

2 injured in West Slope school bus crash



Four people were hurt in West Slope school bus accident on Aug. 14. Photo/CHP

Updated 12:05pm

Two students were taken to the hospital this morning following a three-vehicle accident on the West Slope.

The El Dorado Union High School District bus was hit head-on by a vehicle at 6:30am Aug. 14. The driver of the passenger vehicle was arrested on suspicion of driving under the influence, according to the California Highway Patrol.

Another vehicle was also involved in the Thursday morning crash on Grizzly Flat Road in Somerset.

The injuries are not considered serious. The other students were loaded onto another school bus.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Candidates solidified for November ballot

Some familiar names will be missing from the Nov. 4 ballot when it comes time for South Shore residents to vote.

Roberta Mason, an original member of the Lake Tahoe Community College board of trustees, is stepping down after 40 years. Newcomer Jeff Cowen is running unopposed for her seat.

Bob Grant and Michelle Sweeney are vying for the seat being vacated by Molly Blann. Also running for the college board is incumbent Kerry David. He has no challengers.

New this election is LTCC and Lake Tahoe Unified School District board members are being elected to represent specific areas. This means people will only be voting for one person.

Wendy David is stepping down from Lake Tahoe Unified's board to run for City Council. Ginger Nicolay Davis is running unopposed for that seat. Barbara Bannar is running unopposed to retain her seat.

In addition to David, the council candidates are incumbents Tom Davis, Brooke Laine and Angela Swanson, and Bruce Grego, Austin Sass and Matt Palacio.

Longtime South Tahoe Public Utility District board member Eric Schafer is calling it quits. Vying for his seat are Duane Wallace and Andy Chapman.

Incumbent Jim Jones is being challenged by Jeff Romsos. Incumbent Chris Cefalu is running unopposed.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Consensus lacking for future of Regan Beach

By Jessie Marchesseau

Upward of 100 people congregated on Regan Beach on Tuesday evening for the South Lake Tahoe Parks and Recreation Commission's workshop to help determine the future of this area.

"We can't have a community project without community input," said Parks and Recreation Commission Chairman Pete Fink as he opened the evening's workshop.

Luckily, most of the attendees on Aug. 12 were practically bursting with input.

The crowd was promptly broken into groups, each led by a representative from either the commission or city staff. They were toured around the entire Regan Beach site as leaders pointed out areas of concern and encouraged residents to make suggestions, come up with new ideas and express opinions.

It is no surprise that more than one heated discussion ensued. It seemed few people agreed on anything.

One Al Tahoe resident suggested all parking be removed so the park is accessible only to those on foot or bicycle, coinciding with a citywide effort to become a more bikeable, walkable community. Others were adamant the free parking should remain for residents who don't live nearby and so those with children or mobility issues can still easily access the park.

There was some talk of doing away with weddings at the beach,

a service which brings in between \$30,000 and \$40,000 per year in rental fees according to Recreation Manager Lauren Thomaselli, but blocks off portions of the beach on most summer weekends. Others argued for it to stay, saying it was not only an important source of income to the city, but provided a place for residents and visitors alike to have an affordable wedding in Tahoe.



South Tahoe residents offer ideas about what Regan Beach should be going forward.
Photos/Jessie Marchesseau

Some suggested Regan Beach should be restored to what it was in the 1950s, a sloped natural beach; others said that would result in too much erosion and all the sand being washed away. Lakeview Commons kept popping up as a point of comparison. Some people want to see Regan Beach more like its popular neighbor; some want it as different as possible.

One nearby homeowner would like to see Regan Beach remain virtually as it is now, except for maybe cutting all the trees down to improve views for adjacent homeowners.

Many of the attendees were residents or homeowners in the Al Tahoe neighborhood. This may explain why some of them seemed to have agendas to keep as many people out of the park as possible, pushing out groups, weddings, people with dogs and people with cars.

To one such comment a woman chimed in: “Everyone wants to be the last one in and shut the door behind them. Do you want to be a neighborhood or a bunch of Nazis?”

Through the many debates and discussions of the evening, two issues stood out as hot topics: legal enforcement and dogs.

Some residents pushed for stricter enforcement of just about everything: bigger fines for having dogs outside the dog area, fines for dogs pooping, fines for glass on the beach, for smoking, for drinking, for being there after hours, and more. Some were advocating hefty fines for these offenses, \$200-\$500, with a theory that if violators are fined, they will have more respect of the town and lake. Others just commented this could be a good revenue source for the city since they did away with the paid parking plan.



With Lake Tahoe so low,
there is more to Regan
Beach.

As for the dogs, part of Regan Beach is currently designated as a dog water park while dogs are prohibited on the rest of the beach. There is some signage alerting beach-goers of this policy, but it is minimal and dogs often end up in the dog-free zone. Clean-up baggies are provided at the entrance to the dog area, but not all dog owners are inclined to use them, resulting in unwanted dog waste lying about.

For some, the solution is to ban dogs entirely. Others would like the dog park to stay, but implement better signage and/or

impose fines for violations. One attendee was adamant there should not be a dog park anywhere near the lake, submitting an article discussing the toxicity of dog feces for planners to review. Meanwhile, another resident suggested Regan Beach would be an ideal place to implement the Park Spark Project, installing devices which turn dog waste into energy to power things like street lights.

Organizers handed out 100 surveys and maps for attendees to fill out during the workshop. Questions included which neighborhood you live in, how often you visit the park, what amenities you think are important, what amenities you would like to see in the future and how often you would come if those things were implemented. People were encouraged to draw on the maps, indicating what changes they would like to see and where. Those who did not receive a map were asked to place sticky notes with suggestions on the big map displayed under the tent.

The sticky notes included comments such as: "remove grass", "keep grass", "no dogs", "allow dogs", "add more playground equipment", "remove playground".

After the evening's workshop, ideas for the future of Regan Beach appear to be all over the board. But one thing is for certain: the city and Parks and Recreation Commission have their work cut out for them in trying to come up with a plan which the community can agree on.

Tuesday's workshop was just the beginning of a long process. City Manager Nancy Kerry said there will be plenty of public meetings and lots of planning to come. If things move quickly, construction could start as early as next year.

The last time Regan Beach saw a major overhaul was in the 1990s. Kerry said according to surveys conducted by the city over the last year, it is one of the top three public areas respondents would like to see improved, and thanks to some

recent restructuring of debt she hopes to have between \$1.5 million and \$2 million to dedicate to the project.

Teen recovering after nearly drowning at Tahoe

By Ashley Cullins, KRNV-TV

Two weeks after nearly drowning near Sand Harbor, 19-year-old Jake Blackmon is expected to fully recover.

Blackmon was in Tahoe on vacation with a friend. The day before they were supposed to go home to Houston, he nearly drowned.

It's a story that could've ended much differently if the people at the beach that day hadn't acted quickly.

"Right before we boarded the airplane in Houston, I called the doctor to get an update and I'll never forget he told me that they would try to keep his heart beating until we got here," said Keith Blackmon, Jake's dad.

Blackmon's parents didn't know if their son would survive nearly drowning in Lake Tahoe – neither did the people who helped save him at Sand Harbor two weeks ago.

Read the whole story

S. Lake man accused of nearly killing roommate

A South Lake Tahoe man with a history of battery arrests is behind bars for attempting to murder his longtime roommate.

The 46-year-old South Lake Tahoe woman who was nearly beaten to death the night of Aug. 12 with a mallet was clinging to life 24 hours later at Renown Medical Center in Reno. At this time her name is not being released.

Steven Post, 48, was arrested on attempted murder charges.

Sgt. Shannon Laney said a verbal argument escalated into Post grabbing a rubber mallet like one would use for camping and striking the victim several times in the head and arm.

“He admitted to everything,” Laney told *Lake Tahoe News*. “He was arrested on attempted murder based on the weapon and area he was striking.”

Being struck in the head often has fatal consequences.

The two have lived together for 18 years, most recently on Azure Avenue near the state line. Post told officers there is no romantic involvement between them at least at this time.

Post was arrested in 2010 and 2011 on charges of battering the same woman. He was not convicted.

– *Lake Tahoe News*

Catholic school in S. Lake Tahoe not opening

By Kathryn Reed

There will be no Catholic grade school on the South Shore this fall.

"We had a hail Mary pass out there with a donor who came in with great support, but it was just short of the goal line," Stella Roper, spokeswoman for what was to be Lake Tahoe Catholic Academy, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "We had to look at it with less passion and with more responsibility."

The decision to not open the South Lake Tahoe school was made Aug. 12.

A group of parents, teachers and community members had rallied together since June to try to open the academy after the Catholic Diocese said St. Theresa School had to close because of declining enrollment and not enough money being generated from the K-8 school.

The academy had hoped to open Sept. 2.

Roper said funding, and commitment from parents and teachers could have sustained the school for a couple years, but not in the long term. The decision was that it would be better for all involved to not open rather than to have to close again in what could be a handful of years.

The corporation formed to run the school still exists, and may continue to. Supporters of faith-based education are not ruling out trying again to create a sustainable education model for the area.

Roper said organizers are not upset they tried to resurrect the school, and found a tremendous amount of community support

for such an education platform. But, ultimately, the numbers did not pan out.

Now those students, of which there were 50 last school year, need to find another place to be schooled this fall. Douglas County School District starts Aug. 18 and Lake Tahoe Unified's first day is Aug. 25.

Project aims to lessen surprise of extreme wildfires

By Louis Sahagun, Los Angeles Times

Are wildfires becoming more extreme?

As part of an effort to answer that question, Nevada researcher Tamara Wall is calling on current and past wildland firefighters across the nation to share personal experiences of instances in which they witnessed surprising fire behavior.

"This project is driven by a phrase increasingly heard among fire agencies at the management level: I've never seen a fire behave like that before," said Wall, who is leading a collaborative effort between the U.S. Forest Service and the Desert Research Institute, a nonprofit research campus of the Nevada System of Higher Education.

Participants are encouraged to provide as many experiences as they want in an online program that takes as little as five minutes to complete.

Stateline nightclubs No. 1 problem for DCSO

By Kathryn Reed

Simple batteries and assaults at Stateline nightclubs are the No. 1 call Douglas County sheriff's deputies respond to.

"It's just a younger, more rambunctious person that tends to go to the clubs," Undersheriff Paul Howell told *Lake Tahoe News*. "When you mix alcohol and young people, you get fights. When I talk to my counterparts in Reno and Vegas, they see the same problems."

On occasion, shoplifters at the big box stores in the Carson Valley eclipse fights at the casinos. Such was the case in July. Last month deputies responded to 62 thefts in the valley and 51 assaults at the lake. Still, 95 percent of the thefts throughout the county are in the valley, while 95 percent of the fights in the county are at the clubs.



Nightclubs on the South Shore keep Douglas County sheriff's deputies busy.

Photo/LTN

Howell said the number of altercations at the Tahoe casinos has declined through the years as gaming has slid in popularity in the basin. Plus, the numbers fluctuate based on how many people are in town. And summer is always a more violent time than winter.

A simple assault is defined as pushing, shoving, slapping and punching – “something that does not cause serious injuries.”

Not all the people deputies run into are arrested. Sometimes security at the clubs has defused the situation. Howell said his officers work hand-in-hand with casino security to quell the unrest. It is usually security that calls in DCSO for reinforcements.

Many times the situation is resolved by people willingly leaving the club. Often people don't want to press charges, so no arrests are made.

Between 95 and 98 percent of the people causing the disturbance are visitors; with most of them being from the Sacramento or Bay Area, according to Howell.

Howell doesn't blame the free alcohol at the casinos as the problem. He said the people gambling are seldom the same ones who are in the clubs. People in the clubs are paying for their booze and it's not always cheap, especially with bottle and VIP services.

But there are opportunities to drink for cheap or free. At Opal Ultra Lounge inside MontBleu drinks are a buck on Thursdays, while women drink for free on Fridays until 2am.

No one from MontBleu nor Harrah's returned phone calls. Those two casinos are home to the main nightclubs in Stateline.

XHale – Hookah Bar and Lounge, which opened in May in part of

the building that used to be Bill's Casino, has seen deputies show up a few times.

"When people are intoxicated, they don't know what they are doing and they get all physical," Sunny Patel, owner of XHale, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "My security guards try to break up the two people who are fighting. Usually it's the other person not fighting who gets in the middle and ends up getting hurt."

Patel said he has cameras in many locations so there is evidence to prove who did what when. He added that it hasn't always been guys at XHale who are the instigators.

But Howell said deputies mostly interact with guys in their 20s.

He doesn't anticipate the Hard Rock Hotel, when it opens in the winter, will add to his deputies' workload. Howell said a property of that caliber tends to hire the appropriate number of security officers and that they tend to be highly trained.

Tahoe youth accuses camp leader of sexual advances

A 22-year-old man from Sonora is accused of sexting a 14-year-old Meyers boy.

Brandon Moe met the teen at a summer camp outside the basin. Moe was the youth's cabin leader.

Following the boy's return home the two communicated via text and Facebook, according to El Dorado County sheriff's deputies.

“When the child’s mother detected that the communications had changed from innocent to inappropriate and sexual she contacted the sheriff’s office,” Sgt. Michael Seligsohn said in a statement.

Moe was arrested Aug. 11 on a charge of distributing or exhibiting lewd material to a minor. Bail was set at \$1 million.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Truckee man found dead in wilderness

A missing Truckee man was found deceased Aug. 11 in the Boca/Verdi Peak area of Nevada County.

The Placer County Sheriff’s Office helicopter located Eusebio Nunez’s vehicle Sunday at 11:35am. A search team from Placer and Nevada counties on Monday found his body approximately 100 yards from his vehicle.

The cause of death is under investigation.

The 49-year-old had not been seen July 25.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*