

LTUSD urging students to be vaccinated

By Margaret McKean

According to the California Department of Public Health, there are 99 cases of confirmed measles cases in California.

Measles is a highly infectious, airborne disease that typically begins with fever, cough, runny nose and red eyes, and within a few days a red rash appears, usually first on the face and then spreading downward to the rest of the body.

The measles virus can live for up to two hours on a surface or in an airspace where the infected person coughed or sneezed. If other people breathe the contaminated air or touch the infected surface, then touch their eyes, noses, or mouths, they can become infected. Measles is so contagious that if one person has it, 90 percent of the people close to that person who are not immune will also become infected. Infected people can spread measles to others from four days before to four days after the rash appears.

About three out of 10 people who get measles will develop one or more complications including pneumonia, ear infections, or diarrhea. Complications are more common in adults and young children.

If your child has not been vaccinated for the measles and is eligible for vaccination, it is urgent that you contact your healthcare provider and have your son or daughter vaccinated. It takes two weeks to build up immunity to the vaccine. So those who receive an MMR now would be immune if a case of measles occurred two weeks or more from now.

You may also call the health department if you have questions – 530.573.3155.

For the safety of your child and students and staff who are unable to be vaccinated due to leukemia, cancer, immune disorders and pregnant women we urge you to get your child immunized against measles.

Contacts to a “confirmed” case, who do not have immunity against the measles, would be excluded for 21 days after exposure.

Lake Tahoe Unified School District waivers as of Feb. 5:

School	Students	Waiver %	No Immunizations	Partial Imm	MMR	Tdap
Bijou	574	5	16	12	24	
LTESM	398	16	32	30	58	
SH	497	6	19	11	23	
TV	503	7	31	6	33	
STMS	814	9	30	42	43	48
STHS	1025	9	36	53	38	69
Mt Tallac	86		2	2	2	1

Source: LTUSD

If you believe your son or daughter may have been exposed to the measles, please keep them home and contact your health care provider for next steps as well as the school to inform them.

If a case of measles appears within our school community, students that have not received the measles vaccine will be sent home from school. Should you have additional questions, please contact your healthcare provider.

Margaret McKean is a registered nurse who works for Lake Tahoe Unified School District.

‘I did kill those cops,’ suspect says to stunned courtroom

By Don Thompson, AP

SACRAMENTO — A man charged with killing two Northern California sheriff’s deputies stunned a courtroom Wednesday by blurting out that he committed the crimes and is ready to be executed.

“I did kill those cops. You can execute me whenever you’re ready,” an agitated Luis Enrique Monroy Bracamontes said at the end of a hearing as he was led from the Sacramento County courtroom in chains.

Earlier, during a break, Bracamontes repeatedly told his lawyers he wanted to plead guilty.

“You don’t have the right to plead guilty without our consent,” Assistant Public Defender Jeffrey Barbour told him quietly while the judge waited. They later blamed his outbursts on anxiety.

Norm Dawson, another of his attorneys, told Sacramento Superior Court Judge Steve White, “We’re not at this time prepared to enter a plea.”

Prosecutors are seeking the death penalty for the Utah man, who is charged with killing two deputies during an hourslong rampage in October that also left a motorist and another deputy wounded.

His wife, Janelle Marquez Monroy, also is charged but does not

face the death penalty. She sat quietly during the 20-minute proceeding, sometimes resting her chin on a fist.

"I think what you were hearing was a great deal of anxiety," Dawson said outside the courtroom when asked about his client's outbursts.

But Bracamontes was adamant, turning his head to address spectators as he was being handcuffed to leave the courtroom.

"I killed, I did, I did. I just want to plead guilty and get the execution," he said as his attorneys stood nearby amid heavy security. "I did it, everything."

A spokeswoman for the Sacramento County District Attorneys' Office, Shelly Orio, said she was prohibited from commenting because it would violate legal ethics.

Bracamontes and his wife both are charged with murder, along with numerous other charges, in the slayings of Sacramento County Sheriff's Deputy Danny Oliver and Placer County Sheriff's Detective Michael Davis Jr.

Bracamontes is a Mexican national with a long criminal history who had been deported several times and was in the country illegally at the time of the slayings.

Most of the court proceeding itself revolved around a request by attorneys for both suspects to exclude reporters from the courtroom to prevent news media accounts from influencing prospective jurors.

White denied the request. But he barred all still and video photographs, and prohibited audio recordings from being aired or published. He did allow a sketch artist to make portraits.

The suspects are next due back in court March 27 for a status conference.

High winds knock out power in Tahoe, Truckee

Updated 1:45pm:

- Douglas County Sheriff's Office and the East Fork Fire District are responding to numerous calls of down power lines and flying debris from this current wind event. Genoa Lane, Muller Lane and Tolar Road are closed due to fires ignited by down power lines.
- Truckee Fire Department was working a small brush fire near Donner Pass Road and Church Street. There are no structures or neighborhoods being threatened at this time. The fire is contained by fire crews.
- Truckee police, fire, and public works are actively working to clear roadways following numerous down trees and power lines. There are numerous areas without power. Keep away from any power lines. Call Nevada County dispatch at 530.550.2320 to report down trees or power lines.

Hundreds of people in the Lake Tahoe Basin woke up in the dark Friday morning because they are without power.

Liberty Utilities, which operates on the California side, is dealing with a wire down on Highway 89 near Fallen Leaf Lake. This is affecting that enclave, Camp Richardson, Spring Creek and the Cascade Lake area.

Another 25 customers near Tata Lane are without electricity because of a broken pole. Homes in the North Upper Truckee area are also in the dark.

NV Energy, which operates on the Nevada side, is reporting 15 outages affecting 200 customers, including people in Douglas County.

There is no estimated time when power will be restored for any of these customers.

A high wind warning from the National Weather Service in Reno remains in effect for the Lake Tahoe Basin through 4am Saturday. Rain is in the forecast through Sunday, with snow coming Monday.

Scientists trying to engineer drought-tolerant plants

By Deborah Netburn, Los Angeles Times

As the California drought enters its fourth year, scientists are trying to genetically engineer plants that survive on less water.

After adding a new piece of genetic code to their DNA, tomatoes and other plants were able to hold on to more water and survive for as many as 12 days without irrigation.

The tactic, described in the journal *Nature*, seeks to control how much water a plant loses through the small pores on its leaves known as stomata.

Stomata, as you may remember from biology class, let carbon dioxide in and oxygen out. The size of the opening is regulated by two guard cells that can inflate like little tires.

Tahoe Paradise Park turns to EDC for help

By Kathryn Reed

MEYERS – Help is possibly on its way for the Tahoe Paradise Resort Improvement District.

The board that runs this park on the South Shore agreed on a 4-1 vote Feb. 5 to enter a memorandum of understanding with El Dorado County for the government to assist with administrative responsibilities. Judy Clot voted no.

Now the Board of Supervisors must OK the deal.

“We are at a critical mass point where we need help,” Sue Novasel said. She is chair of the TPRID board and the county supervisor representing this area. Novasel said she believes this route is necessary to “ensure our park is viable and that we will be able to do more.”

This South Shore park, which turns 50 in July, in many ways functions like it is a newbie and other ways like a relic of a bygone era. No one knows where the bylaws are, documents are stored in 11 boxes – nothing is digital, the lone employee who lives on site hasn’t been held accountable for the hours he works and now resists having to do so, election of board members doesn’t exist and there is no plan to make this area self-sustaining.



Tahoe Paradise Resort
Improvement District has no
plans to fix the tennis
court nearest the entrance.
Photo/LTN file

The MOU is designed to help resolve some of these issues. Instead of the park district starting from scratch, it will rely on the county's experience with some basic practices like making sure all types of contracts are sound and dealing with the employee when it comes to work assignments and an annual review.

A bigger issue is to have county officials do an assessment of the park's resources. This will help the park figure out what can and should be the focus going forward.

The plan is for the county to act in an advisory role for the next year. Ultimately it is up to the TPRID board to do what it wants.

Some of the nearly 20 people who attended the meeting worried if TPRID is giving up too much control to the county, as well as if the county's attorney would have a conflict of interest if she were to give advice to the board because it might not be her employer's best interest.

It was reiterated that the TPRID board has the ultimate say and that if needs firm legal advice, that will mean hiring an outside attorney if need be.

TPRID has a nearly \$130,000 grant that has largely been spent on siding and landscape issues. The goal was to install a more permanent rest room, but ultimately the proposal did not meet Tahoe Regional Planning Agency requirements.

A contingency of the grant is that projects must be completed by a certain date in order to be reimbursed for costs or the money goes away. Creative paperwork allowed for the tennis court improvements that were made a couple years ago to suffice for the current deadline.

But the one court that is still unplayable because of the cracks is destined to remain that way for quite a while because a spring runs underneath it that makes continued replacement fiscally irresponsible.

What might happen with that plot of land in the future has not been determined.

The district is working on a master plan, with the goal to bring it to the public at a workshop in the coming months. No date has been set.

This board has been dysfunctional in the past, but played nice Thursday night. Board member Lorraine Anderson resigned effective at the end of the meeting. It will be up to the board to replace her.

—

Notes:

- Future board meetings – Feb. 19, March 26 and April 30. The next meeting is at 6pm at Lake Valley Fire Protection District off Highway 89.
- Events committee to meet Feb. 17 at 6pm at Lake Valley Fire.
- A presentation about the budget is expected at the next board meeting.

Lung cancer becoming a bigger killer

By Justin Worland, Time

For years, breast cancer has been the leading cause of cancer death among women in developed countries, but according to a report on the incidence of cancer worldwide from the American Cancer Society, lung cancer now surpasses it.

A combination of early breast cancer detection efforts and the lingering effects of the tobacco epidemic drove the shift, says lead report author Lindsey Torre, an American Cancer Society researcher. The study, which was published in *CA: A Cancer Journal for Clinicians* and used data from 2012, reported that lung cancer killed 209,000 women in developed countries in 2012, while 197,000 women died of breast cancer.

The report emphasized the growing incidence of cancer in the developing world. Lung cancer was the leading killer of men in developing countries and breast cancer the leading cause of death for women.

[Read the whole story](#)

NBC anchor admits telling

false story

By Travis J. Tritten, Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — NBC Nightly News anchor Brian Williams admitted Wednesday he was not aboard a helicopter hit and forced down by RPG fire during the invasion of Iraq in 2003, a false claim that has been repeated by the network for years.

Williams repeated the claim Friday during NBC's coverage of a public tribute at a New York Rangers hockey game for a retired soldier that had provided ground security for the grounded helicopters, a game to which Williams accompanied him. In an interview with Stars and Stripes, he said he had misremembered the events and was sorry.



Brian Williams

The admission came after crew members on the 159th Aviation Regiment's Chinook that was hit by two rockets and small arms fire told Stars and Stripes that the NBC anchor was nowhere near that aircraft or two other Chinooks flying in the formation that took fire. Williams arrived in the area about an hour later on another helicopter after the other three had made an emergency landing, the crew members said.

"I would not have chosen to make this mistake," Williams said. "I don't know what screwed up in my mind that caused me to conflate one aircraft with another."

Williams told his Nightly News audience that the erroneous

claim was part of a “bungled attempt” to thank soldiers who helped protect him in Iraq in 2003. “I made a mistake in recalling the events of 12 years ago,” Williams said. “I want to apologize.”

Read the whole story

Measles – resurgence of a preventable disease

By Jennifer Ehmann

Recently, measles made headlines after an outbreak linked to exposure at Disneyland in mid-December. Washoe County has reported two suspected cases and more than 100 cases, mostly in California, have been confirmed.

Measles is caused by a highly contagious virus and more cases are likely to emerge. Fourteen states have been affected and previous statistics from the California Alert Health Network showed 86 percent of past measles cases are patients who have not been vaccinated or the vaccination status is unknown.



Jennifer
Ehmann

In two years, cases of the measles in the United States have

increased. Vaccination can help prevent the spread of the illness and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports a two-dose series has been found to be 97 percent effective.

Measles is not a new disease. A Persian doctor wrote the first description in the 9th century, but the disease may date back to Roman times. Before 1963, when a vaccine became available, most children had the disease by age 15. Prior to the use of the measles vaccine, the CDC estimates 500 deaths, 48,000 hospitalizations, and 4,000 cases of encephalitis (infection of the brain) occurred in the United States annually.

Without the vaccine, nearly 90 percent of people who come into contact with an infected person get the measles. Measles spreads through respiratory droplets in the air, such as coughing and sneezing, and touching contaminated surfaces. Some reports note the virus can survive for up to two hours on surfaces.

Symptoms include a fever (often quite high), runny nose, cough, red eyes, and a sore throat followed by a distinctive rash on the whole body. The flat and sometimes bumpy rash may appear three to five days after the other symptoms, starting on the head and spreading down the rest of the body. People are contagious up to four days before they show signs or symptoms and until four days after the rash appears.

The measles has no specific treatment. Complications include diarrhea, ear infections, and pneumonia. Encephalitis, an infection that causes a swelling of the brain, is a more serious problem that can leave the person with deafness, seizures, mental retardation, or death. Another complication is Subacute Sclerosing PanEncephalitis (SSPE), which is a progressive, fatal infection of the nervous system that occurs seven to ten years after having the illness. Pregnant women can have severe complications that can affect them and their unborn child.

In 2000, measles was considered eradicated from the United States largely through immunization efforts. Immunization is achieved with the MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) vaccine or MMRV (measles, mumps, rubella, and varicella) vaccine. A young child usually gets the vaccine between the first 12 and 15 months and a second dose between 4 and 6 years old. Travel outside the country may prompt earlier vaccination between 6 to 11 months old for younger children at risk. The American Academy of Pediatrics reports that mild side effects may occur from the vaccine, but a severe reaction is very rare.

If you are unsure of your or your child's vaccination status or have concerns regarding your child having the illness, contact your pediatrician. The Centers for Disease Control and American Academy of Pediatrics also have valuable, updated information.

Jennifer Ehmann is a pediatrician at the Barton Community Health Center. She may be reached at 530.543.5623.

Calif. lawmakers aim to limit vaccine exemptions

By Fenit Nirappil, AP

SACRAMENTO — California lawmakers proposed legislation Wednesday that would require parents to vaccinate all schoolchildren unless a child's health is in danger, joining only two other states with such stringent restrictions.

Parents could no longer cite personal beliefs or religious reasons to send unvaccinated children to private and public schools under a proposal introduced after dozens of people

have fallen ill from a measles outbreak that started at Disneyland. Mississippi and West Virginia are the only other states with such strict vaccine rules, though the California bill's chief author said he would consider including a religious exemption.

"People are starting to realize, 'I'm vulnerable, my children are vulnerable,'" said Sen. Richard Pan, a Democratic pediatrician from Sacramento. "We should not wait for more children to sicken or die before we act."

Childhood vaccine has become an emotionally charged topic amid a measles outbreak that has sickened more than 100 people across the U.S. and in Mexico. No deaths have been reported.

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, California is among 20 states that allow for personal belief exemptions and 48 that allow for religious exemptions.

A Washington state lawmaker introduced a bill Wednesday that would remove the personal belief allowance for an exemption in that state.

Public health officials believe an immunization rate of at least 90 percent is critical to minimizing the potential for a disease outbreak. California's kindergarteners met that threshold at the start of this school year, according to state statistics: 2 percent were exempted because of their parents' personal beliefs and another half a percent were exempted because of their parent's religion.

Less than one-fifth of a percent of all students – about 1,000 – had a medical vaccine exemption that would be preserved under the bill.

Pan, who previously served in the Assembly, was the author of another vaccination bill that took effect last year. It requires parents who don't have their children vaccinated for non-religious reasons to get a note from the doctor's office

before enrolling their children in school.

A spokesman for Gov. Jerry Brown, who signed that bill, did not say if the governor would oppose efforts to end exemptions.

“The governor believes that vaccinations are profoundly important and a major public health benefit and any bill that reaches his desk will be closely considered,” spokesman Evan Westrup wrote in an email.

Parents cite a variety of reasons for not immunizing their children: religious values, concerns the shots could cause illness and a belief that allowing children to get sick helps them to build a stronger immune system.

The American Academy of Pediatrics says doctors should bring up the importance of vaccinations during visits but should respect a parent’s wishes unless there’s a significant risk to the child.

The California bill is also backed by Democratic Assemblywoman Lorena Gonzalez and Democratic Sen. Ben Allen, a former Santa Monica school board member.

Separately on Wednesday, Sens. Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein called on California’s top health official to reconsider the state’s policy on vaccine exemptions in light of the measles outbreak.

“We believe there should be no such thing as a philosophical or personal belief exemption, since everyone uses public spaces,” the Democratic senators wrote in an open letter.

Decrease in water use by Calif. may be temporary

By Paul Rogers, San Jose Mercury News

Driven by drenching rainstorms that dramatically reduced the need to water lawns, Californians cut water use 22.2 percent in December compared with the same month a year before, according to new data released Tuesday.

For the first time since last June, when the State Water Resources Control Board required the 411 largest cities and water districts in California to issue monthly water use reports, residents of the Los Angeles and San Diego areas conserved more water than residents of the Bay Area: 23.2 percent vs. 21.6 percent.

But leaders at the board said Tuesday that the impressive gains aren't expected to last.

January was bone dry and hot, and officials hope water use doesn't shoot right back up again when the tally is done for January.

Read the whole story