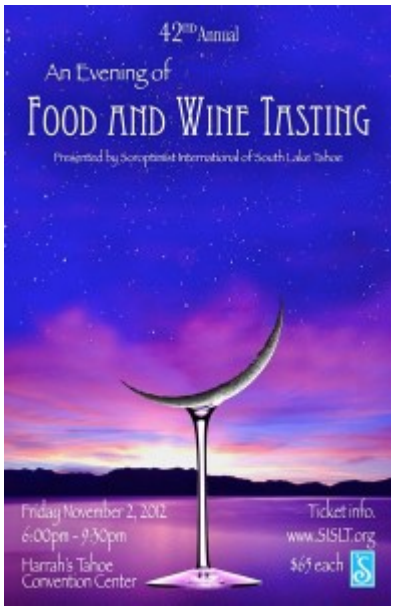
"She flew 20 to 30 feet. The suitcase was lodged under the vehicle," Williams said.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Local artist designs winning wine poster

Local art student Matt Kauffmann's entry in the 42nd annual An Evening of Food and Wine Tasting poster contest will be featured on all promotional material.

It features a surreal blue-violet scene with a moon sliver as the bowl of a wine glass over Lake Tahoe. Kauffmann, who will receive his BFA from Sierra Nevada College next spring, received a $250 cash prize and two tickets to the wine event. He describes his original design as "radtastic" and says the recognition from Soroptimist is motivation to keep creating new work.



Soroptimist International South Lake Tahoe's annual wine tasting is Nov. 2, 6-9:30pm at Harrah's Lake Tahoe.

This year's event will showcase more than 18 area restaurants and 30 vintners.

Tickets are $65 each and can be purchased from any SISLT member or online. A $10 discount on a pair of tickets is being offered for purchases through Oct. 1.

Closing S. Tahoe fire station called a success, but won't be permanent

The experiment of closing South Lake Tahoe Fire Station No. 2 "went well," according to Fire Chief Brian Uhler.



The firefighters normally assigned to the station near South Tahoe Middle School worked from one of the other two stations Aug. 27-31.

The goal is to make sure the commanding officers are covering the city's emergency needs.

With the elimination a year ago of the three battalion chiefs and the fire chief really being a police chief, the command structure has been gutted. It was the firefighters left behind, who were in a separate bargaining unit from the battalion chiefs, who thought captains could do all the work. They, city officials who make these sorts of the decisions and the council are realizing there was value to a fire command structure.

"The biggest benefit is that we've learned that there may be ways to adjust existing resources 'on the fly' so our commanders can maintain command-control," Uhler told *Lake Tahoe News* of the station closure experiment. "Another variation that we're exploring is having shift commanders move to Station 2 for the majority of the time so they can 'flex' toward wherever events occur."

At this time, Uhler said, there are no plans to close Station 2.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report