

Bay Area political candidate apologizes for Dugard mailer

By Sam Richards, Bay Area News Group

CONCORD – Assembly candidate Tim Grayson has apologized for a campaign mailer sent to some households in Contra Costa and Solano counties touting his contact with kidnapping victim Jaycee Lee Dugard after her long time in captivity, without first consulting with Dugard's family or nonprofit foundation.

Nancy Seltzer, a spokeswoman for the JAYC Foundation Inc., which helps families that have gone through abductions and related traumas, said Grayson apologized to Dugard and to the foundation on Monday and immediately removed Jaycee-related material from his campaign website, as was requested.

Grayson, a Concord city councilman, said late Tuesday that "in no way would I want to do anything that would be a problem for the Dugard family."

Dugard, now 36, was abducted from Meyers in June 1991, when she was 11 years old, by Phillip Garrido, a known sex offender, and his wife, Nancy Garrido. Dugard was kept at the Garridos' unincorporated Antioch property until 2009, when she was found in the company of the Garridos.

[Read the whole story](#)

Calif.'s shoddy roads won't

get fixed any time soon

By Liam Dillon, Los Angeles Times

Over the last few months, Gov. Jerry Brown and legislators have reached major deals to increase taxes on healthcare plans and boost the state's minimum wage. But as Brown prepares to release his revised budget on Friday, one big issue appears to be far from a resolution: California's shoddy roads.

Brown, Assemblyman Jim Frazier, D-Oakley, and state Sen. James Beall Jr., D-San Jose, have all pitched plans to chip away at the more than \$130-billion backlog in state and local road repairs, plus the billions more in annual transportation budget deficits. The plans emerged after Brown called a special session last summer to focus legislators' attention on the dire problem.

All three proposals rely on hiking up the state's beleaguered gas and diesel taxes along with levying new annual fees on car owners. These revenue increases require the support of two-thirds of the Legislature, including the backing of traditionally tax-averse GOP lawmakers.

Read the whole story

STHS challenging accreditation report

By Kathryn Reed

Lake Tahoe Unified School District officials are scratching their heads when it comes South Tahoe High School being put on

a two-year probation by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

The school board on May 10 received notification from STHS Principal Chad Houck. Houck got word from the WASC in late April and has already started the appeals process, which is likely to take a year.

"We believe the information WASC used was incorrect because of errors, bias or lack of evidence," Houck told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The school's accreditation is not threatened, Houck said. (Accreditation is good for six years.)

No one from WASC returned a call.

"It is big deal. When something like this happens it's important we take it very seriously," Houck said. "It definitely caught us off-guard."

The only way to find out what led to the probationary status is to appeal the decision. Even though that process is under way, with the district challenging WASC on three out of four possible criteria, no word has come back from the Burlingame-based organization.

Accreditation starts with the school's doing a self-analysis. This go-round more technology was involved, which allowed more staff participation. It's about creating a plan for improvement. Action is already occurring, with the board on Tuesday approving additions for Common Core.

A WASC team made up of educators from throughout the state is assembled to help with the process and make recommendations.

That, in large part, is where things broke down, according to Houck. He said meetings were canceled, and that the committee never met with Superintendent Jim Tarwater. LTUSD also contends there was bias by one or more members of the team who came to visit, and that the evidence given the evaluation team

was not complete.

When the committee left, Houck said, there was no indication the areas for improvement weren't routine and already being addressed.

"In our report we had an action plan. We have an action plan to address those areas of growth. We already know how to get better," Houck said.

Nev. court deals setback to commerce tax repeal effort

By Michelle Rindels, AP

An effort to repeal the state's new commerce tax suffered a likely fatal setback on Wednesday after the Nevada Supreme Court ruled a petition that's been circulating for several months isn't fit for the ballot.

Justices said in their order that the summary of the measure's effect, which appears on the signature-gathering material, is inadequate because it doesn't tell voters that the measure could unbalance the state budget by tens of millions of dollars. They ordered that signatures collected so far are invalid.

"By ignoring the significant effect the referendum would have on the balanced budget mandate, the description of effect suggests that no such effect exists and is thus materially misleading," Justice Nancy Saitta wrote in concurring with the full court's ruling. "The petition's signers have been both deceived and misled."

The ruling is a major setback for the RIP Commerce Tax group led by Republican Controller Ron Knecht, even though justices sided with his group on some arguments. RIP Commerce Tax had gathered about 20,000 signatures as of early May, and would have to start over again to collect the more than 55,000 signatures needed by June 21 to qualify the referendum for the ballot.

Knecht said he disagreed with the court's assessment that the repeal would unbalance the state budget. He said the Legislature will pass a budget late next spring that can account for the estimated \$60 million that the state wouldn't collect next summer.

"With all due respect, we believe the Nevada Supreme Court's decision reflects a misunderstanding of the facts about the effect of a commerce tax repeal," he said in a statement. "We are evaluating our options for clarifying these matters, resolving the court case and getting the required signatures."

Defenders of the tax said they were pleased with the decision.

"We've argued all along that the RIP Commerce Tax petition would have grave and lasting consequences to the State of Nevada," said Matt Griffin, an attorney for the Coalition for Nevada's Future, a group funded by casinos and other business groups. "Nevada's parents and school children can celebrate today's decision."

The commerce tax, which applies to businesses that make more than \$4 million each year in Nevada revenue, passed last year as a way to pay for new education initiatives. Opponents said it was a betrayal after voters in 2014 overwhelmingly rejected a margins tax on businesses.

Supporters of the commerce tax were trying to stop the measure before it qualifies for the ballot because it would have consequences whether or not voters pass it. If voters approved the referendum, the tax would be abolished. But if they

rejected it, the tax would be frozen in statute until another statewide vote on it.

Commerce tax proponents said that prevents the Legislature from fixing flaws and adjusting rates. Commerce tax foes contend that's a good thing and would prevent lawmakers from expanding the tax to smaller businesses.

Nevada revamps its welcome signs

By Cy Ryan, Las Vegas Sun

CARSON CITY — Nevada's welcome signs that have greeted highway motorists at state-border entry points for about two decades are set for a makeover.

State officials have selected four sign designs by Nevada high school students to be finalists for consideration.

None of the finalist designs features symbols of the gaming industry, the backbone of Nevada's economy.

Read the whole story

Nevada renewing efforts to

attract Chinese tourists

By Associated Press

Nevada is renewing its efforts to attract Chinese tourists after shutting down a Beijing tourism office it operated for a decade.

The state Board of Examiners approved a \$396,000, two-year contract on Tuesday with East West Marketing Corp. The company has offices in China and Los Angeles and will develop and maintain a Nevada tourism website in Chinese, handle social media and bring Chinese journalists to tour Nevada.

Nevada had a tourism office in China since 2004, but the board voted last year to close it down and pay out severance costs to three employees there.

State tourism director Claudia Vecchio said at the time that Chinese and Nevadan officials had differences of opinion and wanted to restructure to reflect an evolving Chinese tourism landscape.

Health issues require more LTUSD nurses



The need for school nurses is growing in LTUSD. Photo/Provided

By Kathryn Reed

Twenty-four students with seizures, nine with Type 1 diabetes, two with Type 2, 112 with asthma, 21 with cardiac conditions, 136 with food allergies and of those 45 require epi-pens. Those are some of the issues nurses in Lake Tahoe Unified School District are dealing with on a daily basis.

They handle feeding tubes, catheterization, suctioning, oxygen, AED, nebulizer, diastat (rectal valium), and blood glucose-insulin.

On a recent school day in a matter of an hour a nurse was dealing with a growth on a student's leg that a teacher had noticed (turned out to be benign) and a teacher having a heart attack (that person is fine, had a stent put in).

Just putting a Band-Aid on a scrape would likely be a welcome distraction from the more serious medical conditions.

Margaret McKean, head nurse with the district, on Tuesday told the school board how her staff is seeing an increase in chronic illnesses, as well as social and emotional conditions.

It's impacting what is going on in the classroom.

"It's harder for the teachers to do their jobs," McKean said. That is why the nurses are brought into the fold to help with overall needs assessments for students.

The nursing staff has slowly been increasing to handle the rise in health issues.

The board on May 10 agreed to hire the equivalent of 1.24 full time nurses. This will bring the staff to five. Working with McKean now are Karen Tucker, Jen Drennan and Morgan Kiskinen. They are dispersed throughout the district, though not every school has a nurse on site each day.

To be a school nurse requires having a bachelor's of science in nursing, being a registered nurse and having a school health credential.

Not every child has access to health care outside of what is provided by the school district.

"We are the front line," McKean told *Lake Tahoe News*. "Parents say go see the school nurse."

This is her 34th year in the district, with next year possibly being her last. McKean is at the high school where she says the stress level is higher, but it pays off just being able to help students.

As for why there has been an increase in health issues, McKean said, "It used to be the fetus was the only pure environment. Now there are so many chemicals that it is affecting the auto-immune system."

Better diagnosis also ups the numbers.

There are also the routine issues the nurses have to deal with, like checking on immunizations. Seventh grade is a critical year to ensure everyone is up-to-date. Only 38 percent of the sixth-graders are immunized, so the nurses have a lot of work to do before now and the start of next school

year in August.

Nurses also administer hearing and vision screenings. This year 1,353 students had hearing tests, with 15 students not passing. Of the 1,450 eye tests, 335 kids were referred for follow-up checks.

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In other board action:

- South Tahoe High School students Annika Johnson and Sydney Morris were recognized for their winning photographs in the California Streaming Photo contest.
- The board authorized hiring personnel to handle the growing two-way immersion program throughout the district. It will be expanding to STHS in the fall.

Study: 1 in 3 antibiotics prescribed in U.S. unnecessary

By Lena H. Sun, Washington Post

Nearly a third of antibiotics prescribed in doctors' offices, emergency rooms and hospital-based clinics in the United States are not needed, according to the most in-depth study yet to examine the use and misuse of these life-saving drugs.

The finding, which has implications for antibiotics' diminished efficacy, translates to about 47 million unnecessary prescriptions given out each year across the

country to children and adults.

Most of these are for conditions that don't respond to antibiotics, such as colds, sore throats, bronchitis, flu and other viral illnesses.

Read the whole story

Database highlights Nev.'s connection to Panama Papers

By Daniel Rothberg, Las Vegas Sun

One Nevada company was mentioned in a federal indictment of FIFA officials. At least 10 Nevada-registered firms were owned by one of Thailand's wealthiest families, and dozens more have ties to a corruption probe in Brazil, a *USA Today* analysis revealed last month.

They represent a sliver of the more than 1,000 companies created by M.F. Corporate Services, a Nevada entity that forms companies here and is linked to the Panamanian firm at the center of the largest data leak in history. That firm, Mossack Fonseca, reemerged in the news Monday when a group of investigative journalists with access to the documents, dubbed the Panama Papers, published a database of 200,000 offshore entities.

The database published on Monday showed 1,260 entities active in Nevada from the Panama Papers and a previous leak, though only a portion of those companies remain active.

Read the whole story

Study: No scientific basis for laws on marijuana and driving

By Joan Lowy, AP

Six states, including Nevada, that allow marijuana use legal tests to determine driving while impaired by the drug that have no scientific basis, according to a study by the nation's largest automobile club that calls for scrapping those laws.

The study commissioned by AAA's safety foundation said it's not possible to set a blood-test threshold for THC, the chemical in marijuana that makes people high, that can reliably determine impairment. Yet the laws in five of the six states automatically presume a driver guilty if that person tests higher than the limit, and not guilty if it's lower.

As a result, drivers who are unsafe may be going free while others may be wrongly convicted, the foundation said.

The foundation recommends replacing the laws with ones that rely on specially trained police officers to determine if a driver is impaired, backed up by a test for the presence of THC rather than a specific threshold. The officers are supposed to screen for dozens of indicators of drug use, from pupil dilation and tongue color to behavior.

The foundation's recommendation to scrap the laws in Colorado, Montana, Nevada, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Washington comes as legislatures in several more states consider adopting similar laws.

At least three states, and possibly as many as eleven, will vote this fall on ballot measures to legalize marijuana for either recreational or medicinal use, or both. Several legislatures are also considering legalization bills.

“There is understandably a strong desire by both lawmakers and the public to create legal limits for marijuana impairment in the same manner we do alcohol,” said Marshall Doney, AAA’s president and CEO. “In the case of marijuana, this approach is flawed and not supported by scientific research.”

Determining whether someone is impaired by marijuana, as opposed to having simply used the drug at some time, is far more complex than the simple and reliable tests that have been developed for alcohol impairment.

There’s no science that shows drivers become impaired at a specific level of THC in the blood. A lot depends upon the individual. Drivers with relatively high levels of THC in their systems might not be impaired, especially if they are regular users, while others with relatively low levels may be unsafe behind the wheel.

Some drivers may be impaired when they are stopped by police, but by the time their blood is tested they have fallen below the legal threshold because active THC dissipates rapidly. The average time to collect blood from a suspected driver is often more than two hours because taking a blood sample typically requires a warrant and transport to a police station or hospital, the foundation said.

In addition, frequent users of the drug can exhibit persistent levels of the drug long after use, while THC levels can decline more rapidly among occasional users. Nine states, including some that have legalized marijuana for medicinal use, have zero-tolerance laws for driving and marijuana that make not only the presence of THC in a driver’s blood illegal, but also the presence of its metabolites, which can linger for

weeks after use.

That makes no sense, said Mark A. R. Kleiman, a New York University professor specializing in issues involving drugs and criminal policy. "A law against driving with THC in your bloodstream is not a law you can know you are obeying except by never smoking marijuana or never driving," he said.

He said rather than switching to a new kind of law as AAA recommends, states should consider simply making it a traffic violation.

Studies show that using marijuana and driving roughly doubles the risk of a crash, Kleiman said. By comparison, talking on a hands-free cellphone while driving – legal in all states – quadruples crash risk, he said. A blood alcohol content of .12, which is about the median amount in drunken driving cases, increases crash risk by about 15 times, he said.

Driving with "a noisy child in the back of the car" is about as dangerous as using marijuana and driving, Kleiman said.

The exception is when a driver has both been using marijuana and drinking alcohol because the two substances together greatly heighten impairment, he said.

The foundation also released a second study that found the share of drivers in fatal crashes who had recently used marijuana doubled in Washington after the state legalized it for recreational use in December 2012. From 2013 to 2014, the share of drivers who had recently used marijuana rose from 8 percent to 17 percent.

While it stopped short of blaming the crashes on that increase, AAA traffic safety director Jake Nelson said traffic fatalities went up 6 percent in Washington during that same while the fatalities nationally declined.