

Study: Consumers unaware of their water usage

By Monte Morin, Los Angeles Times

Americans use twice the amount of water they think they do, and appear to be particularly oblivious about how much H₂O they flush down the toilet on a daily basis, according to new research.

In a paper published online Monday in the journal PNAS, a researcher concluded that Americans underestimated their water use by a factor of 2, and were only slightly aware of how much water goes into growing the food they eat.

The study's conclusions were based on an Internet survey of 1,020 people, and comes amid a national drought that extends from the Pacific Coast to portions of the Mississippi Valley, with the most severe conditions in California.

[Read the whole story](#)

Lawsuit alleges Nev. deputy illegally seized cash

By Scott Sonner, AP

A rural Nevada sheriff's deputy is accused of stopping travelers on a lonely stretch of Interstate 80 and confiscating tens of thousands of dollars for the county without bringing charges, according to two federal lawsuits.

Two men who were traveling alone through Northern Nevada's high desert last year offer strikingly similar accounts of their stops by the same Humboldt County deputy near the town of Winnemucca, about 165 miles east of Reno.

Neither search produced drugs or an arrest, but in one case the deputy took a briefcase filled with \$50,000 and in the other he seized \$13,800 and a .40-caliber Ruger handgun, according to the lawsuits filed in U.S. District Court in Reno.

Both men said they were told they'd be released with their vehicles only if they forfeited their cash.

"It's like Jesse James or Black Bart," said John Ohlson, a longtime Reno defense lawyer who filed suit on Jan. 16 on behalf of Tan Nguyen, 37, of Newport.

The lawsuits say the cash seizures are part of a pattern of stopping drivers for speeding as a pretext for drug busts, which violation the Constitution. They maintain Sheriff Ed Kilgore, Deputy Lee Dove, Humboldt County and its prosecutors condone the practice of seizing assets regardless of criminal prosecution.

Two Reno lawyers representing the county did not immediately respond to telephone or email messages seeking comment, nor did Kilgore or Dove.

Chief Deputy District Attorney Kevin Pasquale said the district attorney's office would not discuss the lawsuits. "As a matter of policy, we never comment on pending litigation," he told the Associated Press.

County officials were not shy in the past about discussing their cash seizures. The day after Nguyen had his money taken, the sheriff issued a news release with a photograph of Dove pictured with a K-9 and \$50,000 in seized cash "after a traffic stop for speeding."

“This cash would have been used to purchase illegal drugs and now will benefit Humboldt County with training and equipment. Great job,” the statement said. Dove’s report said he had the money counted at a Winnemucca bank, then gave it to the district attorney’s office “for asset/seizure/forfeiture.”

Nguyen’s suit says Dove stopped him Sept. 23 for driving 78 mph in a 75 zone in what his lawyers described as a “profile stop” based on suspicion he was transporting drugs in a rental car picked up at the Denver airport.

Dove wrote in his report Nguyen agreed to a search before opening the briefcase with the \$50,000 in cash. Nguyen denies that he consented.

Nguyen told Dove he won the money at a casino on the way to visit his cousins in California, according to Dove’s report, but Dove told Nguyen he suspected the money was obtained illegally. Dove reported he smelled marijuana but didn’t find any.

Nguyen was given a written warning for speeding but wasn’t cited.

As a condition of release, Nguyen signed a “property for safekeeping receipt,” which indicated the money was abandoned or seized and not returnable. But the lawsuit says he did so only because Dove threatened to seize his vehicle unless he “got in his car and drove off and forgot this ever happened.”

Safeway bought by parent

company of Albertsons

By Heather Somerville, San Jose Mercury News

PLEASANTON – Safeway announced on Thursday it had been bought by private equity firm Cerberus Capital Management in a \$9.4 billion deal that will merge the Bay Area's dominant grocery chain with Albertsons, creating a massive chain that promises to further transform how Americans shop for groceries.

By merging Pleasanton-based Safeway with its Boise, Idaho-based Albertsons, Cerberus hopes to cut costs and expand product selection, and compete in a market Safeway and Albertsons have been steadily losing to big-box retailers, convenience stores and niche grocers.

For shoppers, the sale could mean lower prices, as executives pledge to pass cost savings on to the consumer, although some analysts are not so confident. For Safeway employees – who will be negotiating a new contract with the company later this year – jobs could be on the line, as antitrust regulations and duplication between the companies may lead to individual store sales and closures.

It's too soon to know if the sale will impact the South Lake Tahoe, Round Hill, Kings Beach and Truckee Safeways.

Read the whole story

Truckee dealing with rash of

burglaries

By KARNV-TV

Thieves are targeting specific types of homes throughout the Truckee area at a higher rate than usual. Often, these crimes go unnoticed for weeks.

A significant number of houses throughout Truckee are vacation hubs for secondary home owners, a demographic being heavily targeted this winter.

From November to the present, more than 20 Truckee homes have been broken into and ransacked, with three just this past weekend. "It started off primarily as, unfortunately, kicking doors in, a lot of damage that way," said Truckee police Sgt. Robert Womack.

Read the whole story

Yosemite bears eating like it's 1915

By Bettina Boxall, Los Angeles Times

Black bears in Yosemite National Park aren't snacking as much on human food as they did decades ago, according to new research that traces changes in the diet of Yosemite bears over the last century.

Researchers analyzed samples of bear bones from museums and bear hair collected from the field to determine the ratio of human-to-wild-food that Yosemite bears consumed as far back as

1915.

Not surprisingly, they found that the proportion of human food rose significantly after the park started feeding bears in 1923 to keep the animals away from developed areas. Lighted feeding platforms were even used to entertain park visitors until 1940.

Read the whole story

EPA restricts sulfur in gas to cut auto emissions

By Neela Banerjee, Los Angeles Times

WASHINGTON — The Environmental Protection Agency issued final rules Monday to slash the amount of sulfur in gasoline, which would help cut smog-causing pollution from autos and bring the rest of the country's fuel supply in line with California's standards.

The new rule for "Tier 3" gasoline calls for reducing the amount of sulfur in fuel by two-thirds, to 10 parts per million from 30 parts per million. Similar low-sulfur gasoline is already in use in California, Europe, Japan and South Korea.

The new gasoline would be available at the pump by January 2017.

Read the whole story

Not all states think chickens should have leg room

By Stephanie Strommarch, New York Times

ATWATER -- Hens in California are living the good life. Many can now lay their eggs in oversize enclosures roomy enough to stand up, lie down – even extend their wings fully without touching another bird.

Hens in most other states don't have it so good. Their conditions, as the head of California's egg trade group explained, are "like you sitting in an airplane seat in the economy section all your life."

So if you're a hen, you want to live in California. Short of that, you want California-size leg room. And that's precisely what lawmakers in California are demanding of out-of-state farmers who sell eggs in California – setting off a feud over interstate commerce that has spilled over into the farmyard at large.

The Missouri attorney general has filed a lawsuit to block the California egg rules, and at least three other states are considering doing the same. The beef and pork lobbies are also lining up against the California rules in an effort to prevent any new restrictions on raising livestock.

Read the whole story

Lake level causing problems for boat owners

By Kathryn Reed

Boats already aren't able to get in and of Lake Tahoe marinas and with only a little runoff expected to come down from higher elevations in the next couple months, the situation is only going to get worse as summer rolls into fall.

The Tahoe Queen paddle-wheeler can no longer get in and out of its home port at Ski Run Marina.

"There are plans to dredge if the drought continues. It is being done directly by Aramark," Mansoor Alyeshmerni, owner of Ski Run Marina, told *Lake Tahoe News*.



Steve Pascal had to remove his boat this winter from the Tahoe Keys Marina because he can't get out to the lake. Photo/Provided

Aramark's habit of not returning calls continues. No permit has been sought by Aramark to dredge, according to Lahontan officials.

Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board has permitted a maintenance dredging project that has already started at the

North Tahoe Marina.

"I've heard from a representative of Tahoe City Marina they may wish to dredge this summer. We are talking about maintenance dredging. That is to dredge to the area that has previously been dredged," Alan Miller with Lahontan told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The agency is also in the process of permitting a maintenance dredging operation for Tahoe City Public Utility District.

Miller said now is the typical time to dredge so marinas avoid the busy summer season when boats want access. It takes about 30 to 60 days to get a permit.

"They can (dredge) anytime unless there's a habitat issue," Miller said.

Steve Pascal had to remove his 56-foot-long boat last month from the Tahoe Keys Marina because he could no longer get out of the channel into the lake. He hasn't been able to do so since September.

The lake level was at 6,225 feet then. The natural rim of Lake Tahoe is 6,223 feet. The water level is about 1 foot above that now.

"My boat draws 4.5 feet and I was unable to get out. The water level in the channel now is about 3 feet," Pascal told *Lake Tahoe News*. "The majority of boats in Lake Tahoe need more than 3 feet underneath them to get out of the channel."

He said the Keys is the only marina that can house his vessel and is the only one where he can remove it. Francesca, named after his grandmother, is now in San Diego.

What irks Pascal is that part of his slip fee was a surcharge for dredging maintenance. He's had large boats at the marina since 1993. In those 21 years he said he's spent \$240,000 on slip fees, maintenance dredging fee, and water quality fees.

Pascal said he's talked to Robert Spinnato, general manger of the marina, about dredging, but nothing ever happened.

Spinnato did not return multiple phone calls.

CDC: Antibiotic overuse can be lethal

By Betsy McKay and Valerie Bauerlein, Wall Street Journal

The overuse of antibiotics in U.S. hospitals is putting patients at risk and helping to fuel the creation of deadly superbugs, according to a government report released Tuesday.

Prescribing practices vary widely, with doctors in some hospitals providing three times as many antibiotics for patients as physicians in other facilities treating similar types of patients, concluded the report, produced by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The CDC analyzed prescribing practices at 323 hospitals in 2010 and 11,282 patients at 183 hospitals in 2011. About 36 percent of patients studied were given the powerful antibiotic vancomycin without testing or for too long, the report found.

Read the whole story

Owl rehabbing at LTWC may have been poisoned

By Mike TeSelel, KCRA-TV

Five days after being rescued by Lake Tahoe's Wildlife Care center, a great horned owl is still unable to fly and unable to use its legs.

"We're not sure why," said Tom Millham of Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care. "We have a thought it could have been a poisoning."

Millham said he has seen similar symptoms in other birds in the past. Based on those cases, he suspects this owl may have eaten a rat or mouse that had ingested rat poison.

[Read the whole story](#)