

Grocers group supports plastic bag ban

By Marc Lifsher, Los Angeles Times

SACRAMENTO — A drive to ban most stores from handing out single-use plastic bags got an important boost Monday when the California Grocers Association announced its support for a bill.

The measure by state Sen. Alex Padilla, D-Pacoima, would prohibit the bags in grocery stores and pharmacies beginning on Jan. 1, 2015. Shoppers would be urged to bring their own reusable cloth or plastic bags or would have the option of paying the actual cost of a paper bag, estimated at 10 cents or less.

Convenience and liquor stores would face the same requirements on Jan. 1, 2016.

An initial hearing on SB405 in the Senate Environmental Quality Committee is set for Wednesday.

The proposal, if it becomes law, would supersede roughly 70 local plastic bag ordinances, such as those in Los Angeles County and the cities of Los Angeles, Santa Monica, Long Beach, Pasadena and West Hollywood.

The South Lake Tahoe City Council this year said it preferred to keep plastic bags, despite a growing trend do the opposite.

"It is time for a statewide single-use plastic bag ban in California," Padilla said at a Capitol news conference.

Ron Fong, president of the California Grocers Association, said his 400 members back Padilla's bill because it provides "consistency and predictability for consumers." Complying with dozens of slightly different city and county laws is

complicated and expensive, he said.

Single-use bags are a form of “urban tumbleweed” that fouls creek beds, parks and beaches and is harmful to wildlife and marine animals, environmentalists contend. The bags also are difficult to recycle, with less than 5 percent being repurposed, they said.

“They blow off the face of landfills and out of transfer stations,” said Mark Murray, executive director of Californians Against Waste. “This is a problem product and the best solution is to phase them out.”

Plastic bag manufacturers counter that their products are made of 100 percent recyclable material that is regularly reused by consumers. Light-weight plastic bags take up less room than paper bags in landfills and account for only 2 percent of all litter, said a fact sheet from a trade group called the American Progressive Bag Alliance.

Padilla’s proposal is not the only one dealing with single-use plastic bags this legislative session. A rival one by Sen. Lois Wolk, D-Davis, would put a 5-cent tax on all single-use plastic and paper shopping bags.

CalFire worried about early, bad fire season

By Kate Mather, Los Angeles Times

CalFire is beefing up its staffing in anticipation of a fire season officials worry could be affected by an “extremely” dry winter, the agency announced.

CalFire has hired and trained seasonal firefighters that will help staff seasonal stations and some helicopters “around the clock,” according to a department statement.

The agency announced Monday it had begun “transitioning into fire season” in San Diego, Riverside and San Bernardino counties.

The agency said a snow survey conducted in late March indicated low snow levels, as the Northern Sierra Nevada received only 5.5 inches of rain between January and March – a potential record low. CalFire officials are “concerned about the impact to this year’s fire season.”

Officials asked Southern California homeowners to take recommended precautions, including: clearing 100 feet of defensible space around their homes; removing needles and leaves from roofs and rain gutters; trimming branches 6 feet off the ground, and using powered lawn and landscaping equipment in cooler morning hours.

Seniors convince council to kick out county

By Kathryn Reed

Instead of El Dorado County taking over office space, they repurposed the South Lake Tahoe Senior Center building to the point where the original occupants no longer feel welcome.

Tuesday’s South Lake Tahoe City Council meeting was full of people in support of returning the building in the middle of town to be just a senior center as was the agreement between

the two government bodies when documents were first signed in the 1970s.

They got what they wanted. The council unanimously agreed to tell the county it has until June 30 to find another place for its people or the locks will be changed July 1.



City Attorney Patrick Enright said the agreement in place is not valid because it was never signed by the mayor or any council member, and there was never a meeting before the council to discuss the potential changes.

The signatures on the agreement allowing mental health into the senior center are Enright's, City Clerk Suzie Alessi and former City Manager Tony O'Rourke.

The county owns the land. The building was constructed by the city. The city pays the county for use of the land.

An amended agreement dated Dec. 12, 1972, for what is known as the 56 acres, said the city had until the end of 1976 to build the senior center.

In 1981 the nonprofit Tahoe Basin Senior Citizens Center was founded. This was so the seniors could essentially govern themselves, raise money and make improvements. More than \$200,000 in improvements has been made since then.

The facility had been operating exclusively as a senior center. That changed last year with the county in its quest to consolidate offices told the city it would be moving mental health and veterans services into the senior center.

The county hasn't even reimbursed the city for its share of the utilities from last year.

The American Legion has offered to let the vets have office space when needed. According to Councilwoman JoAnn Conner, who is a member of the veterans auxiliary, the offer has fallen on deaf ears with the county.

No one from the county was at the April 16 meeting, but city staff has been working with county staff and elected officials to come to a resolution. The city says the talk all sounds good, but nothing changes.

And while the seniors knew changes were coming based on meetings that were conducted last year, the outcomes were not all anticipated.

Rooms are off limits, making exercise time be rescheduled to the recreation center. But for this age group to walk in snow and on ice is not the ideal option.

Even more disturbing to the 19 people who spoke on Tuesday is not feeling safe at the center.

Vagrants are now sleeping outside the building. Mental health clients are smoking cigarettes and pot in the bathroom. Kitchen privileges are not what they were. Equipment and furniture belonging to the seniors are missing.

Across the parking lot is the Lake Tahoe Museum, which has been vandalized since mental health patients showed up.

And while it was stressed by many that the intent is not to come down on mental health clients, it's about the need to segregate these two distinct populations. It's also about keeping the senior center just that – a center for seniors. For many, this is their one place to socialize, to get a hot meal, to be among their peers.

In other action:

- The council is having a special closed session on April 22 and possibly April 23 to interview up to five candidates for

city attorney. There is no local candidate. It's expected to be a few weeks before the new person is named. Enright's last day is May 31.

- A two-year agreement with On Course Events will be entered into for the South Lake Tahoe company to operate the Thursday night summer concerts known as Live at Lakeview. There is, however, some disagreement as to who owns that name. Rob Giustina, owner of the company, told *Lake Tahoe News* he has the rights.

- The council revised the lease with Tahoe Sports Entertainment so alcohol sales are no longer part of the gross sales.

Cops: S. Tahoe man chokes mom until she passes out



Skylor
Klisch

A 21-year-old South Lake Tahoe man is accused of strangling his mother to the point she lost consciousness.

Skylor Klisch was booked April 17 into jail on charges of felony battery and resisting arrest. After a small package of marijuana was allegedly found on him at the jail, he also faces charges related to bringing a controlled substance into the El Dorado County Jail.



The weapon and ammo found on the suspect April 17 in South Lake Tahoe. Photos/Provided

Officers were called to a residence in the 800 block of Tahoe Island Drive on Wednesday at 6:30am. There they found a battered, unconscious 45-year-old woman. Her son, Klisch, had left on a bicycle.

Officers said Klisch didn't stop until his bicycle lost traction on the snow and he fell.

Officers said they confiscated a .22-caliber handgun and ammunition.

The victim regained consciousness and was provided medical treatment.

A judge has issued an emergency protective order preventing Klisch from contacting his mother until further notice.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Expect delays today on I-80

Caltrans is alerting motorists that delays are expected on Interstate 80 today from 10am-1pm due to rock removal operations.

The California Highway Patrol will be intermittently holding westbound traffic near Yuba Gap and eastbound traffic near Emigrant Gap. Delays of approximately 15-20 minutes can be expected.

The work was originally scheduled for Tuesday but was delayed a day because of the weather.

The removal operations will include employee rock scaling, blasting, slope stabilization and debris removal.

This work is part of the \$105 million Emigrant Gap project on I-80 from Carpenter Flat to Hampshire Rock. This project is designed to remove and replace the worn roadway pavement, replace the existing median barrier and guardrail, improve drainage and increase shoulder widths. Completion is scheduled for fall.

Medicinal pot deliveries cropping up in S. Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

Three businesses that are delivering medicinal marijuana in South Lake Tahoe may be violating the city's laws.

City Manager Nancy Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News* she found out

about the illegal operations on Monday.

"If it turns out they are operating a dispensary, they will be shut down," Kerry said.

A man answering the Truckee number for Hip Joynt said his boss has been in South Tahoe since late last summer and in Truckee for a couple months before that. He, however, deferred all comments to his boss, who has not returned a call.

The woman answering the South Tahoe telephone for Hip Joynt said, "I'm not sure my boss is ready to be in the newspaper." (The main number is out of the East Bay, as are most of the cities the company delivers to.)

The company's website says, "We provide prompt, professional, discreet delivery of clinically tested cannabis and gourmet edibles throughout California, in strict compliance with state law."

South Tahoe Police Chief Brian Uhler told *Lake Tahoe News*, "Transportation (of medicinal marijuana) is not covered in any provision of the law – state or federal."

Pony Express, a company that tried to establish itself in South Lake Tahoe as a medical pot delivery service, was busted a little more than a year ago. The two defendants pleaded guilty to felony charges.

Uhler said he also recently became aware of the latest delivery services operating in town. He will be working with South Lake El Dorado Narcotics Enforcement Team to reel these ones in, too.

An Internet search of these types of services comes up with a handful on the South Shore and in the Truckee area.

A call to High Tides Medical Delivery went unanswered with no ability to leave a message. That business, according to its Yelp page, operates seven days a week from 9am-noon in South

Lake Tahoe.

Chef Jenn's Delivery Service has been operating in South Lake Tahoe since November. Jenn, who lives in town but would not give her last name, said she spoke with Kerry briefly on April 16.

"I don't think I'm violating the law," Jenn told *Lake Tahoe News*. "If there is a law I'm not following, please someone tell me so I can fix the problem. I'm more than willing to cooperate. I've never been a person who wants to break the law. I don't want to cause problems."

She delivers the medicine to people who have medicinal marijuana cards. Some are shut-ins, some want privacy. It's all by donation.

Jenn said 10 percent of what is collected is returned to the community. Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care has received a donation and the Boys & Girls Club of Lake Tahoe is next.

"I have real jobs. This is not how I make my money," Jenn said.

In her kitchen she makes some of the edibles.

This, though, is in direct violation of the city's medical marijuana ordinance. No one is supposed to be producing edible products in their homes.

Kerry said more time is needed to find out what the businesses are doing exactly and how they may or may not be complying with local, state and federal laws.

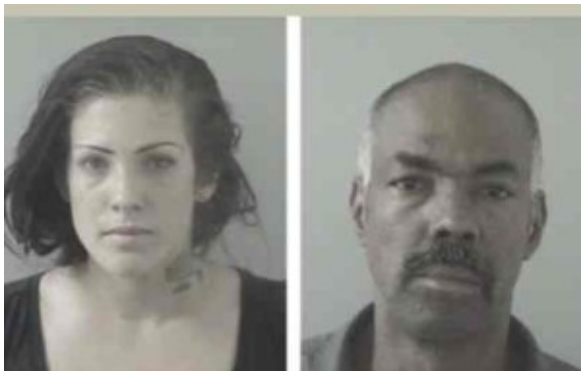
West Slope residents arrested on drug charges

By Cathy Locke, Sacramento Bee

A three-month investigation by the El Dorado County Sheriff's Office has led to the arrest of a 51-year-old parolee from Placerville accused of selling heroin to undercover detectives.

The investigation began in January when sheriff's patrol deputies received a report of a man threatening the life of another person. The man accused of making the threats was identified as parolee Ronnie Chambers, according to a sheriff's office news release.

While investigating the threat, detectives discovered that Chambers wanted to sell cocaine, sheriff's officials said.



Lauren Bond and Ronnie Chambers

During January, undercover detectives called Chambers and arranged to purchase \$200 worth of cocaine from him.

They arranged to meet Chambers in Placerville, where Chambers reportedly sold them a substance that appeared to be cocaine.

The substance, however, was later determined to be crushed

pills that contained morphine, sheriff's officials said.

Undercover detectives later phoned Chambers and complained that they were not happy with his product. They told him they wanted their money back or the cocaine he originally promised them.

In February, while still investigating the threats, undercover detectives met with Chambers. At that time, Chambers provided them with \$100 of the original \$200 and a small amount of crystal methamphetamine, sheriff's officials said.

Earlier this month, Chambers contacted the undercover detectives and offered to sell them heroin, which the detectives subsequently purchased from him, according to the news release.

At that time, Chambers was arrested along with a passenger in his vehicle, Lauren Bond, 22, of Shingle Springs.

Bond is accused of being in possession of narcotics paraphernalia at the time and having an active narcotics warrant for her arrest. Both were booked into El Dorado County jail on Thursday.

Sheriff's officials said Chambers was on unsupervised parole and was also arrested on suspension of five drug-related felony offenses. He is being held without bail.

Hot dog king who once lived in Tahoe dies

By Scott Glover, Los Angeles times

John Galardi, a fast food entrepreneur best known for founding the Wienerschnitzel hot dog chain, has died of pancreatic cancer, his company announced. He was 75.

Galardi also had business dealings in South Lake Tahoe. He was a partner in the El Dorado Improvement Corporation and at one time owned the Rodeway Inn.

Galardi died Saturday, according to the company release.



John Galardi had ties to South Lake Tahoe.

Galardi opened the first Wienerschnitzel stand in L.A.'s Wilmington neighborhood in 1961 when he was 23, according to a company biography. It's now the world's largest hot dog chain, with 350 locations selling more than a 120 million hot dogs a year.

As his hot dog business took off, Galardi added the Original Hamburger Stand and Tastee Freez to his portfolio, all operated under the Galardi Group, based in Irvine, the bio said.

"He has touched countless lives through his generosity as a business leader and his legacy will forever live on," Dennis Tase, who handles day-to-day operations of the company, said in a prepared statement.

"Galardi built a brand representative of a time when life was simpler, a brand that holds a special place in the hearts of

so many families in America. He will be deeply missed.”

Galardi is survived by his wife, Judane, and his four children.

1 person dies in accident at Caples Lake

A Florida man died Monday when the vehicle he was driving went off the road near Caples Lake dam.

The name of the 25-year-old from Hobe Sound is not being released pending notification of family.

According to California Highway Patrolman Paul Smyrski, the victim was headed toward Kirkwood on Highway 88 at a high rate of speed when he lost control of his vehicle. About 1 inch of snow was on the ground. The Toyota pickup did not make the sharp left onto the dam. The vehicle left the road, went up a dirt embankment, struck a tree and sign post and then went airborne.

The vehicle then hit a metal gate and post before it went off a small cliff, hit a cedar tree and landed on the driver's side.

The driver was ejected. He was pronounced dead at the scene.

Smyrski told *Lake Tahoe News* alcohol is not believed to be a factor in the April 14 4:45pm fatality.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Eldorado losing its forest supervisor

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – After less than two years on the job, Kathy Hardy is about to retire as forest supervisor of the Eldorado National Forest.

While the 605,000-acre forest does not include parts of the Lake Tahoe Basin, it once did. When the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit was created, the Eldorado lost the Lake Valley portion of its jurisdiction.

Years ago Hardy worked for LTBMU. And at that time she was a member of Soroptimist International South Lake Tahoe. She returned last week as a guest speaker to the group during a lunch at Harveys.



Kathy Hardy will be retiring this spring from the Eldorado National Forest.

Photo/Provided

Ecological restoration is one of the main focuses of her job. This includes dealing with timber stands and various issues

that affect rivers and streams.

When the Forest Service was created, trees were thought of as a crop. That's why it falls under the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The Eldorado includes four rivers, parts of two wilderness areas (Desolation is one), 888 lakes-ponds-reservoirs, 57 campgrounds, 700 miles of non-motorized trails, and 2,600 miles of roads. "Which is too many," Hardy said of the roads.

There are 155 National Forests and 20 National Grasslands in the country.

"They are managed for multiple uses. There is a lot of conflict with each other," Hardy said.

While recreation is often what people in Tahoe think of when being part of the forest, playing outdoors can have impacts on other goals of the Forest Service. This is because the resources of the forest also need protection – whether it's the plants or animals.

Ensuring the watersheds provide a continuous flow of clean water is another mandate of the Forest Service.

Fire has long been an issue within the Forest Service, with policy changing throughout the years. Now it's about managing the forest so the threat of a devastating fire is lessened. More recently letting some fires burn as they would do naturally is being allowed because research shows this is better for the ecosystem.

Of the 360 employees in the Eldorado about two-thirds are permanent employees, with the other third seasonal summer workers. Half of the workers are firefighters. They are deployed throughout the country as needed.

When Hardy started with the U.S. Forest Service in 1981 there were not many women. While she is the first woman to lead the

Eldorado, of the 18 National Forests in California, 10 have a woman at the helm.

While budget cuts continue to impact Forest Service operations, she said the department anticipated sequestration by implementing 6 percent budget cuts at the start of the year.

But she also said she doesn't know how the cutbacks will completely be absorbed. It's possible some campgrounds won't open.

This summer Hardy plans to spend more of her time playing outdoors with her husband, Bruce Ungari, who has already retired. Camping, skiing, rafting and fishing are some of their favorite activities. A tip she told Soroptimist – check out the Big Meadows campground near Georgetown.

“It's just beautiful,” Hardy said, and her favorite in the Eldorado.