

Anonymous campaign mailers strike Nev. candidates

By Jane Ann Morrison, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Gary Fisher made a choice not to respond to anonymous and apparently illegal mailers and phone calls that resurrected his past battling drugs and alcohol.

In the four-way Democratic primary in Assembly District 34, he lost by a mere 22 votes to Meghan Smith. He violated one basic political tenet: Never let an attack go unanswered.

Brendan Summers, executive director of the Assembly Democratic Caucus and adviser to Fisher, did not think the anonymous attacks “made much of a difference in the outcome” although he called them “vile and also clearly illegal under Nevada campaign laws.”

He said a response would have only served to give the mailers and calls credence.”

There were plenty of negative mailers and calls during the primary. It would be news if there weren't.

Read the whole story

Whooping cough cases double in El Dorado County

Ten cases of pertussis, or whooping cough, have been reported in El Dorado County this year. That is more than twice the

number reported last year.

Six cases were reported in South Lake Tahoe and four cases were reported on the West Slope. No deaths have been reported in El Dorado County.

As of June 10, 3,458 cases of pertussis have been identified statewide this year, including the death of an infant.

Pertussis disease is cyclical and typically peaks every three to five years. The last peak in occurred in 2010, when El Dorado County had 54 cases and California had more than 9,400 cases. There were 10 pertussis related deaths across California in 2010, all among infants. There were no pertussis related fatalities in El Dorado County that year.

Pertussis is a contagious respiratory tract infection, spread through coughs and sneezes. Symptoms typically start with a cough and runny nose for one to two weeks, followed by weeks to months of rapid coughing fits that sometimes end with a whooping sound.

To prevent the spread of pertussis, it is recommended that:

- Pregnant women receive the pertussis vaccine booster during the third trimester of each pregnancy, even if they received it before. Immunity passes to the baby, providing some protection after birth and before the child can be vaccinated.
- Infants get vaccinated against pertussis as soon as possible. The first dose is routinely recommended at two months of age, but since pertussis is circulating in the community, infants can be vaccinated as young as 6 weeks of age.
- Adults receive the pertussis vaccine booster, especially if they have contact with infants or are healthcare workers in contact with infants or pregnant women.

Goldman: No escaping climate change

By Kathryn Reed

INCLINE VILLAGE – “Climate change is going to affect the whole world in a variety of fashions and most are negative.”

That was the message Charles Goldman delivered to nearly 100 people on Tuesday night at the Tahoe Environmental Research Center. Goldman is a renowned limnologist who has been studying Lake Tahoe since the 1950s.

Goldman said that climate is changing so fast that the models created to track it are having a hard time keeping up.

He equated the climate change deniers to the tobacco company chiefs who used to say smoking was good for your health – it’s just not true.



Glaciers are melting throughout the world, including the Moreno Glacier in Argentina. Photo/LTN file

The reality, he said, is signs of climate change are already

prevalent. Flooding in the Midwest this spring made it difficult for farmers to get corn in the ground at the time they were used to. Puffins are dying off because the fish they are feeding to their young are too big to swallow. The smaller fish they used to feed the young are gone. Temperatures are rising throughout the world and records keep being broken.

"You can only make snow if it's cold enough," Goldman said. "That will be more and more difficult."

This, he pointed out, could be a problem for Lake Tahoe.

Beyond the diminishing snowpack in the Sierra, scientists most often point to the melting of glaciers.

The Arctic ice pack reflects heat back into the atmosphere. When they are gone that heat goes back into the ocean.

"If it's extreme enough, the Gulf Stream could lose its oomph. If that happens, Europe freezes over," Goldman said.

The release of methane gases is another concern as the ice melts and the permafrost recedes on the tundra. Goldman said methane gas is 22 times more potent than greenhouse gas.

Goldman said he first realized how air pollution was impacting Lake Tahoe when he saw the billowing lead spewing from buses at the Stateline casinos. He said atmospheric deposition is a greater problem for the lake than stream runoff.

"The world should recognize air pollution is a global problem, not just a local problem," Goldman said. He pointed out how researchers have tracked dust from the Gobi Desert reaching Lake Tahoe.

Fresh water is likely to disappear and be one of the biggest concerns with climate change. The increasing world population – which is now more than 7 billion people – contributes to this. Some forecasts are that there will be 14 billion by mid-century.

The world cannot sustain that many people, Goldman said, because the food supply isn't adequate enough.

Scientists urge WHO to regulate e-cigs

By Anna Edney, Bloomberg

E-cigarettes require strict regulation at a time when there's been little research into potential harm, more than 100 scientists told the World Health Organization in a letter.

The group said the health organization should support marketing regulation, safety and efficacy data requirements and protection for bystanders from second-hand vapor. A different group of researchers wrote WHO last month urging the group to avoid suppressing sales since the devices may help smokers quit.

The letter dated June 15, from 129 academics and anti-tobacco advocates, disputed the potential of e-cigarettes as a cessation device. The WHO is preparing a paper it will submit to its tobacco control convention made up of 178 countries.

"The absence of detailed evidence on adverse health effects is not evidence that no effect exists," according to the letter. "Rather, insufficient time has elapsed to determine what effects exist and their magnitude on a population level."

Read the whole story

What killed Americans in 1900 vs. 2010

By Kyle Kim, Los Angeles Times

Americans aren't dying the way they used to. The data come from an article published by the New England Journal of Medicine, which combed through 200 years worth of its back issues to look into how Americans die.

The article was originally published in 2012, but became a top post on Reddit this week after computer scientist Randy Olson posted a reworked version. We created a chart to more clearly show the changing causes of death.

The most visually striking difference is the enormous decline of infectious diseases (pneumonia, influenza, tuberculosis, etc). Advances in medicine and society have largely eradicated many of these diseases that were an overwhelming cause of death in 1900.

[Read the whole story](#)

Crews pounce on Stateline

wildland fire



Firefighters on June 18 hike into a small blaze in Stateline. Photo/Carol Faccinetti

Crews are battling a small wildland fire behind the former Kingsbury Middle School in Stateline.

The call came in about 2:45 this afternoon.

About a 50 foot by 50 foot swath of land has burned between Meadow Drive and the school. There is a hose around the perimeter and crews were starting to be released as of 3:20pm

The U.S. Forest Service is the lead agency. Also assisting are Tahoe Douglas, Lake Valley and CalFire. The Forest Service had a helicopter on standby out of Minden, but it was released as of 3:20pm.

The cause is not known, but there is no electrical in the area and there has been no lightning. While there have been homeless encampments nearby, they haven't been exactly in the spot where this fire occurred, a Tahoe Douglas firefighter told *Lake Tahoe News*.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

DEA accused of obstructing researching benefits of pot

By Renee Lewis, Aljazeera America

The Drug Enforcement Administration has maintained marijuana's classification as a harmful drug with no medical benefits despite scientific evidence to the contrary, a report said, adding that the agency has also obstructed research that could lead to the substance's reclassification.

"The DEA impedes research by abusing its discretionary powers over the scheduling process, making it difficult to obtain marijuana for research purposes. We recommend taking away the DEA's power over drug scheduling and access to drugs for research," Ethan Nadelmann, executive director of the Drug Policy Alliance, said last week.

The report, "The DEA: Four Decades of Impeding and Rejecting Science," released by the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies and DPA, calls on the DEA to end its "unjustifiable" monopoly of the supply of research grade marijuana available for federally approved research.

The DEA has ignored calls to reschedule marijuana – which is currently called a Schedule 1 drug meaning it has no known medical value and is on par with drugs like heroin and crack.

Medical marijuana advocates are calling for a rescheduling to Schedule 2 – where the Food and Drug Administration would regulate it as a prescription medicine, allowing easier access to medical grade cannabis for scientific research, the study said.

Read the whole story

Geothermal plant may threaten Mammoth groundwater

By Chris Clarke, KCET

A 33-megawatt geothermal power plant approved in August by the Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service has the town of Mammoth Lakes worried about its drinking water supply.

Ormat Technologies' Casa Diablo IV Geothermal Energy Project would draw 29,000 acre-feet of extremely hot water per year from deep within the rock layers of the tectonically active region, using up to 16 newly drilled wells.

But that geothermally heated aquifer lies beneath the cold water aquifer from which Mammoth Lakes draws its drinking water, and locals are worried that the Ormat's pumping could draw down the cold water aquifer: a troubling prospect in this drought as locals become increasingly dependent on groundwater.

Most of the water pumped by Ormat will be reinjected into the geothermal aquifer, so that aside from losses to steam and leakage, the actual volume of water in the hot aquifer may not change by much. But the reinjected geothermal water will be much cooler. The Mammoth Community Water District (MCWD), which serves the resort town of 8,000 or so residents with drinking water and wastewater services, has expressed concerns that reinjecting cooler water into the geothermal aquifer

might reduce pressure in that aquifer, resulting in a drawdown of the cold water aquifer above it.

That would mean less potable groundwater within reach of MCWD's wells. And that's a problem. For the last two years, with spring snowmelt much reduced, the water district has been forced to increase its reliance on pumping as its surface water sources like Mammoth Creek have dwindled.

Read the whole story

SLT putting investment action plan together

By Kathryn Reed

While South Lake Tahoe's financial viability is precarious, the City Council on Tuesday agreed that investing in recreation must happen if the city is going to be on stable footing.

City Manager Nancy Kerry started a 3½ -hour workshop on June 17 by outlining where the city is today in regards to income/expenses. The city is headed for the red because expenses are outpacing revenues. Much of the drain is from health care costs for current and retired employees.

But pension expenses also add to the problem. PERS – Public Employee Retirement System – costs are expected to increase 7 percent each year. And with PERS recently recalculating fees, South Lake Tahoe must pay an additional \$300,000.



The city will need more public-private partnerships like the one for Harrison Avenue in order to make improvements. Photo/LTN

While employees have not gotten a raise in the last five years, retiree benefits keep increasing. PERS puts in a cost of living adjustment no matter the economic situation. In the last five years, retiree payouts have increased by 12 percent. This means California public employee retirees can't say they are on a fixed income.

South Lake Tahoe has 165 employees, but 800 people receive health benefits. This is because until 2001 dependents could be covered on the health plan of retirees for the rest of their lives. Starting with those hired in 2008 retiree health care was no longer an option.

In a 10-year period from 2009-18 the city forecasts needing \$44.3 million to fund health care. If changes are not made, that figure could grow to \$60 million or more, according to Kerry, based on health care costs rising and more people entering the program.

"The city can't grow to \$6 million a year or we'll never fund recreation," Kerry said. The current annual health care cost is about \$4 million.

That \$6 million is the same amount of cash the city receives in property taxes each year.

South Lake Tahoe under Kerry's leadership wiped out a \$20 million year liability by mandating qualified retirees join Medicare. This is something that should have been done under any previous city manager.

The city is negotiating with each of its bargaining units to make changes to the benefits plan.

"The system is the problem. Information was not brought to the council about how bad things were getting," Kerry said.

In the mid-1980s it cost the city \$1,200 a year for a family's health plan. Today it costs \$1,500 per month.

It is not known if any other city administrator ever proposed capping the amount of money the city would pay per employee or retiree, but it never happened.

Going forward

Kerry told the council if the city doesn't continue investing in infrastructure, it will have what it has now – crumbling streets. She said the community needs between \$15 million and \$20 million each year to be able to compete. This would be a mix of public and private money.

She didn't hesitate to expound upon Tahoe's major industry being tourism and the need to have quality amenities.



Overhauling South Tahoe's pool complex could cost

\$13.7 million. Photos/LTN
file

The city has put in \$30 million in infrastructure improvements in the last four years.

Part of Tuesday's discussion was about what else the city should invest in. The council is open to spending the \$1 million in excess reserves on projects. This money is in addition to the city's 25 percent reserves.

Staff will come back soon with recommendations about how to spend the money. Part is likely to go toward finalizing some planning and design work for projects, some could go toward the bike park in Bijou Community Park, and maybe some for hookups at Campground by the Lake.

Jim Marino, assistant public works director, went over staff recommendations for what should be capital improvement plan priorities. He prefers CIP mean community investment plan.

Upgrading the recreation center at an estimated cost of \$13.7 million and revamping Regan Beach to the tune of \$4.2 million top the list. An aquatic center could be built, perhaps a second story, definite energy upgrades would be included to the rec center. At the beach the steel bulkhead would be removed and the building gutted.

While the council agreed to the priorities, there is no money for these endeavors. An outdoor amphitheater also is of interest to the council.



The field at Lake Tahoe Community College needs replacing.

However, the return on investment for all three would likely be rather immediate.

But with definitive goals, then partnerships can be formed and grants sought, as well as money put away for the big projects.

Playing to the recreation theme, the city is saving money from Measure S/R to replace the community ball field at Lake Tahoe Community College. It's likely to cost \$500,000. Marino said at 9-years-old the field has reached its life expectancy.

Replacing it, he said, "directly supports sports tourism, which I believe is underleveraged."

The council collectively agreed the community deserves more action and less talk.

When it comes to figuring out how to come up with more money to invest in the community, the council agreed to form a community task force that will be a partnership with other stakeholders – which includes agencies, government entities, residents and business owners – who want to work on ways to bring investors to town.

Of the seven people who spoke at the meeting, most agreed the city needs to invest in itself, with some saying go after little things, others saying shoot for the moon. Of the 21 letters, nearly all lobbied on behalf of the bike park.

The bike park advocates have \$350,000 in cash and in-kind donations, with \$100,000 more needed to complete the project. It is in the planning stages and could come to the council later this summer.

But it was also pointed out that residents would be asked what

they are willing to do when it comes to investing in the community because the city can't do it alone.

Novasel, Curtzwiler to vie for EDC supe seat



Sue Novasel and Kenny Curtzwiler move on to the November election for El Dorado County supervisor.

It's official – either Sue Novasel or Kenny Curtzwiler will be supervisor of El Dorado County District 5.

The June 3 election results were finalized June 17. Now the two Meyers residents meet in November.

A mere 14 votes separate fourth from second place. While Kevin Brown was in second on election night, he came out fourth in the end.

“I don't see any reason to go back and recount,” Brown told *Lake Tahoe News*. He said with the county doing its own recount and the attention to detail with the provisional ballots, he believes the results are accurate.

He now plans to run to retain his seat on the El Dorado Union High School District in November.

Angela Swanson finished third. She was not available for comment. Her term on the South Lake Tahoe City Council ends this fall, though she could run for a second term.

Curtzwiler said he wouldn't talk until he knows if there will be a recount.

"I am committed to being a strong advocate and representative for all of District V," Novasel told *Lake Tahoe News*. "I look forward to the next five months of campaigning and plan to meet and listen to the needs and concerns of district 5 citizens."

The numbers:

Novasel – 1,557 votes, 28.47 percent

Curtzwiler – 977, 17.87 percent

Swanson – 967, 17.68 percent

Brown – 963, 17.61 percent

Gerri Grego – 682, 12.7 percent

Teresa Piper – 308, 5.63 percent.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*