

LTCC hires community education director

Twenty-six people applied to be director of the resurrected community education program at Lake Tahoe Community College, with Megan Waskiewicz coming out on top.

She will start the 20-hour week job July 1.



Megan
Waskiewicz

With the state changing how it pays colleges and the local community clamoring for enrichment classes, the college has come up with a way to make money and keep people happy.

While it's not expected that many classes will be offered in the fall, a larger selection should be available in the winter. Classes are expected to much less than a quarter in length.

Cynthea Preston, dean of Instruction, said a website just for community education is being developed. There will also be a link to it directly from LTCC's website. This should be operational in August.

— Kathryn Reed

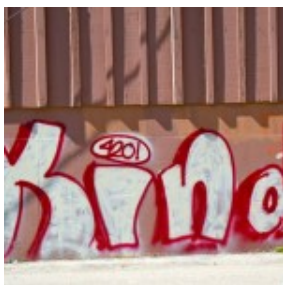
Surge in graffiti adding to South Tahoe's rundown look

By Kathryn Reed

Art isn't usually the first word business owners or residents think of when they see graffiti marring structures.

While tagging is nothing new on the South Shore, it has been cropping up in more visible locations in the past six weeks.

Adidas was hit in early May just below the roofline, with taggers covering up a good part of the high wall along Highway 50. It took several weeks for it to be painted over.



Graffiti on the back of the Miller's Outpost.

Photos/Kathryn Reed

A large tag still remained Thursday afternoon on the back of the old Miller's Outpost with the word "kind" and the number 420 in a circle dotting the I. The number represents California Senate Bill 420 regarding medical marijuana cards. And April 20 is known as an international pot smoking day.

Some businesses do patch jobs to cover up the graffiti; others like at the Y Factory Stores do a better job so there is no evidence of the vandalism.

The cumulative cost to businesses to clean up after the vandals is unknown. But it definitely is an unbudgeted expense.

“It’s not just the Y, but there it has been the most brazen and more public,” Detective Nick Carlquist said.

Carlquist is South Lake Tahoe Police Department’s point man for gang and graffiti activity. He works odd hours – much like the taggers. He’s not in a uniform most of the time – much like the taggers who don’t want to be easily identified.

His is a world where people don’t like to talk. While interviewing people about all the tagging on the interior and exterior of the old C&M Lodge on Bonanza Street, one guy said he wouldn’t name names for fear of retaliation from the gang members allegedly involved.

Taggers don’t stop at the state line. Law enforcement believes some of the same people are working that area – at the casinos, and the run down, closed motels on Cedar Avenue. Nearly every pillar at the bankrupt convention center site is tagged.

Experience counts

Carlquist has been with SLTPD for about three years, having come from the Hollister department. Even when departments like the K-9 unit were cut there, the gang unit stayed intact.



Taggers like large areas where they can leave their mark.

His experience in these matters helped him get the job in Tahoe.

What he noticed when he arrived is not a lot of talk going on between neighboring jurisdictions. Now gang investigation meetings are taking place on a regular basis for detectives of various agencies to share info. That wasn't happening a year ago.

When Carlquist asked about South Tahoe's "gang registry" his bosses had no idea what he was talking about.

The department now has that registry which is allowed per a California law passed years ago. It works in somewhat the same as the sex offender registry. Once a gang member is out of prison they must register with the law enforcement agency where they reside.

But there are no limitations of where they can live or with whom. However, it gives cops an address for at least a one-time gang member, if not current.

While Carlquist won't give the exact number of people on the registry, he said it's high for the size of city South Lake Tahoe is. But it has become a tool for law enforcement.

"It has proved to be a deterrent," Carlquist said of the

registry. "About 95 percent of registrants are not repeat offenders. It has helped some get out of a gang and some have moved to another town."

Who is doing the tagging?

As is tradition in Tahoe, the taggers come out as the snow melts. Winter isn't a big season for them.

It's not that there are necessarily more of them, but there are more places to vandalize. Carlquist has noticed the sagging economy in South Tahoe has left more vacant buildings – commercial and residential – for taggers to use as a canvas.



Brick is hard
to restore
after it's
been
vandalized.

People aren't at the buildings so there is more opportunity to get away with the crime.

He sees the graffiti being a mix of taggers who think what they are doing is creating art and gang members marking their territory. Either way, it's criminal activity. When these men and boys, that is the predominant gender, are caught they are often charged with vandalism, burglary, breaking and entering, and trespassing.

About two-thirds of the crimes are committed on commercial sites, with the other third being a mix of residential and

city property like pump houses and street signs. Businesses are easier to hit because usually they aren't occupied at night.

The culprits don't fit into a nice profile. It's all races, ages and genders. With gang members, oftentimes the affiliation is passed from parent to child or sibling to sibling.

They are a bit like male dogs, though, in needing to leave their mark without any regard to the property they are doing it on.

In 2009 and 2010 the Surenos hit the Ski Run Boulevard area, putting out a roll call with all the monikers the individual members go by. While this helps law enforcement put together a profile, those monikers don't always stay the same. Some have four or five ways to sign a tag.

This gang also has been known as the Southside 13.

South Tahoe also has Nortenos. N is the 14th letter of the alphabet and represents northerners.

With the convictions in three Cyclones gang members in 2010 for the 2009 stabbing of a South Tahoe teen, it basically wiped out that group.

Carlquist doesn't believe the gangs mentioned above are responsible for the spike in graffiti at the Y. He won't say anything more until arrests are made.

With the South Shore being along the triangle of Reno, Carson City and Sacramento, the area has a lot of transient gang members. Some stop a while, some pass through.

Drug sales, trafficking and transporting weapons are common.

When it comes to taggers not in a gang, it's all about being creative.

“It’s a mindset thing. Taggers really think they are doing artwork. They say ‘we are great artists and want to show the world’,” Carlquist said. “They say the world is their canvas and there is no such thing as private property.”

These people know about the websites touting which tips on spray paint cans will do what, what markers are good, how to tag or bomb or scratch.

And taggers in Tahoe don’t just need a wall. They hit granite rocks and bike trails.

Proactive possibilities

Property owners can make their buildings less attractive to taggers by using motion sensor lighting, cutting vegetation away so taggers can’t duck behind it, and putting up chain link fences instead of wood so there isn’t a surface to tag.

It’s creating defensible space to stop would-be taggers.

Heavenly Village rarely has graffiti because security officers are constantly roaming the area and lighting plays a role in deterring that kind of behavior.



Dumpsters are a common item to be tagged.

Carlquist recently met with security for that center to talk about gang awareness so they understand indicators.

The city has a graffiti abatement program to provide some

assistance with cleaning up tagged buildings and structures. But call officers before painting over the crime scene.

Parents and teachers can pay attention to what might seem like innocent doodling when in fact it's miniature graffiti on their notebooks or in their rooms – sketches possibly before hitting the streets in a bigger way.

Carlquist wants to talk to concerned adults about whether something might be an indication a person is in a gang or potential tagger. He may be reached at (530) 542.6121.

He wants to do more outreach with the community and is hoping grants the police department is applying for will pay for that. In the mean time, when he's not out searching for the bad guys, Carlquist is doing what he can to talk to local groups.

"Enforcement and prevention are the two important points," Carlquist said to ridding the area of graffiti and those responsible for it.

Judge sides with state; Kindertown to close

By Kathryn Reed

The last class of preschoolers may have graduated from Kindertown.

Kindertown Preschool and Daycare is being forced to lock its doors at the end of the day June 24.



Maria Barrows-Crist hands Danika Yuzbick her preschool diploma June 17.

Photos/Kathryn Reed

While most of Friday morning was about proud parents taking pictures of their little ones dressed in pink and blue caps and gowns, a meeting afterward had their faces turn almost ashen.

Maria Barrows-Crist read a letter to them and then handed each a copy. It talks about her day in court, the future, who they can write letters to, and suggestions for where to take their children if, in fact, this South Lake Tahoe institution does lock its doors for good.

Barrows-Crist has been fighting the state Department of Social Services since September 2009.

Just when she gets over one hurdle, another is put in front of her.

"I'm not perfect, I don't do everything right, but I'm not a danger," she told parents June 17.



Parents
receive the
news June 17
Kindertown
must close.

The state believes otherwise. The biggest issue is a child was able to get out the gate at the center and wander onto the walk along Highway 50. The state has no leniency for this child having a history being an escape artist at other locations.

Barrows-Crist won a stay in February, with the idea she would get her day in court again. With her lawyer Mike McLaughlin and his office trying endlessly to get the court to set a briefing schedule, time kept passing.

On June 2 a management conference was set of June 3. From there the June 16 date was set. Attorney Kara Thiel represented Barrows-Crist in El Dorado County Superior Court in Placerville on Thursday before Judge Warren Stracener because McLaughlin was out of town.

The thinking was Stracener would extend the stay, allowing Kindertown to stay open, and a date set to hear the evidence. Instead, Stracener said close and you can have your say later if you want.

McLaughlin, who called *Lake Tahoe News* from the road, said he isn't giving up. He plans to spend the weekend researching options.



Maria Barrows-Crist helps preschoolers to their seats June 17.

“I hope to get before him Wednesday and convince him of the error of his ways,” McLaughlin said of the judge. “I think it would be hard for (Barrows-Crist) to keep up the fight once the doors are closed.”

Barrows-Crist is unable to hold back tears on the phone or in person as she talks about the situation.

“This is not just my business. This is my life. These families are my family,” she told *Lake Tahoe News* as she arrived at the center Friday.

One thing that might save her is the buyer who is interested in the 30-plus-year-old facility. If the business trades ownership, the doors would stay open.

Appraisals for KMS next step for closed school

With three public sessions to get feedback from about what to do with the shuttered Kingsbury Middle School site completed

earlier this month, the next step is to get appraisals on the Zephyr Cove site.

Douglas County School District Superintendent Lisa Noonan updated the board Tuesday afternoon about what the public had to say and what happens next.

Getting appraisals, which could take months, will put a value on the land and structures. The board would ultimately make the decision about who would be hired to do the appraisal.

It's still possible the site could be used by the district, or another Douglas County agency. However, it is in the board approved facilities master plan to sell the property.

The school closed three years ago this month because enrollment at the three lake schools was on a steady decline. Now the K-12 students are in two schools in Stateline.

– Kathryn Reed

Recreation advocates take sides on ballot measure

By Kathryn Reed

If an umpire had been in the room, several “players” would have been ejected.

And it was a good thing no children were there Thursday night, even though the subject matter was recreation. These grown men don't all play nice together.

What brought them to the South Lake Tahoe Recreation Complex

was to discuss Measure S and the possibility of changing it into Measure R. What got them riled up was if voters should be asked to change how the dollars are divvied up and how the dollars should be allocated.



John Upton and
Norma Santiago
get an earful
at the June 16
meeting about
rewriting
Measure S.
Photo/Kathryn
Reed

South Shore voters on the California side approved Measure S in 2000 to provide money to maintain future bike trails, create ball fields, and build an ice rink – in that order. Instead, the order was reversed. The ice rink is done, one ball field is in, and little of the bike trail funds are spent because no asphalt is being laid.

The ball field proponents, led by John Cefalu and Measure S's lone paid staff member John Upton, tried in 2009 to get more money out of the measure for their preference and failed with Measure B. This time they brought the bike community to the table in hopes altering the measure's language to allow for old trails to be renovated would sweeten the pot.

"Little League is trying to get more money. I will very much be opposed. I think the funds should go to what was originally

voted for," Jerome Evans, a former city recreation commissioner, said. (The only current rec commissioner at the June 16 meeting was Jonathan Moore.)

Evans and Cefalu traded verbal jabs. Evans was confrontational as he spoke. Cefalu and Upton were not always gentlemen-like, either. Cefalu eventually left the meeting when it came time for Evans to speak again.

Before he departed, Cefalu said based on the opinions of the dozen people in the room, he didn't see Measure R having the two-thirds votes needed to pass.

He suggested the bike people get their own measure on the ballot to raise funds for their cause.

The reality is what's left to be collected through 2030 from property owners at a rate of \$18/year for single family residences and what's in the bank from Measure S is not enough to take care of what voters thought they were paying for. Cyclists and baseball advocates agree on that much.

However, one person described it as everyone wanting a piece of the pie, with Measure R creating a smaller piece for bike trails. And it ultimately would no matter how people sugar coat it.

Upton and Cefalu lobbied hard that doing nothing is sticking with the status quo. For them, and the ball field gang, it means not being able to make the improvements they want.

The status quo for cyclists means the only bike trails that would be improved are new ones when they need it.

It's the pot of money being set aside for those improvements that ball field advocates want to get their hands on.

Cyclists contend while the money for new trails is stagnant, one day the fiscal situation will change and those dollars voters approved for their maintenance will be needed.

The next step is the recreation joint powers authority will meet June 30. Because the meeting as been noticed to be at Lake Tahoe Airport at 9am, it will start there, and then be moved to the library on Rufus Allen Boulevard because of a conflict in scheduling. So attendees just need to be at the library about 9:15am.

The three members of the JPA (El Dorado County Supervisor Norma Santiago, South Lake Tahoe City Councilman Hal Cole and Tahoe Paradise Park board member Deborah Henderson) will be asked to vote on a resolution to create Measure R and the November ballot language.

When asked Thursday by more than one attendee if any of this could be changed, Upton said an emphatic no. Santiago said the politically and legally correct answer of yes. A “no” would imply a decision had been made – which at a minimum violates the Brown Act. And it would be political suicide to admit to making a decision before a public hearing is conducted.

Santiago told *Lake Tahoe News* for the JPA board to consider amending the language of Measure R the verbiage would need to be presented in the necessary legalese at the June 30 meeting.

But the truth is the ballot language does not need to be finalized until July 29, so the JPA could schedule a special meeting to create some other iteration of Measure S if they so desired.

Santiago took issue with the allegation rewriting Measure S has not been transparent, citing the May 5 meeting that resulted in Measure R being tweaked.

But the truth is Kathay Lovell, as South Tahoe mayor last summer, approached the Bicycle Coalition, saying a compromise to amending Measure S needed to be found.

Talks between the Coalition’s Ty Polastri, Upton and Cefalu started earlier this year. The first time the idea of altering

S was brought to the public's awareness was at an April South Lake Tahoe City Council meeting.

By that time, the language for R was written. No public meetings were conducted before then to get input from anyone. It was all behind the scenes finagling by youth baseball leaders to get it to that point.

On a side note, the Cefalu family is involved in this in another way. Even though no money from Measure S goes to the ice rink operation, it was South Shore property owners who built it via the tax assessment. The city sought bids from people and entities wanting to run the rink, with Chris Cefalu – son of John Cefalu – being the frontrunner to get that bid in July when it comes to the City Council. The proposal was submitted by Tahoe Sports and Entertainment, owned by Van Oleson and Cefalu.

The is proposed Resolution and this is the proposed ballot measure.

Harveys hit with \$3.5 mil. judgment in tainted water case

Within seconds of taking a sip of what she thought was water, Julia Ellis doubled over at the bar at Harveys Lake Tahoe.

The casino's mistake of serving her a highly toxic cleaning solution instead of bottled water resulted in a jury this week rendering a verdict that Ellis be paid \$3.25 million in damages for past and future medical bills, as well as for pain

and suffering.

“Food safety is a national priority. This is a tragedy that never should have happened and that could have been avoided,” Christopher Dolan, Ellis’ attorney, said in a statement.

The case was tried in San Francisco Superior Court. Dolan said the company has accepted responsibility. What the jury decided Monday was what damages should be.

On Dec. 2, 2007, Ellis asked a Harveys bartender for water. He thought that’s what he brought her. In reality a Harveys employee had poured a highly caustic, highly toxic, concentrated cleaning solution with a PH of nearly 13.5 out of 14 into an unmarked Harrah’s water bottle and left it in the kitchen, where it was soon served to Ellis.

Ellis, who lives in Mill Valley, suffered severe chemical burns to her esophagus and stomach.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

California drought drove up energy costs

By Bettina Boxall, Los Angeles Times

Drought One of the biggest costs of California’s recent drought went largely unnoticed, according to a report that estimates state ratepayers paid \$1.7 billion to replace lost hydropower with natural gas generation that also pumped millions of tons of pollutants into the atmosphere.

“Some of the drought’s most direct and costly impacts were to

air quality and California electricity ratepayers,” concludes an analysis of the drought’s impacts by the Pacific Institute, a Northern California think tank that focuses on water issues.

In an average year, about 15 percent of the electricity produced in-state comes from hydropower. Citing data from the California Energy Commission, the authors found that figure dropped to 8 percent to 10 percent with falling runoff levels during the 2007-09 drought. Utilities made up for the loss by burning more natural gas and buying more power from out of state, driving up production costs as well as greenhouse gas emissions. The authors calculated that the switch to other power sources resulted in an additional 13 million tons of carbon dioxide emissions.

Read the whole story

Sacramento turmoil keeps budgets downstream in flux

By Kathryn Reed

Now there’s a state budget, now there’s not. This fiscal gamesmanship California lawmakers are playing may ensure they keep getting a salary, but it is creating an eraser hole in ledgers up and down the state.

Lake Tahoe Unified and Lake Tahoe Community College boards of education on June 14 discussed their respective budgets. Both plan to adopt so-called final budgets June 28. But in reality they are placeholder budgets until the state approves a budget.



June 15 was the legal deadline for lawmakers to approve a state budget. It was done so on controversial party lines. The following day Gov. Jerry Brown vetoed the Democrats' plan – even though he is one of them.

Brown said what landed on his desk contained “legally questionable maneuvers, costly borrowing and unrealistic savings.”

State Sen. Ted Gaines, R-Roseville, and Assemblywoman Beth Gaines, R-Roseville, who represent Tahoe in the Legislature, voted no on the budget.

LTUSD and LTCC had found ways to work within the confines of what Brown proposed in his May revise.

But what the Dems put forth Wednesday would have thrown at least K-12 CFOs scrambling to find money.

“It is unfortunate that the state has chosen to shift the burden to fund state education obligations – forcing districts to use precious limited dollars to borrow money – to meet unavoidable expenses for salaries and operations,” LTUSD CFO Deb Yates told *Lake Tahoe News* before the governor's veto.

While it's a wait-and-see mode right now, it's like a fiscal (and bit of an emotional) yo-yo that educators, cities and counties are subjected to.

The budget lawmakers came up with would have eliminated redevelopment agencies. Placer County adopted a five-year redevelopment plan in May, while South Lake Tahoe transferred most of its Redevelopment Agency holdings to the city.

According to the California Department of Education, the following K-12 districts are on fiscal early warning:

Marc Sabella, director of fiscal services at El Dorado County: • Black Oak Mine Unified • Gold Oak Union Elementary • Rescue Union Elementary LTCC, presented options to the board Tuesday night for being able to keep from bouncing checks. At the May 24 meeting the board was briefed on possibly needing a TRAN (Tax and Revenue Anticipation Note) to keep the cash flow going.

The board decided this week to hold off on that idea and instead consider borrowing from reserves or a local bank or possibly some other scenario. This is because a TRAN could cost \$65,000 and other options would be nil or significantly less.

The money is needed because the state stops paying its bills if a budget is not in place. The fiscal year for the state, LTUSD and LTCC starts July 1.

On Thursday, Sabella told *Lake Tahoe News* June 16 just before Brown vetoed the budget, "Only when all parties agree to the state budget, does it effect the college. We will have to wait for a completed state budget before there are any changes here."

When that day will come remains a mystery.

Politicians question spending money on wants vs. needs

By Ed Fletcher, Sacramento Bee

With local governments facing historically tight times, some

are asking whether elected officials should forgo district discretionary funds.

In Placer County, two supervisors are asking that their \$20,000 in unrestricted funds be tossed back into the general fund.

Sacramento County and the cities of Sacramento and Roseville are among the other local municipalities that have programs that give elected officials wide latitude in spending a small pot of money.

The Placer County program, called revenue sharing, earmarks \$20,000 annually for each supervisor to dole out to local nonprofits, special causes and community events – usually in small amounts ranging from \$200 to \$1,000.

Supervisors Jack Duran and Jennifer Montgomery say that while the causes are worthy, core county functions should take precedence.

Montgomery has already turned her allocation back to the county to support health and human services programs in the Tahoe area.

Read the whole story

Garridos in their new homes – state prison

By Sam Stanton, Sacramento Bee

State prison officials said today that they had settled Phillip and Nancy Garrido into their new homes after a nearly

two-year stay at the El Dorado County Jail while they awaited trial for kidnapping Jaycee Lee Dugard.

Phillip Garrido arrived at Corcoran State Prison today, where he will be processed and kept in a cell away from other inmates while processed. Then, he likely will be placed into custody in the “protective housing unit,” where about 14 other high profile inmates such as Charles Manson and Juan Corona are segregated from others at the prison.

Read the whole story