Suspect caught in Stateline burglary spree

Peter Quillian, who is suspected of committing several burglaries in Stateline, is behind bars.

Quillian was arrested by Douglas County sheriff's deputies on Sept. 24.

He was arrested on a fugitive warrant out of South Lake Tahoe. Deputies said at the time he was in possession of a hypodermic needle. Quillian is accused of stealing from several Lower Kingsbury Grade locations

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Nev. posts poor eighth-grade math scores

By Meghin Delaney, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Nevada students are slowly making gains in math in elementary school, but by the time eighth grade rolls around that progress comes to a screeching halt.

At least that's what the most recent testing data released by the state suggests. Only 18 percent of students reached the proficiency level on the eighth-grade math exam, compared with 29 percent for seventh-grade math students. That made eighth-grade math the scoring nadir on the Smarter Balanced test in Nevada among all grades.

Other states that use the test don’t show similar drop-offs for their eighth-grade students.

Read the whole story

1,741 Calif. districts violated drinking water rules in 2016

By Nathaniel Levine, Sacramento Bee

Public drinking water systems in California violated state and federal regulations more than 4,700 times in 2016. This database contains every violation from that year.

Most of the violations occurred at small systems serving fewer than 300 people, but you might consume their water even if the district doesn’t serve your home. Many of the smallest systems serve non-residential users at schools, workplaces, campgrounds, parks or ski resorts. The violations are tracked by the California State Water Resources Control Board.

Several South Lake Tahoe locations were flagged.

Read the whole story

Security, political anxiety part of ’18 Winter Games

By Susan Wood

PARK CITY, Utah – Despite a war of words between the United States and North Korea, U.S. Olympic officials and winter athletes all but shrugged off the danger of a nuclear threat affecting the Games in South Korea in February.

Team USA and representatives from the PyeongChang Games on Sept. 25 discussed the current matter among other issues during the media summit at Park City.

After all, the Olympics is an event born as a symbol of unity and goodness in humankind.

Missile- and Twitter-launching threats between President Donald Trump and North Korea leader Kim Jong-un, with its southern neighbors caught in between, have led to questions about whether the Games would be safe.

This is not the first time the Olympic Games have felt the effects of international relations gone awry.

In 1972, the Summer Olympics in Munich experienced a massacre when 11 Israeli Olympic team members were taken hostage and eventually killed at the hands of a Palestinian terrorist group called Black September.

On the domestic front, the Games in Atlanta in 1996 were marked by an explosion of a bomb in Centennial Park, killing two and injuring more than 100 others.



USOC Chairman Larry Probst and USOC CEO Scott Blackmun talk about security for the 2018 Winter Games on Sept. 25. Photo/Kathryn Reed

A strong resolve and heavy hand in security are expected to protect the upcoming Games. Still, a sports minister in France has a large enough concern to question whether the nation would pull out, the Los Angeles Times reported days ago.

To that, U.S. Olympic Committee Chief Executive Officer Scott Blackmun told *Lake Tahoe News* at a filled press conference "the statement was taken out of context." He pledged diligence from Olympic officials to lock down the Games to danger with a constant reliability on law enforcement and wisdom of the International Olympic Committee.

"Should the unthinkable happen, it's the issue of the IOC," he said.

USOC Chairman Larry Probst countered the qualified suggestion of danger a quasi whim from the French official. He declared it would be "highly unlikely (France) would pull out."

When asked whether athletes approached the USOC about the matter, officials quickly responded with "not one."

U.S. halfpipe snowboarder Kelly Clark, a veteran of four Olympics, seemed undeterred by the perceived threat. She remembered competing in her first Olympic Games in Salt Lake City five months after 9/11.

“Based on my experience, the United States makes the right decisions to make the athletes safe,” she told *Lake Tahoe News*. “I saw the power of sport and what it can do – especially the Olympics. It brings the world together. People put their differences aside and celebrate sport.”

South Korea would be her fifth Olympics. She has experienced a variety of security protocols but “has always felt safe.”



PyeonChang Olympic spokeswoman Nancy Park and POCOG Executive Vice President Jaeyoul Kim are confident athletes, spectators and others will be safe during the Games. Photo/Kathryn Reed

U.S. bobsled competitor Aja Evans also shared her faith in officials to keep her protected.

She was joined by Olympian Mikaela Shiffrin who insisted she plans to concentrate on her sport.

“Right now it doesn’t look like the political tensions are

going to have an effect on the Olympics. I'm thankful because I want to compete on that stage," Shiffrin said.

But U.S. biathlete Susan Dunklee appeared more skeptical of international relations running smoothly.

"I think we're not able to see the whole situation, and it could change at any time," Dunklee told *LTN*. She added the spectrum of possibilities could even accelerate to the point the United States "may not even go."

Alpine skier Julia Mancuso, an Olympic veteran who hails from the slopes of Squaw Valley, provided the perspective that every Olympics has the potential of some kind of threat. In visiting South Korea for a test run on the courses with the other athletes, Mancuso compared the Asian nation to Russia.

"I felt really safe at South Korea," she mentioned, further commending organizers for essentially seeming prepared. The Games in Sochi had a less secure feel that she had to overcome.

This could be music to the ears of PyeongChang 2018 Games officials.

"We appreciate the confidence the USOC has in us delivering a great Games," POCOG Executive Vice President Jaeyoul Kim said. He pledged to *LTN* during the summit that South Korea has "taken all the necessary precautions to deliver a safe and secure Games."

Raising the bar, Kim went on to insist POCOG and IOC officials are working diligently with military police and international security teams to avert any disaster. And they're all about sharing information – the power of knowing. He noticed the potential of enhanced "intel sharing" at the Rio Summer Games in 2016.

In these circumstances, a beefed up evacuation plan would be

in order. Kim said his government has complied.

POCOG spokeswoman Nancy Park noted “everybody has the same concerns.”

Park clarified security has always been important.

“It’s just that it’s never been out in the forefront (until now),” she said.

Nonetheless, this tension at some level must have escalated to at least a heightened awareness. The name of the location has been altered for the Olympics. Local leaders were apparently afraid international visitors would confuse Pyeonchang, a county in eastern South Korea, with Pyongyang, the capital of North Korea, NBC reported. That’s why the spelling has been changed to PyeonChang.

Apparently, the Unforgotten War isn’t all forgotten. In 1953, the Korean War ended with not a peace treaty but a truce – a temporary pause in fighting. Back then, North Korea invaded South Korea with the blessing of the Soviet Union and China. The United States served to support the south.

Trouble on the home front

Adding to the tension of present-day politics at home, Trump has fueled the fire of civil discourse with provocative tweets to North Korea.

Policies out of the White House have prompted far-reaching peaceful protests – in particular among national athletes. From the NBA champions Golden State Warriors declining a traditional visit to the latest surge in National Football League players taking a knee as a gesture of disapproval, U.S. protests became a topic at the media summit.



Kelly Clark of Mammoth trusts officials to provide the requisite security for athletes. Photo/Kathryn Reed

“One of the proudest parts of being an American is freedom of speech. I’m proud of athletes who stand up for what they believe in,” Mancuso said.

She further clarified though it may be more appropriate for athletes who compete every week such as the NFL players to carry on such a gesture rather than Olympic athletes who may take a stand only to wait four years to continue to take another.

And as icons of their country, athletes may see these issues as multi-dimensional in which aspects of solidarity can be agreed upon.

Alpine skier Laurenne Ross demonstrated the complexity of the issue when asked if she would visit the White House, an invite her fellow athlete Clark would certainly accept again.

“I would go. It doesn’t mean I love what is going on there,” Ross said.

She believes people have the right to freedom of expression, and that’s one of the great things about the country she’s

representing.

But the Olympics has a code of conduct. Rule 50 of the Olympic Charter states: “No kind of demonstration or political, religious or racial propaganda is permitted in any Olympic sites, venues or other areas.”

Study: Wildfires increase sediment in watersheds

By Alastair Bland, Water Deeply

Around California, the country and the world, reservoirs are silently filling with sediment, and only a few people are thinking about it. Among them is Tim Randle, a civil engineer with the United States Bureau of Reclamation’s Sedimentation and River Hydraulics Group.

“We used to be gaining water storage capacity with dam building,” said Randle, who is based in Denver. “Now, around the world, the pace is slowing down as sediment builds up. This is true in the U.S., too.”

According to new research from the U.S. Geological Survey, in many regions erosion rates are now accelerating thanks to wildfires and climate change. The Western U.S., which relies on reservoirs for vital water storage and flood control, will be particularly impacted.

Joel Sankey, a coauthor of the study and a USGS research geologist, says portions of the Cascade Range in Washington, Oregon and California, as well as parts of the Sierra Nevada, are likely to experience particularly dramatic increases in

fire damage and subsequent erosion.

Read the whole story

EDC auditor candidate using false information

By Kathryn Reed

Mike Owen is back on the campaign trail in an attempt to unseat El Dorado County Auditor Joe Harn in 2018.

Owen lost to Harn in 2014.



Mike Owen is claiming to be an active CPA.

A requirement to be a county auditor in California is to be an active certified public account in good standing with the California Board of Accountancy. Owen doesn't meet this qualification, Harn does.

A complaint has been filed with the state board. It says, "Mr. Owen's license status is delinquent, but he is representing

himself as a CPA. His website indicates that he is a CPA. His campaign business card indicates he is a CPA."

According to the state board, Owen's license expired Feb. 28, 2016. It was first issued in 1993.

The state Professions and Business Code says, "The holder of an inactive license issued by the board pursuant to Section 462, when lawfully using the title 'certified public accountant,' the CPA designation, or any other reference that would suggest that the person is licensed by the board on materials such as correspondence, Internet Web sites, business cards, nameplates, or name plaques, shall place the term 'inactive' immediately after that designation."

Owen is not using the word "inactive" to describe his CPA status.

Owen did not respond to an inquiry from *Lake Tahoe News*.

Tahoe's assemblyman to lead Nev. GOP caucus

By Colton Lochhead, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Nevada Assembly Republican Leader Paul Anderson's decision to step down from the state Legislature will have ripple effects as the party gears up for the 2018 elections.

Anderson resigned his Assembly seat on Friday to take a position with the Governor's Office of Economic Development. Anderson will eventually replace GOED director Steve Hill, who is a candidate for an executive position with the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority.

Gardnerville Assemblyman Jim Wheeler, who represents Lake Tahoe, was elected as Anderson's replacement as the caucus leader. Wheeler served as the Assembly GOP co-deputy floor leader last session.

Read the whole story

Sandoval seeks review of gaming, marijuana relationship

By Cy Ryan, Las Vegas Sun

CARSON CITY – Gov. Brian Sandoval wants the state to take another look at the relationship between the gaming and legal marijuana industries in Nevada.

He has issued an order for the Nevada Gaming Policy Committee to meet by Dec. 15 to review the issue.

Read the whole story

EDC pays $375,000 for flawed salary study

By Kathryn Reed

El Dorado County spent more than a quarter of a million

dollars to do a salary study that it doesn't want to use during current negotiations with workers.

The 900 or so employees represented by Local 1 are working without a contract. The last full contract expired June 30, 2016, but had a one-year extension to June 30, 2017.

"The county and labor have both identified some errors identified in the data which is common for compensation studies of this size, and those were easily corrected," Carla Hass, spokeswoman for the county, told *Lake Tahoe News.*

But the county is not saying what the errors are or why it isn't using the study or why it paid the contractor for something that is flawed.

Hass went on to say, "Labor has also expressed concern regarding what level of benefit should be used to serve as the baseline, such as the PPO health plan versus the HMO health plan, or the various tiers of retirement plans depending on when an employee was hired. These are normal discussion points in any classification/compensation study and the county is committed to working with labor to discuss those issues and using the Koff report as a tool and resource as we implement improvements to the county's overall classification and compensation system."

The union has a little different take on what is going on.

"It is a flawed study and they would be better off putting it on the shelf. It's held up negotiations for a year and now the county is saying it will take 12 to 18 months to review the study before any implementation; meanwhile we go without a contract," Jere Copeland, union rep, told *Lake Tahoe News.*

The contract with Berkeley-based Koff & Associates was for $377,545, of which they were paid $376,855. Hass said this is the going rate for this type of study.

The whole point was to provide a comprehensive classification and compensation study. There were 209 job classifications studied. El Dorado County was compared to the counties of Butte, Merced, Napa, Nevada, Placer, Sacramento, Shasta, Solano, Sutter, Tuolumne and Yolo, as well as to the state.

Public agencies are known for doing these types of studies because employees want to be making what their peers earn and the jurisdiction wants to stay competitive to be attractive to potential hires. With unions, everyone gets the same raise and it has nothing to do with merit/job performance.

It was Pamela Knorr, then director of Human Resources, who signed the contract in May 2016.

A separate consulting firm had been hired the prior year to help the county with getting the study started. That contract, also signed by Knorr, was for $64,000. Municipal Resource Group only received half of that amount.

More talk than action on Tahoe workforce housing

Publisher's note: ***This is one in a series of stories about affordable housing in the Lake Tahoe-Truckee region. All articles may be accessed via the home page under Special Projects, 2017 Affordable Housing.***

By Kathryn Reed

Nearly two years after Vail Resorts announced it would spend $30 million on workforce housing, the financial commitment is beginning to pay off in Colorado, though not so much in Tahoe.

The ski resort behemoth has been doing more at its Colorado properties than in California. Keystone is getting a $6 million workforce housing project, while 23 acres near East Vail have been identified for housing. It is spending $440,000 to convert a commercial building it owns in Silverthorne (Summit County, Colo.) into housing.



Vail Resorts says it owns or leases approximately 3,000 beds in Eagle and Summit counties, which is where its Vail, Beaver Creek, Keystone, and Breckenridge resorts are located.

“Employee housing is a priority for us at both Heavenly and Kirkwood mountain resorts, and we continuously work with our community partners and stakeholders to provide housing options and opportunities for our resorts’ teams. For instance, we have employee housing at both of our mountains; and recently, we added an additional 32 beds to our housing at Kirkwood,” Kevin Cooper, spokesman for the resorts, told *Lake Tahoe News.*

However, what he wouldn’t say is how many employees can be housed at the company-owned facilities, what the amenities are (laundry? food provided?), if they are more like apartments or dorms, if they are seasonal or year-round, and the cost to workers.

At the Sept. 21 California Tahoe Conservancy meeting, staff noted they are in talks with Vail Resorts – the Colorado-based parent company of Heavenly and Kirkwood – about developing workforce housing on a parcel the state owns near the Crossings at the Y in South Lake Tahoe. CTC is doing the prep work to get that land ready to be sold, with the desire for it to be used for worker housing.

It’s estimated 40 residential units could go there.

CTC staff said Vail is interested in year-round housing for employees as it expands its summer attractions.

The board will see this parcel and idea on the agenda when the environmental documents are completed and more details are solidified. Staff had no time line for when that might be.

Northstar, the Vail Resorts property in Truckee, is part of the Truckee North Tahoe Regional Housing Council, and has pledged $30,000 to the Housing Solutions Fund.