

# Hiker found alive near Donner Summit

A hiker missing since Monday was found alive Thursday.

Cody Michael, 23, and his dog were expected back in Rocklin on May 16, but never showed. This was after Michael had texted a picture of the two of them to family.

They were in the Donner Pass area hiking the Loch Leven Trail.

Placer County sheriff's deputies said both were "alive and well." Michael was taken to a nearby hospital to be examined.

*– Lake Tahoe News staff report*

---

## Douglas candidates' forum exposes differences

By Susan Wood

GARDNERVILLE – It's been said: The personal is the political.

When five of the seven candidates running for four seats on the Douglas County School District board of trustees took up the question of transgender access in restrooms at Monday night's forum at the Carson Valley Inn, the usually tame venue got slightly raucous.

Amid the laughter, groans and mumbling of attendees, each candidate tried to delicately express their views on the controversial subject affecting the schools. The federal mandate requires schools to allow students who identify with a

gender other than the one they're born with to use the bathroom of choice.

Leading up to that subject, the panel discussion appeared mild and typical of most political forums. But moderator Jerry Evans, who owns KKFT 99.1-FM, baited the candidates with the inquiry at the non-partisan forum sponsored by the Good Governance Group of Douglas County. The primary is June 14. If no one receives 50 percent of the vote plus one, the top two candidates will face each other in November.



Michael Kiger

Retired teacher Michael Eugene Kiger of Zephyr Cove, who's challenging Keith Byer of Glenbrook and Nicholas Shepack of Zephyr Cove in Area 3, said he doesn't support the mandate and added that it's "not something we can decide on immediately." It was difficult to tell whether he was speaking of choosing one's gender or challenging the rule.

(Cindy Trigg, who represents the area now, is being termed out.)

Ambiguity may be a survival mechanism in times like these.

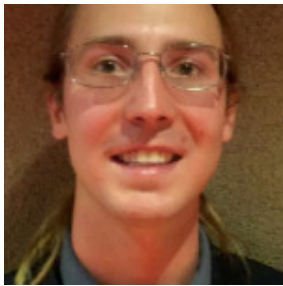


Keith Byer

Shepack, a small businessman who went to the Lake Tahoe schools, said he doesn't like that it's a federal mandate, but was open to further discussion.

Gardnerville resident Linda Gilkerson, who works for Tahoe Youth & Family Services as a mentor coordinator, told listeners that perhaps the conversation should be made with the younger set.

"I can tell you that millennials look at this differently," the first-time office seeker said, suggesting that young people appear more open to diversity



Nicholas  
shepack

than older generations.

To that, Evans piped in that it seemed hard to fathom a teenage girl not minding showering with a boy.

But to that, Gilkerson held her own, countering: "That's not what we're talking about here," despite the sneers from the approximately 40 people in the audience.

"Before you pass judgment, ask the children. They're a lot more open than a lot of people in this room," she said, while never wavering.

Incumbent Karen Chessell of Minden, who's running unopposed for the Area 1 seat, came to Gilkerson's defense. The veteran

school board trustee, who also works for the Nevada Department of Education, insisted she agrees that children are not occupied with transgender issues.

The bigger challenge to her is creating policy.

Larry Lippmann, up for the Area 5 seat against Gilkerson, stopped short of covering the policy and politics.

Instead, the Gardnerville resident – who has logged 35 years in education starting out as a bus driver – simply stated he’s “in support of people who are in transition” and that he has sympathy and empathy.

Byer and Gardnerville resident Neal Freitas, the latter running unopposed for the Area 4 seat, were absent.

Other than the small disturbance during the May 16 panel discussion, the night came off as a friendly meet-and-greet gathering, where the candidates mingled with those interested in Douglas County schools.

Four county commissioner candidates also participated in the forum – Greg Lynn, Dave Nelson, Frank Godecke and Larry Walsh. They fielded questions ranging from green energy and flooding to conflicts of interest along with water and growth.

But it was the school board candidates who took center stage first.

### **The lake as an island of Douglas**

When asked by *Lake Tahoe News* how they view school issues at the lake, Lippman declared he sees no separation between the valley and the lake.

“We’re all in this together,” the former mathematics teacher said. Lippman taught at South Tahoe High School in 1986.

Chessell, who said she showed up to hear what the other

candidates had to say, said she's "concerned about the success of all (Douglas County) citizens." She pointed out how she was on the board during radon mitigation, an issue facing the granite-based mountain area.

She noted the selling of the former Kingsbury Middle School "has been a challenge," especially since it needs a new roof.

As a teacher and administrator, Chessell may put her 150 hours of specific training in education budget and finance to work in finding a solution there.

"I feel the taxpayers have invested in me," she said. "I look forward to four more years."

In respect to Area 3, Shepack has ideas of his own.

"There's a lot we could do with that property," Shepack told *Lake Tahoe News* of the Stateline property. He'd like to see a recreation center or large community space that would generate money for the community. Shepack runs the concessionaire company Friar on the Mountain.

Beyond the business angle, Shepack said he brings a unique perspective – one of being a student. He spent all 12 grades at lake schools.

Gilkerson noted she takes the perspective of a parent and longtime resident of 24 years in the county. She raised two sons in Douglas schools and worked as a substitute teacher, along with working for nonprofits.

"Every job has led me back to our community," she said.

Kiger endorses the idea of giving back to the community and through awareness and greater access being retired wants to avail himself to the citizenry. Like Lippmann, Kiger taught math.

**Common ground?**

The candidates provided some diversity in the ranks when the question came up of Common Core, the U.S. initiative that details what K-12 students should know in English/language arts and math.

Chessell and Gilkerson offered their support for the consistency standards. Shepack hesitated, saying he's not quite ready "to scrap it." Kiger wants to enhance it, while Lippmann is against it.

"I'm way in favor of local control. I don't know if I want the people in the federal government telling us what to teach," the teacher said. To that, he gained applause from the audience.

### **Does money rule?**

When Evans posed a question from the audience about whether money helps education, most of the candidates affirmed the almighty dollar is necessary.

"Money does make a difference," a stern Lippmann insisted.

Kiger explained how a small ratio of students to teachers brings better results. Chessell declared the state's support of the dollars also provides "better results."

Shepack would like to see more funding go to the arts, while Gilkerson leans toward improvements in technology.

Byer, who was in Chicago on the night of the forum, specifically told *Lake Tahoe News* that our investment in technology will help shape students' futures since they "will face a dynamic work environment." He added: "Every career will be intertwined with technology."

Byer pledged to be diligent about making up for reduced student enrollment factors as a businessman eager to find creative solutions.

Freitas did not respond to an inquiry from *LTN*.

---

# Snowpack melting quickly in Sierra



Water is flowing into the Truckee River from Lake Tahoe. Photo/LTN

**By KCRA-TV**

With temperatures in the 90s Tuesday in the Sacramento area, the water was raging along the North Fork of the American River thanks to fast-melting snow.

“It’s pretty high compared to the other years,” Anna Chubar said.

The raging waters are good news not only for rafters and boaters, but also for Northern California reservoirs, which are filling up fast.

Lake Shasta is 93 percent full Tuesday, thanks to a healthy snowpack. Lake Oroville is 96 percent full while Folsom Lake

is 86 percent full.

**Read the whole story**

---

## **Terrain makes search for missing hiker difficult**

**By Jennifer McGraw, CBS-13**

A Rocklin family holding onto faith and hope after Day 2 and no sign of their son who went hiking in the Tahoe National Forest overnight.

“Strength that I get from God makes it better, helps me get through it,” said Howard Michael.

His 23-year-old son, Cody Michael, camped overnight Sunday and was expected Monday to come home, but never did.

The national guard sent in Black Hawk helicopters searching a 6 mile radius, yet still no sign of Cody or his trusted German shepherd.

**Read the whole story**

---

## **Is drought new norm for water**

# use?

**By Denis Cuff, Bay Area News Group**

With the drought fading and temperatures heating up, it's no wonder more sprinklers are popping up. But is it too soon?

Some homeowners and environmentalists worry water restrictions are coming off too fast in a state struggling to have enough water for people, businesses, fish and wildlife.

Water industry officials, however, say Californians have proved that once they learn to conserve, they don't forget those habits.

Officials say new technology with more efficient sprinkler controls, toilets, and clothes and dish washing machines also factor in. Landscaping changes also made a difference in holding down water use as homeowners replaced thirsty lawns with drought resistant plants, officials said.

**Read the whole story**

---

## **SLT council tightens screws on VHR owners**

**By Kathryn Reed**

It seems like every time the South Lake Tahoe City Council makes some change to the vacation rental ordinance, another group of people becomes disenfranchised.

On Tuesday it was those who have the tourist rentals in a

multi-family dwelling.

The staff report says, "There will be no VHR permits for multi-family properties one year from the effective date of this ordinance."

Eleven people spoke at the meeting; most not happy with the changes – and certainly not understanding of them.

Mayor Wendy David said, "We have a housing crisis. As the City Council we need to think of the community. We are facing a substantial crisis with those who want to live here and can't find adequate housing."

The change means people who have a second dwelling on their property, own a duplex, or larger multi-family dwelling will no longer be able to rent them to tourists.

These people believe they are being discriminated against. Those who voiced their opinions said they ought to be grandfathered in, spoke of how their properties had no violations, and that the money pays their bills and helps with retirement income.

The council didn't budge.

While the staff report from the May 17 meeting said the ordinance was designed to be more user friendly and easier to follow, that wasn't the case for everyone reading along.

Councilman Austin Sass, who with David, was on the subcommittee to come up with the changes. He said at the get-go only three things changed. The staff report had 11 significant bullet items, and the actual ordinance is full of lined-out language and additional verbiage.

It used to be that owners could pay a reduced permit fee if they opted to rent to fewer people than the maximum allowed. Not so going forward. The VHR permit will be for the top number, thus further increasing the city's bottom line.

One item that didn't get any attention is that all types of vacation rentals will now have to collect/pay transient occupancy tax.

The staff report says, "... TOT payment is required for all rentals of 30 days or less and it is collected through an issued VHR permit." This includes people renting a room and staying on the premise. A chart in the actual ordinance says as much, too.

However, to add to the confusion, City Attorney Tom Watson told *Lake Tahoe News* those types of rentals don't require a VHR permit, but instead people will need a business license. Further clarification was sought early today, but no answer has arrived.

The second reading of the ordinance is expected at the June 7 meeting. The ordinance would be effective 30 days later.

One thing that could ease the housing crunch is that on Monday the California Senate passed SB1069, which would allow people to add a second dwelling to their property. Watson said this would have no bearing on South Lake Tahoe's VHR ordinance.

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency normally says no to such units.

"As far as how this state legislation would affect TRPA rules, we would have to wait and see what if anything passes at the end of the day, how that compares with our rules and our policies and goals for the region, and update things accordingly," Tom Lotshaw, spokesman for the bi-state regulatory agency, told

---

# 2 tax measures before SLT voters in Nov.

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe voters in November will decide if the hotel and sales taxes should be increased.

The City Council on May 17 agreed to go forward with the ballot measures. What to spend the added revenue on remains to be decided.

The current transient occupancy tax is 10 percent throughout much of South Lake Tahoe, 12 percent in the redevelopment area. The former goes into the city's General Fund, the latter mostly to pay off the bond debt. The Tourism Improvement District, which was formed in 2006, tacks on another \$3.50 or \$4 per night. TID uses that money for marketing.

The city briefly raised the hotel tax via Measure Z in November 2002. This added \$1 to every hotel room. It was in place from Feb. 1, 2004, to Oct. 31, 2006. It brought in about \$1.1 million a year.

Raising the current TOT by 2 percent is projected to generate \$2 million annually.



Privacy is lacking at the South Lake Tahoe Recreation Center. Photo/LTN file

The plan is to have the money go toward recreation. It will require a two-thirds majority to pass this tax because the money is earmarked for something in particular.

Defining recreation, though, is what could be a hiccup in the process. Two members of the South Lake Tahoe Lodging Association spoke Tuesday, saying they want the ballot language to dictate a state-of-the-art recreation complex will be built. A member of the public who could not stay for the whole meeting earlier that day told *Lake Tahoe News* she wants bike trails to be the priority.

The ballot language is bound to be broad. The resolution supporting it can get into more details.

The city also sees renovations to Regan Beach being part of the bigger recreation improvement picture.

As for the sales tax, the plan is to ask voters to raise it by one-half percent, with the hope it will generate \$2.5 million annually. This would make it 8.5 percent.

Raising the sales tax was already done once. It went from 7.25 percent to 7.75 percent after voters gave the go-ahead in

November 2004. All of this “extra” revenue goes right to South Lake Tahoe, whereas the bulk goes to the state.

What the council could not decide on is whether to go for a 50 percent, plus one vote where the money raised goes to the General Fund, or have it dedicated to something like roads, which requires a 66 percent vote. The five discussed the merits of requiring the lesser vote total and putting an advisory vote with it asking people to choose among two or three areas of where to spend the money. Most likely roads, facilities and housing would be the options. Those priorities came out of a survey the city did earlier this year.

However, the city would not be obligated to follow the wishes of voters. To better ensure the electeds comply with voters’ wishes, the idea was floated of passing a resolution stating that to deviate from the voters’ desires would take a 5-0 vote of the council.

Everything regarding the sales tax will be back before the council on June 7. To qualify for the Nov. 8 ballot, the council must have the resolution done by June 21.

The council is confident about asking voters to approve both tax measures because the survey showed only 5 percent of respondents saying no to any tax, with 8 percent undecided. Forty-five percent said they would support both taxes.

Recreation and roads are the two main areas on which people want money to be spent, according to survey results.

While an amusement tax had been bandied about, the dismal survey results removed that from the discussion.

The council members admitted they have their work cut out to convince voters to say yes to both taxes even though it will be tourists who are most impacted.

---

# Tahoe man behind bars after leaving work crew



Michael David  
Lillie

A 37-year-old Stateline man serving time for a felony DUI faces even more time behind bars after walking away from a work crew.

Michael David Lillie was caught May 17 in Woodland.

He had been sentenced to up to 10 years at the Steward Conservation Camp in Carson City. While there he was assigned to a work crew in the capital city, which he left May 11.

The latest crime could add six years to his sentence.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

---

# Immigration agents arrest 87 in 5-day Nev. operation

By Anjeanette Damon, Reno Gazette-Journal

Immigration enforcement agents have arrested 87 immigrants in Reno and Las Vegas during a five-day operation they said targeted individuals who pose a threat to public safety.

Of those arrested, 22 were picked up in Reno, including a 33-year-old Mexican national with prior drug trafficking, DUI and domestic violence convictions and a 19-year-old Mexican national with a prior conviction for robbery and resisting arrest.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials, however, refused to release the identifications of those arrested, citing Privacy Act restrictions on “administrative arrests.”

**Read the whole story**

---

## Hiker missing near Donner Summit

A 23-year-old Rocklin man who was last known to be hiking in the Donner Summit area is missing.

Placer County sheriff's crews are looking for 23-year-old Cody Michael and his German shepherd. Dog teams are on the ground and a CHP helicopter is in the air.



Search and rescue crews are looking for Cody Michael and his dog. Photo/Provided

Deputies said Michael texted this photo to his family the morning of May 16, and he said he would be leaving the area by noon. They haven't heard from him since then.

He was hiking in the Loch Leven area, near Hampshire Rocks Road, on Sunday and/or Monday.

Anyone with information is asked to call 530.886.5375.

Michael is 5-feet, 10-inches tall, and weighs 175 pounds. He has brown hair and green eyes. He was last seen wearing the clothes in the photo. His vehicle was found at the trailhead.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report