

Kindertown decision expected in 2 months



By Kathryn Reed

A final decision is expected in April as to whether Kindertown will remain open as a day care facility in South Lake Tahoe.

El Dorado County Superior Court Judge Steve Bailey met in his chambers on Wednesday with Kindertown owner Maria Barrows-Crist, her attorney Mike McLaughlin, and Brenda Ray with the state Attorney General's Office. Ray spoke by telephone.

The judge finally has the transcripts of last summer's three-day hearing that led the Department of Social Services to want to close the local center. The \$3,300 for the documents came out of Barrows-Crist's pocket.

A slew of allegations are in the final 28-page report. Bailey told Ray he expects her to be able to provide evidence to the charges.

In the mean time, Kindertown is slowly increasing the number of children it cares for. Before the trouble began there were 120 kids, it dropped to 35 and is now at 83.

"-Some are coming back, but I have a lot of new kids and a lot of new staff. It is so great," Barrows-Crist told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Cost to rent space at LTCC expected to go up



By Kathryn Reed

It's likely to cost a bit more for agencies and nonprofits to use various rooms at Lake Tahoe Community College.

The idea is to have the cost better reflect the time and expense of college employees who are involved in getting rooms ready, cleanup, and wear and tear on equipment. It's not about making money.

The board didn't take any action Tuesday night. The College Council still needs to review the matter.

Philosophical issues were brought up â€” such as should a fee be charged when the South Lake Tahoe institution is used by for-profit entities like insurance companies did during the 2007 Angora Fire.

If service clubs give scholarships to the college or money in some other form, should they be given a discount? It was one of a few questions board members discussed without any definitive resolution.

Board members also mentioned how the same amount of work is involved by staff if it's a for-profit or nonprofit renting space and equipment.

The proposal calls for hourly rates, which is already on the books, though most rooms (except for the theater) have come with a flat fee. Charging a fee if an organization wants to change things after a certain date is likely to be implemented.

Some of the ideas are to charge \$40/hour for the board room instead of \$10; \$30 per day for a section of the parking lot instead of \$15; and doubling the commons fee to \$50/hour.

“These numbers are so low I can’t figure out where someone would go for this price and this kind of place,” board member Karen Borges said.

The education foundation handles the garden-amphitheater when it comes to renting that area.

In other action:

Cynthia Preston, dean of instruction, gave the board an update on the Nursing Assistant Training Program. This is a feeder program for jobs at Barton Memorial Hospital. Often more than 50 people apply for the 10 instructional spots.

Fight ends with arrest, hospitalization, school lockdown



By Kathryn Reed

A parolee is in custody without bail and another South Lake Tahoe man is being treated for serious injuries at Renown Medical Center in Reno after he was beaten Thursday afternoon.

The chaos on Reno Avenue in the Sierra Tract spilled over to Tahoe Valley Elementary School, which resulted in the school being locked down for about 20 minutes at 3:15pm as students were being let out for the day.

Adrian Gannion, 32, of South Lake Tahoe was being held without bail at the local jail on parole violations. Further charges are likely after police wrap up their investigation.

“Gannion is alleged to have picked up a tree branch about 3- to 4-inches in diameter and 5-feet long and smacked the guy in the head with it,” Sgt. Brian Williams with the South Lake Tahoe Police Department told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Blood was everywhere.

Mark Ross, who is in his mid-40s and from South Lake Tahoe, was airlifted to Reno. The helicopter landed in the snow dump area at the end of Sierra Boulevard. However, Ross had made it to the 7-Eleven at Highway 50 before officers located him.

Ross is expected to live, but the injuries are described as significant.

Witnesses told officers Gannion was fighting three men at the home of his girlfriend on Reno Avenue. Ronald Kato, in his mid-20s and from South Lake, was taken to Barton Memorial Hospital with minor injuries.

The name of the other man involved in the fight was not disclosed.

Officers said there is no indication this was gang related. They are not sure what led to the fight, but drugs and a love triangle will be roads theyâ€™ll pursue.

Gannion has a long criminal history, with some of it being violent.

â€œThe suspect is a known white supremacist and is in custody,â€ Capt. Martin Hewlett, wrote in an email to City Manager Dave Jinkens.

The school became a component of the fight when Gannionâ€™s girlfriend went to pick her daughter up at the school and Gannion was in the front seat with a bloody nose. Witnesses had a description of the vehicle and the two occupants.

Someone at the school called police after recognizing the vehicle. Thatâ€™s when officers called for a lockdown. The two were taken into custody; with the woman subsequently let go. Her child left campus with other relatives.

DCSD coach accused of lewd acts with a child

A basketball coach with Douglas County School District was arrested Thursday night on charges involving inappropriate behavior with children under the age of 14.

Benjamin Thomas Schuler, 24, of Gardnerville is accused of trying to lure a child under 14 years of age with the intent to persuade the child away from home, according to a press

release.



Benjamin
Schuler

Schuler was arrested after it was discovered he had communicated with two 13-year-old girls via sexually explicit emails, investigators said.

Schuler attempted to get one of the girls to leave her home and go to his house, authorities said. The investigation revealed Schuler had previously inappropriately touched one of the girls, authorities said.

The email was discovered by family members of one of the victims.

Schuler had met the girls through his employment as a basketball coach for the school district.

Schuler was booked into Douglas County Jail with bail set at \$25,000 cash only.

Harrah's posts fourth quarter profit

By Steve Green, Las Vegas Sun

Harrah's Entertainment Inc. today reported a profit of \$295.6 million in the fourth quarter, even as the recession contributed to a 10 percent decline in net revenue for its big hotel-casinos on the Las Vegas Strip.

The profit compares to a loss of \$4.782 billion in 2008's fourth quarter, when the Las Vegas company booked special costs of \$5.49 billion to write down the value of goodwill and other intangible assets.

Read the whole story

Chancellor paints dim picture of state community colleges

By Kathryn Reed

Community college enrollment is declining, but it has nothing to do with demand decreasing.

California Community Colleges Chancellor Jack Scott spoke with the media Wednesday, outlining his predictions for the future of the 112 two-year schools "which is the largest system of higher education in the country.

After a peak enrollment of 2.89 million students in 2008-09 and three consecutive years of increases, the system is on

track to post a 1 percent decline for the 2009-10 school year. It's expected to go down even more in the 2010-11 school year.



Jack Scott

This comes at a time when California high school graduates are at record levels, with the class of 2010 predicted to be larger than last year's.

"Really, we have the perfect storm in terms of enrollment," Scott said.

The problem is the 8 percent cut by the state this fiscal year, or \$520 million, means colleges have to cut courses. This comes at a time when workers want to be retrained and more high school students need community colleges because the University of California and California State University systems have placed caps on the number of students they will take.

"Right now we are estimating we will educate 200,000 student for which we will receive no re-numeration from the state. This is not something we can continue to do," Scott said.

He said some colleges have reported 50 percent of their students unable to enroll in the classes they need because not enough sections are offered to meet the demand.

Lake Tahoe Community College budgeted 65 unfunded students for this year. The local board was told Tuesday that number so far is really 236. LTCC's enrollment is bucking the state trend,

with it up 7.3 percent to 4,673 students.

LTCC cut 48 classes from this winter quarter compared to the previous year and will eliminate 64 in spring quarter.

“We need to plan for a small amount of unfunded growth,” Susan Middleton, LTCC dean of student services, told the board.

The chancellor’s office and others in Sacramento want to make sure the two-year schools focus on their mission “preparing students to transfer to a four-year college, basic skills and career technology.

When *Lake Tahoe News* asked Scott if this decree means taking the “community” out of community college in places like Lake Tahoe that have a robust student population that likes to take recreation oriented classes, the chancellor said, “it’s a matter of priorities.”

Scott said English and history need to come before aerobics.

LTCC is one of many colleges planning to tweak summer school offerings as a way to cut expenses. It’s likely multiple sections of a subject will not be offered and class sizes will increase.

“I would imagine during the summer months some colleges will close buildings that are not used in the summer months,” Scott said.

Scott is in a unique position of leading this education system because he is a former college president as well as past member of the state Assembly and Senate.

Still, he is less than optimistic about what will happen if the state continues to cut higher education.

“This divestiture from higher education in California won’t meet future work force needs,” Scott said. “I read

a report by the Public Polity Institute that estimated by 2025 we will have 1 million fewer college graduates than what the economy needs.â€

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has proposed an increase in funding for community colleges that would add \$126 million to the bottom line, which equates to 60,000 students. But what the May budget revise will look like remains to be seen.

Millions of dollars at stake to improve Lake Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

“This was really an important day for Lake Tahoe,” Joanne Marchetta said after Wednesday’s Senate committee hearing regarding the reauthorization of the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act.

As executive director of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, Marchetta was one of three people from Lake Tahoe at the hearing in Washington. The others were Julie Regan with TRPA and Patrick Wright, executive director of the California Tahoe Conservancy.

Wright, with input from the TRPA folks, addressed the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, which is chaired by Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif.



Joanne
Marchetta

[Click here to read his testimony.](#)

“What we are trying to do is raise the profile of Tahoe to stand up there among all other watershed restoration projects,” Marchetta told *Lake Tahoe News* in a phone interview from Washington. “It’s all based on building state, federal, local and private partnerships. We made that point. We have strong partnerships in Tahoe and we are going to build on that. We can show results.”

The lake’s other senators – Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., Harry Reid, D-Nev., and John Ensign, R-Nev. – all spoke in favor of the bill that would bring \$415 million to the lake over eight years for invasive species, lake clarity, fuels reduction and erosion control projects.

“Another way to think about this is it is in fact a jobs bill,” Marchetta said. “Our community in Tahoe is suffering from the recession like the rest of the nation. This money means we can infuse dollars back into the local economy, to put people back to work. These are jobs for the construction and restoration folks, people who want to work on road projects, engineers and designers.”

Lake Tahoe was one of five watersheds in the country asking the committee for its blessing during the nearly three-hour hearing.

None of the other regions had the show of force that Lake Tahoe did on Wednesday.

“All of the questions were about accountability. We are already out ahead of the pack on accountability and we will only strengthen those programs,” Marchetta said. “We hope to leverage more monitoring money out of this authorization.”

Having 10 years worth of science to show the senators seemed to go a long way. The first Lake Tahoe Restoration Act was passed in 2000 after then-President Bill Clinton in 1997 launched what is now the annual Lake Tahoe Environmental Summit.

Feinstein told her colleagues how in 1997 the clarity of Lake Tahoe was to a depth of 64 feet, and it’s at nearly 70 feet now. In 1968, it was 102 feet.

She rattled off numbers like the 300 projects that were completed in the last decade with the \$1.4 billion public-private partnership at the lake, the 739 acres of wetlands that have been restored, the acres of fuel reduction and habitat restoration, and the efforts to reduce fine sediment from reaching the lake.



Dianne
Feinstein

“Much work has been done, but much work lies ahead,” Feinstein told the panel.

Just like when she spoke at last summer’s summit, Feinstein reiterated the need to continue thinning the forest to avoid another catastrophic fire like the 2007 Angora Fire, and putting money toward the potentially devastating quagga

muscles and other invasive species.

"We have 10 years of science that tells us exactly where our highest priority projects are. That bodes well for convincing people Tahoe is the right place to spend money," Marchetta said.

Ensign expressed satisfaction that projects have not been based on personal wish lists, but instead on the science.

"Lake Tahoe is a national treasure and it needs national attention," he said.

Other people testifying on Wednesday were Peter Silva, assistant administrator for water with the EPA; Harris Sherman, undersecretary for Natural Resource and Environment; David Dicks, with Puget Sound Partnership; Pete Grannis with New York Department of Environmental Conservation; Debrah Marriott with Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership; David Naftzger with the Council of Great Lakes Governors; John Tauzel with New York Farm Bureau; and David Ullrich of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiatives.

Invasive species is a threat to all of the bodies of water. The threat of wildfire, especially in relation to water quality, set Lake Tahoe apart. The other entities also don't have the extensive private-public partnership like Tahoe does.

The committee will vote on the bill. Assuming it passes, it goes to the full House. The House authorizes expenditures, so it may mean more lobbying in Washington by Lake Tahoe officials to convince lawmakers to spend the money. Funds aren't likely to be allocated until fiscal year 2012.

"We think we have a really good shot to get this bill passed," Regan said. "We have strong bipartisan support. Our clarity is showing a more stabilizing trend. That is a really good story to tell."

Incline woman pleads not guilty in husband's fatal stabbing

By Reno Gazette-Journal

A 72-year-old Incline Village woman accused of fatally stabbing her elderly husband last year was scheduled a Valentine's Day 2011 trial.

Mary Arlayne Baymiller pleaded not guilty of murder Wednesday during her arraignment in Washoe District Court. She is accused of stabbing her husband, Charles Baymiller, 73, up to 200 times in a rage possibly motivated by her mental anguish over his dementia, and



Mary Baymiller

financial worries, according to court records.

Read the whole story

Attorney: Garrido heard voices

By Sam Stanton, Sacramento Bee

Phillip Garrido's attorney may be laying the groundwork for a mental health defense in his kidnapping-rape trial, citing "signs of serious mental illness" and saying he has "been hearing the voices of angels for years."

The statements, contained in filings made late today by public defender Susan Gellman, come in advance of Friday's hearing over whether Garrido can have contact with his wife, Nancy, in the El Dorado County Jail to prepare their defense and discuss family matters.

[Read the whole story](#)

Freeskier Johnson dies at Squaw Valley

By Jason Kobely, News 10

SQUAW VALLEY — Skier C.R. Johnson, a U.S. Open champion and X Games medalist recognized as a halfpipe specialist and one of freeskiing's most renowned competitors, was killed Wednesday while skiing at Squaw Valley, according to resort officials.

Johnson, a 26-year-old Truckee native, was skiing the Light Towers section of the resort's famed Headwall Wednesday afternoon.



C . R .
Johnson

Read the whole story