

Groups try to build support for Nev.'s school choice program

By Ian Whitaker, Las Vegas Sun

As lawyers duke it out over the constitutionality of Nevada's landmark education savings account program and state officials iron out much-needed regulations, a major question facing ESAs has been who will do the work of building the robust public support the program needs to be successful in the long term.

The answer is a group of dedicated school choice advocates, who have quietly been putting a lot of hours into building a movement around the voucher-style program.

In Las Vegas, a grass-roots effort is being spearheaded by Coco Llenas, a longtime resident with a history of working for nonprofit organizations like the Public Education Foundation.

She is the founder of the newly formed Nevada School Choice Partnership, whose goal is to raise awareness and build support for the program in low-income neighborhoods that need it most.

Read the whole story

TTD considering operating

BlueGo in house

By Kathryn Reed

INCLINE VILLAGE – The Tahoe Transportation District board might take over BlueGo, the South Shore bus service, instead of relying on a third party.

When George Fink with TTD last week told the board going this route would give “the board more control”, board member Nancy McDermid, replied, “Been there, done that.” She represents Douglas County.

Adam Spear, attorney for the district, said the board is already liable today, but he would look into the nuances to see if there would be more exposure with direct operation of the system.

The last time this happened the system declared bankruptcy, board members were personally drawn into the ensuing litigation, as were the agencies they represented, and hundreds of thousands of dollars were spent on attorneys. The TTD board members were also the now defunct **South Tahoe Area Transit Authority** board, which is the entity that declared bankruptcy and was drawn into court by MV Transit, which operated the bus system.

TTD’s five-year contract with Keolis ends June 30, 2016. This firm has been responsible for operating BlueGo, including handling all labor and maintenance issues. TTD staff believes it could get more for its money by having operations and maintenance done in house.

“So much of the fleet is down. It’s been a challenge in the last year,” TTD Executive Director Carl Hasty told the board. “Accident rates tend to be more than they have been in the past.”

Fink said contractors often have short-term views on maintenance, which can shorten the lifespan of vehicles.

"It comes down to, do we want to take on employees," Fink said.

TTD is interviewing firms that handle human resource issues. That is the one area TTD is deficient in.

Will Garner, who represents Placer County on the TTD board and runs the TART bus service on the North Shore, cautioned how much time is spent on HR issues. And he added that with a bus service it is seven days a week, nearly around the clock.

Andrew Strain, Heavenly Mountain Resort's rep on the board, is concerned about how things deteriorated in five years to the point to want to abandon the current type of operation and said it's not good if staff is worried where money is going.

The staff report from the Nov. 13 meeting says, "Another problem is the difficulty in determining how funding is being spent or focused in the contract. The contractor's compensation is normally a fixed fee. There is a limited ability to track contractor spending on maintenance, training, and employee performance. That makes it difficult to assess what value the contractor is actually providing for the money it is receiving."

No actual numbers were provided in the report or by staff at the meeting in regards to where money might be spent differently if TTD took over operations. The current TTD transit budget is \$5,465,200.

"As we prepare for action it would be good to see a solid financial plan," Strain said. "We want to make sure we go in with our eyes wide open. We need to have information before we make a decision."

It was agreed staff will put together a workshop in December

where third parties not involved in the outcome would give input. It will be on the South Shore so people who actually use the transit system would have an easier time to voice their opinion compared to last week's meeting that was in Incline Village.

Small fire in LTCC's theater

The show will still go on despite a fire in Lake Tahoe Community College's theater.

A spotlight on the catwalk caught fire Tuesday night.

"The only thing damaged is the spotlight. Everybody is safe," LTCC President Kindred Murillo told *Lake Tahoe News*. "We are working to get everything fixed up again."

LTCC is in the middle of seven performances of "**Death of a Salesman**". There was no performance scheduled for Nov. 17.

Murillo said the college has been going through a series of safety drills. Those procedures were tested and worked on Tuesday.

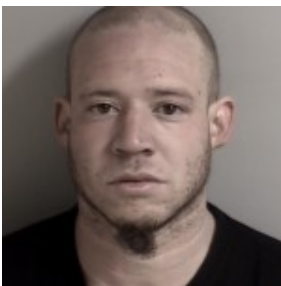
– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Felon back behind bars in

South Lake Tahoe

A Bay Area man was arrested Friday by South Lake Tahoe police officers on robbery and 10 other charges.

When apprehended, Adam Sanford, 32, of Hayward had a loaded 9mm handgun in his waistband and two nearly foot-long knives in his possession, according to officers. Officers said the gun had been stolen from Pollock Pines a month ago.



Adam Sanford

Officers started looking for Sanford after two South Lake Tahoe men called about 7:10pm Nov. 13 to say they had been robbed by a man brandishing a gun and long-bladed knife. They were near the CVS in the Bijou Center. Then there was a report about the same time of the suspect firing at least one round after robbing two other Tahoe basin residents at the rear of the Tahoe Beach Retreat Hotel.

Officers nabbed Sanford after they saw him walk across Highway 50 to the Safeway parking lot.

Sanford is an ex-felon on probation from Sacramento County for burglary.

He was booked into the El Dorado County Jail with no bail after being charged with 11 crimes including robbery, possession of stolen property, exhibiting a firearm and carrying a concealed dagger. Sanford also had three outstanding arrest warrants from Placer County for theft,

resisting police and failure to appear in court.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Burning Man skydiver killed in Paris attacks

By Jenny Kane, Reno Gazette-Journal

The Burning Man community lost one of its own in the Paris attacks on Friday.

Pierro Jacare Innocenti, 40, of Paris, was killed when gunmen stormed the sold-out Eagles of Death Metal show that Innocenti was attending at the Bataclan Concert Hall. Innocenti posted a photo on his Facebook page of the concert billboard with the comment “Rock!” at 8:45pm, less than an hour before three gunmen gunned down 89 people at the venue.

During the weekend, Burners remembered Innocenti by posting photos on social media of Innocenti along with photos of notes to Innocenti left at candlelit memorials in Paris. Some of the notes reading “Pour toi Pierro” had the Burning Man insignia, a stick figure-like interpretation of the Burning Man, and some read “dusty hugs” and “In Dust We Trust.”

Read the whole story

Next librarian of Congress could remake copyright law

By Thomas Lee, San Francisco Chronicle

Say the word “librarian” to anyone born before 1980 and they’ll conjure up images of card catalogs, dimly lit study rooms and Encyclopedia Britannicas. Hardly the stuff of the 21st century.

In fact, thanks to the Internet, plenty of millennials have probably never set foot in a library or spoken to someone who works for one.

Yet the person who holds enormous power over both Silicon Valley and Hollywood happens to be a librarian. The Librarian of Congress may be an obscure office, but the person in the job not only oversees the U.S. Copyright Office but also decides what content – music, software, film, etc. – deserves copyright protection.

The position is currently vacant. James Billington, who served as Librarian of Congress for nearly three decades, said in June that he will retire in January, and President Obama has yet to name a permanent replacement. The vacancy has created enormous opportunity for firms ranging from YouTube and Hulu to Netflix and Amazon to not only influence Obama’s eventual choice but also to push through much-needed reforms to the outdated Digital Millennium Copyright Act.

Read the whole story

Sandoval asks Obama to review refugee eligibility

By Marcella Corona, Reno Gazette-Journal

Gov. Brian Sandoval joined with other political leaders on Monday who say admitting Syrian refugees into the United States could pose a risk to citizens.

Sandoval said he was concerned first and foremost with Nevada's security following a recent attack on Paris that killed at least 132 people and injured hundreds more on Friday.

"...It is in the interest of all Nevadans and the millions who travel to our state annually to insist on extensive evaluations of any potential risk individuals may pose to Nevada or our national security," Sandoval said in a statement on Monday.

[Read the whole story](#)

UNR professor converting weed to biofuel



Glenn Miller and Bishnu Neupane hold the final biofuel product based on the gumweed plant. Photo/Whip Villarreal

By Mike Wolterbeek

A UNR professor is leading the effort to convert roadside gumweed into biofuel, which could help contribute to fuel supplies for the military.

“The plant *grindelia squarosa*, known as curly top gumweed, has extractable hydrocarbons with the potential use as a biodiesel or biomaterials crop,” Glenn Miller, a professor in the college of agriculture, biotechnology and natural resources, said. “Gumweed is native in Nevada and grows on the side of freeways and, more importantly, is an arid land crop that requires less water than other substitutes like alfalfa. Alfalfa takes 5 feet of water to grow, while gumweed uses no more than a foot of water.”

Gumweed was planted at the university’s Valley Road Field Laboratory and the Main Station Field Laboratory using minimal water and fertilizer resources. After growing and harvesting the gumweed, it went through biomass processing where it was broken down to liquid that smells like tar.

“We are looking at breaking it down because it uses less water and it’s already acclimated to Nevada conditions,” Miller

said. "It would be beneficial generating this arid-land crop because it doesn't compete with food or animal feed. The primary resource for diesel fuel is soy beans and ethanol for corn which are always in direct competition with food."

The final biofuel product from the chemical engineering process can produce up to 122 gallons per acre on a biennial basis on the semi-arid lands of Nevada. The crops would require minimum inputs of nutrients and water and have the potential to be converted into jet fuel, which has garnered the interest from the military – the largest fuel consumer in the United States.

Miller said the U.S. Navy is interested in using the biofuel as jet fuel. The project received \$500,000 in grant funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and has the potential to supply up to 20 percent of fuel demand for the military.

"It is estimated that if even 10 percent of sagebrush-covered lands in Nevada are used to grow gumweed for aviation biofuels, 400 to 600 million gallons per year of jet biofuels could be produced," Hongfei Lin, a collaborator from the college of engineering, said. "That's definitely incredible. There's lots of potential."

Lin, a professor of chemical and materials engineering is working on the project with Miller to identify a catalyst that can be used to convert biomass into fuel using an unconventional approach to biofuel production. Instead of adding hydrogen to biomass, Lin is exploring a more cost-effective manner using an oxidation process.

In nature, Oxidation occurs when substances come in contact with oxygen molecules. For example, oxidation occurs when a freshly cut apple turns brown, a bicycle fender becomes rusty or a copper penny turns green. Lin is trying to mimic the natural process for biomass deconstruction when converting the gumweed into biomatter for jet fuel.

Lin will be speaking at the American Institute of Chemical Engineers annual meeting in Salt Lake City where the group's project is being presented. AIChE is the world's leading organization for chemical engineering professionals which promotes excellence and advancement in the practice.

Mike Wolterbeek works for UNR.

Use of pot extract a concern on South Shore

By Kathryn Reed

It's not enough to just get high on pot. The latest trend on the South Shore is dabbing.

This is using the byproduct extracted from the marijuana plant. It is concentrated cannabis so it gives the user a stronger high. The end product is called wax because that is what the substance looks like. It's also described as sap-like.

It's in the schools and it's what adults are doing.

"The majority is high school kids using these things. It can be smoked or made into edibles," Douglas County sheriff's Sgt. Pat Brooks, told *Lake Tahoe News*. He said it's an issue with Whittell and Douglas high school students.

Whittell Principal Crespin Esquivel said it's not an issue on campus or something that is being talked about among students that staff is overhearing.

"They know I do K-9 sniffs randomly," Esquivel said. One was

done in the last few weeks and no drugs were found on the Zephyr Cove campus. "I hope they are smart enough not to bring any of the crap to campus."

Chad Houck, principal at South Tahoe High School, said the use of wax is not an issue during the school day.

"The way they consume their marijuana is not something we always end up seeing or hearing about," Houck told *Lake Tahoe News*.



A South Shore apartment is damaged from a butane drug explosion.

Photo/Provided

Twenty years ago the normal THC concentration of marijuana was between 3 and 8 percent. Today the pot bought at a collective is 15 to 20 percent concentration. Wax can range from 35 to 90 percent. That is one aspect that concerns law enforcement – the stronger potency.

People don't always know what they are getting because a joint could be laced with wax. And what kids are smoking today isn't what their parents were smoking, so the high is greater with

less actual weed needing to be used. The problem is people aren't reducing their consumption.

Wax can be smoked by itself or mixed with the plant, vaporized or converted to an edible.

The drug task force on the South Shore is more focused on adult users and sellers. Those investigators keep finding people making and using wax.

"It's a growing concern within the community," Russell Liles, detective with South Lake El Dorado Narcotics Task Force, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

He said marijuana use as a whole is getting worse locally.

"I've been told by multiple students that it is easier to obtain marijuana than it is to obtain alcohol in our community," Liles said. "I think that is a reflection of the amount of marijuana grows in the basin here."

It's legal in South Lake Tahoe to grow marijuana indoors with a permit for medical reasons.

"The other issue is the majority of marijuana grows we eradicate. They are capable of producing multiple pounds of processed marijuana bud in a year's time. We're talking 20-plus pounds," Liles said. "I don't believe any one person needs 20 plus pounds of dried processed marijuana buds for their ailments."



This marijuana grow on the
South Shore was supposedly
for one person.
Photo/Provided

The growers tend to be men between the ages of 25 and 35. Liles characterizes them as unemployed and outdoorsy.

When it comes to wax the extraction process through butane is another potential problem because it could explode.

Butane is forced through the plant material. The THC – the active ingredient in marijuana – then grabs the butane. The butane evaporates off and the wax is left.

“Within the last couple years we have seen more of the butane honey oil labs whenever we eradicate marijuana grows,” Liles said.

Butane weighs more than air. It will float around a room until it evaporates. But if it finds an ignition source first – kaboom! The explosion then causes a fire, of which there have been a few here in the last couple years.

“We’re definitely fighting an uphill battle,” Liles said.

Marriott to become worlds largest hotel company

By Craig Karmin and Ezequiel Minaya, Wall Street Journal

Marriott International Inc. said Monday that it has agreed to acquire Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide Inc. in a deal worth \$12.2 billion that will create the world’s largest hotel

company with more than a million rooms globally.

Under the terms, Marriott will forward 0.92 share along with \$2 in cash for each Starwood share, for a total of \$11.9 billion in stock and \$340 million in cash. The transaction has a value of \$72.08 a Starwood share.

The merger creates a portfolio with more than 5,500 hotels with 1.1 million rooms world-wide, the companies said in a news release.

Marriott owns two properties in South Lake Tahoe.

Read the whole story