

Police shooting protests help highlight plight of mentally ill in jails

By Mike Blasky, San Jose Mercury News

When Michael James Tyree was killed in a San Jose jail cell, his lifeless body found Aug. 27 battered and bruised after an encounter with correctional officers, there were no Twitter hashtags, no spontaneous street protests, no national news vans parked on the curb.

The rise of powerful civil rights movements such as Black Lives Matter – and the deaths of Michael Brown, Freddie Gray and Eric Garner, all of whom were black – have steered the national narrative around police force toward the systemic abuse of minority communities.

But the swift and shocking arrests of three Santa Clara County jail guards on suspicion of murder in the death of Tyree, who was white, signals that the heightened focus on police brutality will also raise awareness on a growing crisis confronting another often-ignored part of society – the mentally ill in our country's jails and prisons.

[Read the whole story](#)

California's share of Indian

gambling money dwindles

By Jim Miller, Sacramento Bee

Former Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, beginning with the recall campaign and on through his two terms in office, repeatedly linked the state's tribal casino business to state finances.

"We want to have the Indian gaming tribes pay their fair share to the state," Schwarzenegger said during a 2004 news conference, "and it looks like we are on that road."

Today, tribal money is moving in a different direction. A key court decision, a switch in governors and changing casino economics mean that tribal payments to the state's general fund – which totaled \$241 million last year – are beginning to shift elsewhere.

Gov. Jerry Brown and the United Auburn Indian Community, which runs one of the country's most profitable casinos, last month announced an overhaul of the tribe's 2004 agreement with the state. It reduces by nearly two-thirds what the tribe pays into the general fund and directs much of the money to local projects and poor tribes. Lawmakers ratified the agreement last week without a dissenting vote.

Read the whole story

Treasury-backed nonprofit has

millions for distressed Nev. homeowners

By John Kelly, Las Vegas Review-Journal

In Nevada, distressed homeowners don't need to win big at the casino to score as much as \$100,000 in order to keep their homes. They simply need a device with Internet access and a link to the U.S. Treasury's Nevada Hardest Hit Fund, which wants to be the surest bet moving forward for the estimated 25 percent of state homeowners still under or treading water.

Officials with the nonprofit organization have simplified the process, making it entirely online while also promising to work with those without access to a computer. They believe this change will remove some of the snags that applicants experienced early on. Homeowners can click and fill out an easy assessment survey to get started.

The fund has 70 participating loan-servicing organizations eager to approve this assistance, said Tony Cammiso, marketing manager for Nevada Affordable Housing Assistance Corp. Best of all, no repayment is necessary provided the homeowner stays in the home for five years, with the main goal of the program being to keep Nevadans in their homes. That translates into free, and now more than ever, free is good.

Read the whole story

Sandoval makes last-ditch

appeal to BLM over sage grouse

By Michelle Rindels, AP

Nevada Gov. Brian Sandoval made a last-ditch appeal to the federal Bureau of Land Management to accept Nevada's recommendations for protecting the greater sage grouse.

Sandoval sent an eight-page letter Friday to BLM Director Neil Kornze, urging him to reconsider Nevada's strategies for preserving the bird's habitat. The BLM rejected some of Nevada's suggestions earlier this summer, saying federal and state plans were in conflict and opting to pursue the federal strategy.

The governor said it would be "inappropriate" for the BLM to proceed with the federal plan and scrap a state strategy that "provides for increased conservation for greater sage grouse, complies with federal law and policies, and is supported by a vast majority of Nevadans."

Sandoval made detailed arguments that the state plan is more solidly based in science and would better protect the bird. It would also avoid the wholesale closure of certain public lands to development.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service faces must decide by Sept. 30 about listing the chicken-sized bird as an endangered species in Nevada and in rangeland from California to the Dakotas. The BLM and Nevada hope to come up with a workable plan together that will help conserve the bird's habitat and will eliminate the need for an endangered species listing, which would involve layers of additional restrictions on land.

The decision carries big implications for oil and gas drilling, livestock grazing and a host of other uses of

federal lands throughout the region.

The BLM is expected to publicly respond to Sandoval's appeal in coming weeks.

Sandoval met with President Obama last week in Las Vegas to make Nevada's case for keeping the sage grouse off the endangered species list.

Drought hits Nevada agriculture hard

By Jeff DeLong, Reno Gazette-Journal

With practiced labor, Tom Moura spills life across the land.

Moura opens wooden gates to flood irrigation water across his still-healthy alfalfa crops. He knows he's fortunate. During this fourth year of drought, many of Moura's neighbors in the Lovelock area – arguably the bulls-eye for drought in Nevada – have no water for crops at all.

"They haven't cut at all. They haven't even got their machinery out of the shed," said Moura, 69 and a third-generation farmer and cattle rancher.

"I've never seen it like this before. This is extreme," Moura said. "This drought is probably more far-reaching than any other drought I have ever seen or I have ever been told of."

Across Nevada, agriculture struggles. Weeds take hold on fallowed fields. Ranchers sell off cattle their land can no longer support. Crop insurance that has carried growers through the drought thus far is drying up, no longer available

for many should the drought continue even longer.

Read the whole story

Fresno area wildfire to spew smoke through weekend

By Scott Smith, AP

FRESNO — A vast and stubborn wildfire that has proven California's biggest this year was expected to spew smoke through the long Labor Day weekend, leaving some campgrounds empty and prompting health warnings.

This Rough Fire is the one that has sporadically brought smoke into the Lake Tahoe Basin.

The fire burning east of Fresno grew overnight to 85,894 acres. It was 31 percent contained as of Sunday morning.

The blaze is just one factor that has challenged people planning outdoor activities in recent weeks, officials said.

An infestation of bugs swarmed high-desert communities on the eastern slopes of the Sierra Nevada. In addition, an 18-day manhunt along the famed Pacific Crest Trail ended with the suspect's death.

The fire that began July 31 during a lightning strike has closed roads and about 10 campgrounds around Hume Lake and Kings Canyon.

U.S. Forest Service spokeswoman Denise Alonzo urged holiday campers to head to the mountains far south of the fire, where

they can expect cleaner air and better views of nature, including some of the range's 100 groves of Giant Sequoia trees, some of the Earth's largest and oldest living things.

"We're concerned about people trying to stay in their tents and outdoors with so much smoke in the air," Alonzo said. "It's not healthy."

Smoke from the fire prompted the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District to issue a health warning to people headed to the mountains and foothills of Tulare and Fresno counties.

The district says children and the elderly are especially vulnerable. Residents on the valley floor from Merced and south to Kern County may also notice smoke into next week.

Half a dozen wildfires were burning throughout California, a relatively small number compared to the past two hot months that kept firefighters running, said Daniel Berlant, a spokesman for the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

Despite the welcomed lull caused by cooler temperatures, he said fire season is entering its peak time.

Vegetation remains dry from the hot summer, and the winds pick up in the transition to fall, fanning the smallest spark.

"Conditions are still just as dry as July and August," he said. "One less spark this Labor Day weekend means one less wildfire."

Partying tourists confronted with reality that South Lake Tahoe wants quiet neighborhoods



South Tahoe code enforcement officer Danny Loyola confirms details with dispatch. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

It's about 12:30am Saturday and a distinct conversation can be heard coming from the back yard of the next street. It's a group of about 10 who are up from the Bay Area partying. They are here for this long weekend.

They are going home with a \$270 citation for excessive noise at a vacation home rental.

They claim they had no idea they needed to keep things down starting at 10pm. Danny Loyola, enforcement code officer for

South Lake Tahoe, informs them excessive noise anytime of day won't be tolerated.

In this case, a neighbor backing the Dedi Street rental called the police about the noise.

Loyola, who works Thursday-Sunday from 4pm-2am, is the man responsible for keeping the peace between loud out-of-towners and locals.

The woman who called about this house on Sept. 5 said she was woken up from a deep sleep. She tried conversing with the visitors over the fence. They reportedly told her they would keep it down. They didn't. They were "obnoxious" according to the caller, so she called SLTPD.

Loyola drove around the neighborhood to gauge the sounds from various vantage points. The vacationers were loud. It wasn't just muffled sounds.

No sign was on the house designating it as a vacation home rental (VHR), which is mandated on the permit. Loyola makes a note of this.

For every encounter he has on a shift Loyola fills out a disturbance advisement card. It gets placed in the permittee's file so there is a record of how many times enforcers are called to a particular house and for what reason. Noise is the primary reason the enforcers are called out at night. Garbage and parking are bigger issues for the day shift enforcers.

At each call Loyola asks to speak with the person who rented the house. In this case it was an intoxicated woman. She's coherent to a point. She understands they were loud and that this is a bad thing. However, she seems confused as to why she is getting the citation. Loyola is patient with her. Her two male friends try to explain it.

Loyola had called for backup from a sworn officer. It just

felt better. He goes into these situations not knowing who will be on the other side of the door. Most times he confronts people who have been drinking. His radio, flashlight and pepper spray are his “weapons” if things were to go sideways. That’s why when it’s possible, an officer with more firepower is by his side. More important, it’s just another body.

South Lake Tahoe is taking a more proactive approach to enforcing the rules about vacation home rentals. This includes having people dedicated to patrolling the streets during the likely days and hours when guests are more prone to misbehaving.

On this particular Friday-Saturday shift, Loyola receives just two calls. The other is on San Jose Avenue. From the street the voices are much more subdued compared to the other house. They are from Ohio and say they have no idea about the rule concerning noise.

Everyone seems to be out of the hot tub by the time Loyola leaves. He issues them a warning and says he hopes not to see them for the rest of the weekend. They agree.

Loyola has been much busier on previous weekends compared to this last long weekend of summer. When he’s not on a VHR call he is doing code enforcement of a different kind. This includes finding abandoned vehicles, cars parked on city streets without current registration and other infractions, as well as making sure all is well at the city parking garage at Heavenly Village. He also is another pair of eyes for law enforcement for anything suspicious that might be going on that falls outside of his scope of work.

Pastor believes Tahoe church vandalism based on Satanism



Washoe County inmates clean the graffiti off the church.
Photo/Provided

By Scott Sonner, AP

The minister of one of several churches hit by a string of vandalism on the North Shore of Lake Tahoe says they appear to be satanic attacks by an individual who is “very angry with Jesus.”

“I’ve seen nothing that would give a hint it was socially or politically motivated,” said the Rev. Jeffrey Ogden, Presbyterian pastor at Village Church in Incline Village.

“Everything that has been posted, the satanic symbols on the front doors of all the churches – it was satanic,” he told the Associated Press on Friday. “It was anti-Christian, anti-Jesus – more theologically motivated. This is a Satanist who is opposed to Jesus.”

The FBI is offering a reward for information leading to the arrest and prosecution of anyone responsible for the incidents, which began with graffiti at five Tahoe-area churches in April on Easter Sunday and continued in August.

The FBI has declined formal comment on the investigation, but Ogden said agents have told him they are “looking at this as a potential hate crime.”

Last weekend, someone tried to saw down a wooden across in front of Ogden’s church. They returned Tuesday night or early Wednesday and tried unsuccessfully again to bring the cross down at the Village Church, he said.

“This person seems to be very angry with Jesus, and the church,” Ogden said.

Some of the graffiti included, “Jesus has already lost,” and “Jesus won’t save your souls,” he said.

“So far from everything I’ve heard, it appears to be an individual,” Ogden said. “It does not appear to be rationale to me. Obviously the person seems to have a lot of anger inside them.”

fSt. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church also was hit a second time late last Saturday night. The considerable damage there included broken windows and equipment, Washoe County sheriff’s Lt. Jeff Clark said.

St. Patrick’s Episcopal Church also was vandalized again on Aug. 7, when someone painted graffiti on the building and a car parked on church property.

Ogden said it’s clear the vandal is not targeting a specific denomination.

“One church that was hit was one of the more liberal in the community. The Catholic church and ours – we are more conservative in our theology. They are not making distinctions based on our social or political views,” he said.

Several members of the churches attended a prayer gathering Monday night at Cornerstone Community Church to show support for each other.

“It has been a blessing to be able to gather together as people, not focused on traditions or theologies, but coming together to say we support one another as community members,” Ogden said.

“It doesn’t mean that as Christians we don’t have some differences – some pretty profound differences on some things. But when something like this happens, those are not as important. Love is more important, truth is more important, standing together is more important.”

Amid drought, thousands in Calif. cancel flood insurance

By Phillip Reese, Sacramento Bee

State and local officials have preached for months that California’s historic drought could be “the new normal,” the precursor to more frequent years-long episodes of hotter temperatures, less rainfall and lower Sierra snowpack.

Californians across the state have responded en masse to the call for lifestyle changes, curtailing water use, particularly when it comes to watering their lawns.

And some have responded in a manner more concerning to government officials: They canceled their flood insurance.

The number of federal flood insurance policies active in California has fallen by 30,000, or 12 percent, since the drought began in 2012, according to data from the National Flood Insurance Program.

Read the whole story

1 person hurt after fire engulfs Zephyr Cove cabin



A Zephyr Cove cabin is uninhabitable after fire gutted it Sept. 4.
Photo/Ross Rittiman

By Kathryn Reed

A cabin along the Old Lincoln Highway in Zephyr Cove was totally destroyed by fire Friday night.

One occupant, who was visiting from out of town, was taken to Barton Memorial Hospital with minor burns from having tried to extinguish the blaze. That person has since been discharged.

The cause of the 11pm Sept. 4 blaze is under investigation. However, Tahoe Douglas Fire Marshal Eric Guevin said people had started a fire in the fireplace, were taking their

suitcases to a room and then noticed a glow coming from the other room.

They called for help right away, but the older structure burned rapidly.

“Someone opened the door and it fed a lot of air,” Guevin told *Lake Tahoe News*.

“We want people to get out of the home and stay safe. They attempted to put the fire out with a garden hose and other pots and pans of water. It grew too quickly.”

Guevin said he encourages people to have a fire extinguisher nearby – and for people to know how to use it. Firefighters checked on the smoke detectors in the neighboring cabin, found they were not working and replaced them.

There is another cabin on the property that was not damaged that the group will be able to use for the weekend.