

Bay Area brother-sister survive night in backcountry

Updated Jan. 13 12:25pm

By Kathryn Reed

Two Bay Area residents are recovering from frostbite and hypothermia after being rescued near Bear River Reservoir in Eldorado National Forest on Saturday night.

"We are just lucky to be alive," Sally Shanks told *Lake Tahoe News* on Jan. 13 from her bed at Barton Memorial Hospital. But she admits she and her brother would not have survived another night outside. Temperatures have been subzero for the past few nights.

El Dorado County rescue crews got the missing persons report Santa Clara County officials. John Hearne, 70, of Los Altos and Shanks, 66, of Walnut Creek had planned a day snowmobile trip, but failed to return home Friday night.

The experienced snowmobilers were dressed for the elements, but were not prepared to spend the night in the wilderness. What slowed search and rescue crews is the two did not tell anyone where they would be parking and where exactly they would be snowmobiling.

Shanks said she has been snowmobiling for 40 years, and they both know the area well. It was after they had gone in on 29 miles of groomed trails that they decided to follow the sign that said 4 miles to their truck. But that route had them going through deep powder they were not expecting. That's when their sleds got stuck.

"When we saw we could not make it we built a shelter and hunkered down for the night," Shanks said. "My brother and I

are pretty hearty and resilient. We made a smart decision Friday night to camp rather than go where we knew couldn't go."

They dug out under a downed log, put pine branches up as walls and packed that with snow.

Sheriff's Deputy Damian Frisby told *Lake Tahoe News* the two also huddled together and did exercises to stay warm.

They had food and one bottle of water. But that bottle was solid ice. Shanks was able to break through the water at Tragedy Springs to fill the bottle. But that meant they were not starting to hydrate until Saturday afternoon.

Shanks' vehicle was found Jan. 12 at 11:43am at the old Iron Mountain Ski Resort at Iron Mountain Road and Highway 88 in El Dorado County. Deputies, along with search and rescue volunteers from El Dorado, Amador, and Alpine counties began searching the area, as did CHP helicopter H24.

CalStar out of Lake Tahoe Airport joined the search as darkness closed in because the helicopter pilot has night vision goggles. Two buried snowmobiles were located about 7pm northeast of the Bear River Reservoir.

Following their foot tracks, CalStar located the missing duo approximately 4 air miles away. The ground distance traveled by the two was estimated at 12 miles.

The CalStar crew loaded the two on board at 7:18pm, taking them to Barton Memorial Hospital. They remained in the South Lake Tahoe hospital Sunday afternoon.

Shanks isn't sure when they will be released. She said she should fully recover, but her brother has frostbite issues with some of his toes. He took his boots off Friday night, wrapped them in a vest and stuffed them in a backpack. He had to stuff his feet into frozen socks and boots the next

morning.

Shanks admits they were scared.

“We were getting tired and run down. We knew we needed to make wise choices. We conferred on every direction,” Shanks said as they walked along snowmobile tracks on Saturday.

She said she just kept thinking about finding the road, hitch hiking to the truck and having to endure a long drive home. She didn’t anticipate having to spend a few days in a hospital.

Mostly, though, she is thankful to the search and rescue teams, CalStar pilot and hospital staff for all they have done and continue to do.

Scam artist calling Tahoe residents claiming to be DEA agent

A South Lake Tahoe resident on Jan. 12 reported a suspicious phone call to law enforcement that has led to a warning by officers.

According to police, a man identified himself as a Drug

Enforcement Agency agent investigating a mail order prescription purchase the resident had made in 2006. The resident was told to send/wire \$1,000 to avoid being arrested on charges of making an illegal prescription purchase via the Internet.

The resident instead called the police and did not send the money.

The DEA is aware of this scam and has posted a warning on its website advising criminals are posing as DEA agents and attempting to extort money from people who have purchased prescriptions via the Internet. The impersonator tells the person they will take action, which includes arrest, if they don't pay a fine.

If anyone is ever contacted by someone who claims to be DEA agent or any law enforcement officer and demands money or any other form of payment, it is a scam, South Tahoe officers warn.

Police urge people to never give anyone personal or financial information over the phone or email unless having verified who the person is and what company they work for.

More information about the scam is on the DEA website.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Lawmakers whittling away at reproductive justice

By Kate Pickert, Time

It's 8am on a Wednesday, and Tammi Kromenaker is on the phone, trying to untangle an insurance snafu.

After 15 minutes of arguing with a billing operator, the director of the Red River Women's Clinic in Fargo, N.D., begins preparing for the patients who will soon arrive. Staff members trickle in. One puts a DVD of old sitcoms on the waiting-room television. Another straightens a pile of magazines. Someone brews a pot of coffee. By 10 a.m., the clinic is bustling with patients. Before the day is over, 18 women will undergo surgical abortions at Red River. Four others will receive abortion-inducing medication.

Kromenaker, a social worker, was born in January 1972, one year before the Supreme Court decided *Roe v. Wade*. She has spent her entire adult life providing abortion services and is among hundreds of clinic directors across the U.S. navigating an ever increasing number of state-imposed abortion regulations. At Red River, the only abortion clinic in North Dakota, a woman must wait 24 hours between scheduling an appointment and arriving at the facility. Once there, she must undergo a counseling, verification and testing process that lasts up to five hours. If she is a minor, she must notify her parents; get permission from one or both, depending on who has custody; or get approval from a judge. Like Medicaid programs in some 30 other states, North Dakota's does not cover abortion services except in instances of rape or incest or to protect the life of the mother.

In the past two decades, laws like the ones that govern appointments at Red River have been passed with regularity as

pro-life state legislators have redrawn the boundaries of legal abortion in the U.S. In 2011, 92 abortion-regulating provisions—a record number—passed in 24 states after Republicans gained new and larger majorities in 2010 in many legislatures across the country. These laws make it harder every year to exercise a right heralded as a crowning achievement of the 20th century women's movement. In addition to North Dakota, three other states—South Dakota, Mississippi and Arkansas—have just one surgical-abortion clinic in operation. The number of abortion providers nationwide shrank from 2,908 in 1982 to 1,793 in 2008, the latest year for which data is available. Getting an abortion in America is, in some places, harder today than at any point since it became a constitutionally protected right 40 years ago this month.

It might seem as though recent electoral victories by Barack Obama and congressional Democrats set the stage for a reversal of this trend. The President's campaign mobilized Democratic voters and women around the issue of reproductive rights—an effort that produced, according to some exit polls, the widest gender voting gap in history. But while the right to have an abortion is federal law, exactly who can access the service and under what circumstances is the purview of states. And at the state level, abortion-rights activists are unequivocally losing.

Part of the reason is that the public is siding more and more with their opponents. Even though three-quarters of Americans believe abortion should be legal under some or all circumstances, just 41 percent identified themselves as pro-choice in a Gallup survey conducted in May 2012. In this age of prenatal ultrasounds and sophisticated neonatology, a sizable majority of Americans supports abortion restrictions like waiting periods and parental-consent laws. Pro-life activists write the legislation to set these rules. Their pro-choice counterparts, meanwhile, have opted to stick with their longtime core message that government should not interfere at

all with women's health care decisions, a stance that seems tone-deaf to the current reality.

Pro-choice activists' failure to adapt to the shift in public attitudes on abortion has left their cause stranded in the past, says Frances Kissling, a longtime abortion-rights advocate and former president of Catholics for Choice. Kissling is part of a small group within the pro-choice movement trying to push the cause toward more nuanced stances. "The established pro-choice position – which essentially is: abortion should be legal, a private matter between a woman and her doctor, with no restriction or regulation beyond what is absolutely necessary to protect the woman's health – makes 50 percent of the population extremely uncomfortable and unwilling to associate with us," she says.

At the same time, a rebellion within the abortion-rights cause – pitting feminists in their 20s and 30s against pro-choice power brokers who were in their 20s and 30s when Roe was decided—threatens to tear it in two. Many young activists are bypassing the legacy feminist organizations that have historically protected access to abortion, weakening the pro-choice establishment at the very moment it needs to coalesce around new strategies to combat pro-life gains and connect with the public.

As memories of women dying from illegal pre-Roe abortions become more distant, the pro-choice cause is in crisis. In 1973, female lawyers from the Center for Constitutional Rights said Roe v. Wade was "a tribute to the coordinated efforts of women's organizations, women lawyers and all women throughout this country." Writing a new playbook for the pro-choice cause – one that ensures that Roe is not overturned and that access to abortion is preserved and even expanded – would require the same kind of coordination. If abortion-rights activists don't come together to adapt to shifting public opinion on the issue of reproductive rights, abortion access in America will almost certainly continue to erode.

In many ways, the fight to preserve access to abortion is even more daunting than the fight to legalize it 40 years ago. In a dynamic democracy like America, defending the status quo is always harder than fighting to change it. The story of pro-choice activism after Roe reveals that there may be nothing worse for a political movement's future than achieving its central goal.

Around her workspace at Red River, Kromenaker has tacked up photographs of her daughter and phone numbers for the Fargo police department and a security hotline operated by the National Abortion Federation. In the filing cabinet behind her desk, she keeps a green folder full of mail from pro-life activists. The correspondence ranges from vaguely threatening notes to prayers on behalf of Kromenaker, the doctors who work at Red River and their patients. Kromenaker is proud and outspoken about her work, but she takes different routes to work every day to avoid falling into a routine that might make her a target for pro-life zealots. (Abortion doctor George Tiller was at his regular Sunday church service when he was shot and killed by a pro-life activist in 2009.) "Even if I'm at Target looking at clothes, I never let my guard down," she says. It might seem like paranoia to be so vigilant, but in the late 1990s, Kromenaker testified at the trial of a man accused of trying to start a fire at a clinic where she worked before Red River.

In 2011, Kromenaker testified again, this time at a committee hearing in the North Dakota state senate, which was considering a bill passed by the house that sought to ban medication-induced abortions, among other provisions. Despite Kromenaker's testimony and the efforts of pro-choice activists in North Dakota, the bill passed the state senate 42 to 5 and was signed into law on April 18, 2011. (Red River is suing to overturn the law, which a judge has blocked from going into effect.)

In November, feminists celebrated the defeat of U.S. Senate

candidates Todd Akin of Missouri, who said a woman's body can resist a pregnancy in the case of "legitimate rape," and Richard Mourdock of Indiana, who said pregnancies conceived in rape are "intended" by God. Even before Election Day, Cecile Richards, president of Planned Parenthood, said, "This past year and a half has been a remarkable period of unifying women and men and a whole new generation of folks who understand that none of these rights or access can be taken for granted."

Yet the candidate who beat Mourdock, Democrat Joe Donnelly, is also pro-life and believes abortion should be illegal except in cases of rape or incest or to protect the life of the mother. Voters in Indiana also elected conservative Republican Representative Mike Pence as the new governor. Pence has been introducing legislation since 2007 to eliminate federal funding for women's-health clinics that provide abortions, including a GOP House effort to defund Planned Parenthood in 2011. And in North Dakota, which has a Republican governor and legislature, Kromenaker is girding for new legislation she expects to be introduced that would grant fetuses "personhood" status and directly challenge the constitutional basis for *Roe v. Wade*.

The modern era of state restrictions on abortion began in 1992 with the Supreme Court's decision in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*. The court upheld *Roe v. Wade* but said states have a right to regulate abortion as long as they don't write laws that impose an "undue burden" on women. Pro-life politicians enacting laws to limit abortion are now testing the limits of the *Casey* ruling. Their ultimate goal is to land another abortion case before a sympathetic Supreme Court in an attempt to overturn *Roe*. Along the way, in what Charmaine Yoest, president of the antiabortion group Americans United for Life, describes as a strategy to "work around *Roe*," pro-life activists hope to severely – or completely – curtail access to abortion at the state level.

In Mississippi, pro-life activists pushed for passage of a

2012 law requiring that doctors who perform abortions have admitting privileges at local hospitals. None of the out-of-state physicians who perform abortions at the state's sole abortion clinic have these privileges. The clinic remains open while a federal judge examines the constitutionality of the law and whether it presents an undue burden to women seeking abortions. Governor Phil Bryant, who signed the law, said it was part of an effort to "end abortion in Mississippi."

The Volunteer Women's Medical Clinic in Knoxville, Tenn., was open for 38 years before it closed in August 2012, citing the state's Life Defense Act, passed earlier in the year, which also requires doctors to have hospital admitting privileges. A doctor who worked at the facility obtained hospital privileges but died suddenly of a stroke, and clinic director Deb Walsh said she couldn't afford to keep her doors open while she tried to replace him.

In Virginia, the state board of health adopted a rule last year requiring abortion clinics to comply with architectural zoning regulations for hospitals. Like the Mississippi law and one just enacted in Michigan requiring abortion clinics to be licensed, the Virginia rule seems designed to make clinics safer, but there is little evidence that women's health had previously been in danger. Loretta Ross, who co-founded Sister Song, an Atlanta-based reproductive-rights group focused on the needs of women of color, is among those in the pro-choice movement who marvel at the pro-life strategic vision even though she opposes its goals. "The entire women's-health movement was predicated on the lack of women's safety and gender consciousness in health care settings," says Ross. "It is a classic example of our opponents learning from us and taking our script."

In fact, those most affected by new zoning laws are independent clinics like Red River, whose tight margins make it financially burdensome for them to adapt to new requirements. Planned Parenthood is the largest abortion

provider in the U.S., but independent clinics collectively deliver the majority of abortions in America. And as abortion services have become concentrated in specialized clinics – as opposed to hospitals, which accounted for the vast majority of abortion facilities in 1973 – clinics have become easier targets. Pro-life groups celebrate every clinic closure.

The other strength of the state-based clinic laws, which often are based on text written by pro-life activists and lawyers and distributed to lawmakers, is that they are hard to campaign against. The zoning regulation in Virginia, for example, would require abortion clinics to widen all hallways to 5 feet. “Is that the kind of thing that will rally voters?” asks Cristina Page, author of the book *How the Pro-Choice Movement Saved America*. “‘We’re not going to expand these hallways to be 5 feet wide!’ is not a compelling message. The villain is now in the fine print.”

When the Red River clinic opened in downtown Fargo 15 years ago, the surrounding area was a sea of blight and empty storefronts. In the years since, the area has undergone a dramatic revitalization that recently earned it a spot on a list of great neighborhoods in America. Two doors down from the clinic, customers of a deli check out using iPads. Across the street, a boutique hotel and restaurant serves upscale cocktails and locally sourced food.

The beige brick building that houses the clinic looks like a vestige of a more hostile era. A glass-block wall shields those inside from view. The lock on the interior door is operated by a switch inside, and patients are buzzed in only if they have appointments. Twenty to 25 abortions are performed every week at Red River, and the procedures are usually all scheduled on a single day. On these days, a staffer inside watches a set of closed-circuit televisions monitoring the entrance and the handful of protesters from a local Catholic church who show up and mill around out front with graphic signs showing aborted fetuses.

The atmosphere outside is tense, but inside, on the second floor, the waiting room is filled with sunlight. Lush houseplants are perched everywhere, and signs and posters decorate the walls: YOU ARE BEAUTIFUL. WE TRUST WOMEN. WELL-BEHAVED WOMEN RARELY MAKE HISTORY.

Kromenaker, who has run Red River since it opened, was born in a small town in northern Minnesota. Her family later settled in a suburb of Minneapolis, and Kromenaker graduated from Minnesota State University at Moorhead, just a few miles from Fargo. She and her husband, a California native, have stayed put in part so she can continue her work. "We're committed to this clinic," she says.

In Fargo, Kromenaker is battling the state legislature and the local pro-life community. But in Washington, establishment pro-choice activists are dealing with another set of threats that are mostly self-inflicted. What pro-choice activists call "the movement" is in many ways more fragmented than it's ever been, thanks to a widening generational divide. The problem is rooted in leadership, which is concentrated in a small but powerful army of women who were in their 20s and 30s when Roe was decided and who now oversee a number of establishment feminist organizations, including NARAL Pro-Choice America, run by Nancy Keenan, 60; the National Organization for Women, headed by Terry O'Neill, 60; and Feminist Majority, run by co-founder Eleanor Smeal, 73.

Some of these leaders and their similarly aged deputies have been reluctant to pass the torch, according to a growing number of younger abortion-rights activists who say their predecessors are hindering the movement from updating its strategy to appeal to new audiences. This tension had been brewing for years, but in 2010, Keenan told *Newsweek* that she worried that the pro-choice cause might be vulnerable because young people weren't motivated enough to get involved. The complaint struck young activists like Steph Herold, 25, as an effort to place blame on others for mistakes the establishment

pro-choice movement has made along the way. "They are the generation that gave us legalized abortions, but they also screwed up," says Herold, pointing to the pro-choice establishment's failure to stop the 1976 Hyde Amendment, a law that prohibits federal funding of abortions and disproportionately affects poor women. At a conference last May, Herold heard a women's-clinic owner who has worked in the abortion field for some 40 years echo Keenan's complaint—that young people aren't involved enough in the pro-choice movement. Herold was furious. She stood up and, trembling, walked to a microphone. "We're counseling your patients and stuffing your envelopes," Herold told the clinic owner. "You should be talking to us and not just about us."

The power struggle isn't based on differences over the right to access abortion. Young activists fighting for reproductive rights have the same hard-line view of abortion access as their predecessors: they say it should be unrestricted by state governments and that the decision to terminate a pregnancy should be left solely to women and their doctors. But the infighting could splinter the movement if the younger generation abandons those feminist institutions that have traditionally been the headquarters for voter-mobilization campaigns, fundraising and lobbying, the lifeblood of any political movement. Erin Matson, 32, became a vice president of NOW in 2009 but recently resigned. "When you want to build a jet pack, sometimes that means you have to leave the bicycle factory," she says.

Matson says she is considering starting a new organization to specifically target young people. "A number of young women are just saying, 'To hell with it, I'm just going to lead,'" she says. "It's easier for young women to exercise leadership right now than before we had this technology." The technology Matson refers to is the Internet. Last February, when the Susan G. Komen breast-cancer foundation eliminated its long-standing grant funding for Planned Parenthood, a backlash

quickly ensued on Twitter. Under tremendous pressure, Komen reinstated the funding. After the episode, says Herold, "No one can say anymore that young people don't care about this issue."

In addition to being nimbler at Web-based activism, young feminists have another advantage when appealing to millennial voters, who will make up some 40% of the electorate by 2020: relatability. "We need more leaders in this movement who are of reproductive age," says author Page, 42. Sandra Fluke, the law student Republicans barred from testifying before a congressional committee last year, was a valuable asset to the pro-choice cause in part because of her relative youth. She spoke publicly about the personal reproductive rights and birth control choices of her peers. Keenan, who has become aware that her own age might impede her effectiveness, announced last May that she would step down in 2013. She said she hoped a younger person could replace her. "They're chomping at the bit to have their opportunity," she says.

Young abortion-rights activists have a strategy to modernize the cause, which includes expanding it. They often don't even mention the term pro-choice, which they say is limiting and outdated. Instead these young leaders have embraced a cause known as reproductive justice – a broader, more diffuse agenda that addresses abortion access but also contraception, child care, gay rights, health insurance and economic opportunity. "It's a more holistic frame," says Matson. "And you see younger people connecting with that."

The term reproductive justice was coined in the 1990s by black feminists who wanted to broaden the appeal of reproductive rights and speak to the needs of African-American women, whose abortion rate is 3½ times that of white women. "The pro-choice movement would focus on 'Let's open more clinics.' The anti-choice movement would say, 'Let's stop women from going into them,'" says Ross, 59, of Sister Song. "Those of us in the reproductive-justice movement would say, 'Let's ask why there

is such a high rate of unintended pregnancies in our community. What are the factors driving that?'"

Addressing issues like economic disparity marks a major shift from the pro-choice messages of the 1970s that made choice the optimal virtue and an end in itself. But the shift, says Ross, is the natural maturation of the pro-choice movement and worth the extra effort. The abortion rate in impoverished black communities has remained disproportionately high despite efforts by Planned Parenthood and others to provide access to family-planning services. "What this proves," says Ross, "is that if people are not convinced that they have realistic economic and educational opportunities, you could put a clinic in a girl's bedroom and she would still think early motherhood is a better choice."

Eye contact can be hard to come by at Red River. Many patients walk the halls with their heads down and their arms crossed. In journals scattered throughout the clinic in which women are invited to express their feelings, patients write about nonsupportive husbands and boyfriends and ask God for forgiveness. They write about how they can't afford to support another child and how they are so glad Red River exists. Amid the low hum of ringing phones, the sound of a staffer reading a state-mandated script to women wafts through the clinic's upper floor: "North Dakota law defines abortion as terminating the life of a whole, separate, unique living human being."

When her name is called, a surgical-abortion patient descends a set of stairs and steps into a room where a technician performs an ultrasound. Afterward she enters an exam room and is met by the physician on duty. On this Wednesday it's Dr. Kathryn Eggleston, who informs the woman that she's reviewed her chart and asks, "Are you confident in your decision to have an abortion today?" If the woman says yes, the abortion begins; the whirring of the vacuum aspirator used to extract the fetus can be heard in the hallway. Within 15 minutes, Eggleston emerges from the room and enters another where the

removed contents are examined and photographed for the medical record.

In the recovery room, where patients rest in overstuffed leather recliners, Kromenaker chats with a 20-something woman who declined Eggleston's offer to go on birth control. "Do you have a boyfriend?" Kromenaker asks. No. Kromenaker runs through a few ancillary health benefits of birth control anyway, hands the woman some condoms and pats her shoulder.

A 24-year-old patient who drove 80 miles alone to reach the clinic says she and her boyfriend decided together not to continue her pregnancy, which was six weeks along. "Neither of us is anywhere near baby time right now. We argue over who will take the dog out some days, so I don't think the diaper changing would go much better." Another young woman at the clinic that day is less sure. When Eggleston asks if she is confident, the patient says no. Eggleston questions her further, and once it's clear that the woman is conflicted, she gives her prenatal vitamins and sends her home. The woman returns a week later. This time she does not change her mind.

About three-quarters of the patients at Red River are under 30. More than half have at least one child; about one-third have had a previous abortion; fewer than 4% are minors. These statistics roughly mirror national data. In all, more than 50 million legal abortions have occurred in the U.S. since *Roe v. Wade*. According to the Guttmacher Institute, a reproductive-rights group whose statistics are cited by both pro-life and pro-choice activists, nearly 1 in 3 American women will have an abortion by age 45. Some 90% of abortions occur in the first trimester of pregnancy.

The abortion war, like many other political fights, is largely waged on the margins of reality. Review the policies that have stoked widespread national debate and it's easy to assume that late-term abortions and those performed on underage girls or women impregnated by rape or incest constitute the bulk of

terminated pregnancies. In truth, these are mere slivers of the abortion story in America. And on the whole, there is little public disagreement on the merits of abortion in such cases. Most Americans support access to abortion in cases of rape or incest or when the mother's life is threatened, along with a raft of common state abortion restrictions. Gallup data shows that 79 percent of pro-choice Americans believe abortion should be illegal in the third trimester of pregnancy and that 60 percent support 24-hour waiting periods and parental consent for minors.

Establishment abortion-rights organizations oppose nearly all abortion-specific regulations. Pro-life activists view their opponents' hard line as an opportunity to use public support to push for laws that have the indirect effect of making the process of terminating a pregnancy more time-consuming and expensive. "As we work on this common-ground package of legislation, we are more where the American people are," says Yoest of Americans United for Life.

Activists like Yoest are playing a long game that kicked off when the antiabortion movement wholly adopted the label pro-life in the 1970s. Then, in the 1980s and '90s, as pro-life protesters were dragged to court over their activism at abortion clinics – blockading entrances, “counseling” patients seeking abortions and occasionally resorting to violence against doctors and staff—they slowly built a formidable legal apparatus that serves their cause today, says Joshua Wilson, an assistant professor of political science at John Jay College whose book *The Street Politics of Abortion* will be published this year. Of pro-life activists he says, “If they can get laws on the books, great, because they have the legal resources to defend them when they're challenged. It's an integrated strategy that's very impressive.”

The antiabortion cause has been aided by scientific advances that have complicated American attitudes about abortion. Prenatal ultrasound, which has allowed the general public to

see fetuses inside the womb and understand that they have a human shape beginning around eight weeks into pregnancy, became widespread in the 1980s, and some babies born as early as 24 weeks can now survive. Cultural norms about unwed pregnancy have shifted as well in the decades since *Roe v. Wade*. "In general, the pro-choice movement leaves people with the feeling that we don't see these things as complex because the answer is almost always, Well, it's a woman's decision," says Kissling, formerly of Catholics for Choice. "And that's true, but we don't have kitchen-table conversations at the national-advocacy level."

Kissling opposes the specific state laws pushed by pro-life activists but says the pro-choice movement's effort to "normalize abortion" is counterproductive. "When people hear us say abortion is just another medical procedure, they react with shock," she says. "Abortion is not like having your tooth pulled or having your appendix out. It involves the termination of an early form of human life. That deserves some gravitas."

While a return to the pre-roe days of back-alley abortions seems inconceivable – even in the face of so many new state laws restricting access to abortion—there is concern among pro-choice advocates that in places like North Dakota, where the nearest abortion clinic could be hundreds of miles away, women might be driven to take unnecessary risks. Those in the abortion-provider community say they worry that women in rural areas might try to purchase pregnancy-terminating medication on the Internet without a doctor's supervision. Amplifying this fear is the fact that the generation of doctors who stepped up to perform legal abortions after *Roe* have retired or died without a robust new class of physicians to take their place. Efforts are under way at many obstetrics-gynecology and family-practice residency programs to offer abortion training to more doctors, but the specter of protests and unwanted attention remains. "It's a vicious cycle," says Eggleston of

Red River. “If more of us were doing it, there would be less stigma.”

The smaller number of doctors willing to perform abortions has likely contributed to a fairly steady drop in the overall abortion rate, from about 30 per 1,000 women ages 15 to 44 in 1981 to about 20 per 1,000 in 2008, according to Guttmacher. Widespread access to birth control, which the pro-choice movement strongly supports; changing attitudes about family and fetuses; and state regulations are also cited as reasons. In theory, a lower rate of abortion might be something for both sides of the abortion debate to share credit for and even celebrate. But it also illustrates the ultimate challenge for pro-choice advocates. Their most pressing goal, 40 years after Roe, is to widen access to a procedure most Americans believe should be restricted—and no one wants to ever need.

Truckee contemplating plastic bag ban

Truckee is considering an ordinance that would ban all plastic checkout bags and require businesses to impose a fee on recyclable paper checkout bags.

The ordinance’s main intention is to stimulate reusable bag use, and in effect, reduce Truckee’s waste through a dramatic decrease in the consumption of single-use checkout bags. All money collected by a business under this ordinance would be retained by the business and used to cover its implementation costs.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, less than 5 percent of single-use plastic bags are recycled.

Truckee officials say the ordinance has the potential to eliminate the waste generated by plastic bags, while also having a 50-80 percent reduction in the amount of single-use paper shopping bags that are used and thrown away.

Staff is soliciting feedback from the community via this online survey, and from businesses via this survey link.

For more information, contact Nichole Dorr at ndorr@townoftruckee.com or (530) 582.2909.

Some 2-year degrees beat earning potential of bachelor's

By Huffington Post

A college degree's impact on earning potential is well known, but new data questions whether an associate's degree can beat out a bachelor's.

Mark Schneider, president of CollegeMeasures.org and a vice president at the American Institutes for Research, told NBC many associate's degrees "are worth a lot more than I expected and that I think other people expected."

A recent CollegeMeasures.org report that analyzed wage statistics in Virginia found that of the most popular courses of study, recipients of four-year nursing degrees earned the most during their first year out of college with a wage of \$48,959. Those with two-year nursing degrees averaged only slightly less at \$45,342. This greatly outperforms some four-year programs, and other data says this phenomenon exists in

other majors too. Political science and history majors' earned average was \$31,184 and \$30,230, respectively, in their first year out of college.

Additionally, students who receive an occupational and technical associate's degree could earn \$10,000 per year more than those with a non-occupational associate's degree, CollegeMeasures.org found.

There's more data to suggest that completing community college can sometimes earn students a ticket to the upper-middle class. NerdWallet's look at jobs that require an associate's degree showed the median 2010 pay for Air Traffic Controllers was \$108,040. Construction managers brought in \$83,860 and radiation therapists received \$74,980.

To be sure, bachelor degree programs outperform associate's degrees in most industries. For example, engineering majors can look forward to a median starting salary above \$60,000, according to PayScale.com. But Schneider told NBC this pattern of finding workers with two-year technical degrees outearning many four-year grads has been consistent across the states it has studied so far.

"In the U.S., we've tended to think that the bachelor's degree is the only thing that matters," Schneider said, "and this data tells us that technical degrees from community colleges are hidden gems."

Horizon hotel-casino lays off

workers; Edgewood considers options for Stateline property

By Kathryn Reed

Horizon hotel-casino in Stateline is struggling to keep its door open and find people to rent one of the 539 rooms.

Tahoe Horizon LLC, a subsidiary of Columbia Sussex Corp., runs the South Shore business. Horizon employees were laid off before the December holidays. This is usually one of the busiest times of the year for lodging properties at Lake Tahoe as well as for casinos.

While General Manager Corinna Osborne did not return *Lake Tahoe News'* phone calls, one of the fired employees who spoke off the record, said about a dozen workers were let go. Valet, bellmen and restaurant workers are out of work. One of the employees had been with the property for more than 30 years.



Horizon hotel-casino operators have just more than 16 months on their lease. Photo/LTN file

"Business is just real bad right now," a fired worker said.

The Four Seasons restaurant used to serve three meals a day. Now it just serves dinner.

Tahoe Horizon's contract to operate the hotel-casino expires March 31, 2014. The next day Edgewood Companies takes control of the building. Edgewood has owned the land for more than 50 years.

While Edgewood is aware of the recent layoffs, officials said the hotel-casino operator is not contractually required to report those dealings to them as the landlord.

"We don't have any indication they won't stay open," Patrick Rhamey, vice president of real estate for Edgewood, told *Lake Tahoe News*. The company is not making contingency plans if the Horizon wants to close before the contract expires.

Rhamey would not say what the Horizon may become after Edgewood takes over. However, the property will stay open over the long haul.

"It possibly could close temporarily for a short period of time, but not an extended period of time," he said.

With gaming licenses difficult to get in Nevada, it's probable a portion of the 30,000-square-foot casino floor will forever have some form of gambling.

Rhamey said the company is discussing what the property will become, but said nothing has been decided.

The company's website says, "Edgewood Companies has been conducting research and analysis to evaluate potential reuse or redevelopment options for the Horizon site. Options ranging from the preservation of the status quo to a complete scrape and redevelopment are under consideration. The full redevelopment of the site may include a destination resort with a recreation and entertainment focus. Amenities could include a live entertainment venue, a recreation hub to serve

as a gateway to Tahoe's great outdoors, a casino, and an indoor spa and fitness facilities with complimentary retail and restaurants. A redevelopment would include significant water quality improvements to improve clarity in Lake Tahoe."

While the future of the Horizon is up in the air, Edgewood Companies is going forward with plans to develop Edgewood Lodge on the nearby Edgewood Tahoe Golf Course. A business plan is being created which will include who is going to build the facility as well as operate it.

Site work and the pier will be done this summer, with actual ground breaking of the lodge likely occurring in 2014.

3 teenagers accused of robbing Incline gas station

Three people were arrested Jan. 10 in connection with the Jan. 2 armed robbery at the Incline Village Chevron station.

Two 17-year-old boys and 18-year-old Jorge Miranda-Rivas, all of Incline, were charged with robbery with a deadly weapon, conspiracy to commit robbery, grand larceny of an automobile and conspiracy to commit grand larceny of an automobile.

Washoe and Placer counties' sheriff's detectives are working the case together because the Incline incident has similarities to the Dec. 30 robbery at the Kings Beach Liquor

Store. The investigation is ongoing.

Anyone with information, should call (775) 328.3336, Secret Witness at (775) 322.4900.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

More bears mean more strife at Lake Tahoe

By Mike Anton, Los Angeles Times

HOMEWOOD – She was born under a house on the west shore of Lake Tahoe and quickly became a beloved fixture in this rustic community.

She rambled through backyards and climbed into open windows to snack. She swam in the lake's impossibly blue water and sunned herself on the beach as if on an extended vacation.

Residents nicknamed her Sunny. She was one of Lake Tahoe's "celebrity bears" – animals so familiar, so seemingly at ease around humans that they've become de facto residents of this forested idyll where the boundary between wilderness and civilization has all but disappeared.

"She was the epitome of how bears and humans can coexist," said Ann Bryant, an animal rights activist here. "Until she was murdered."

The morning of July 30, Sunny was found dead on the beach, felled by a shotgun blast.

The killing infuriated Lake Tahoe's large and vocal community

of bear lovers, who raised \$35,000 for a reward leading to the arrest and conviction of Sunny's killer.

Others thought that wasn't enough.

When no arrest was made, the suspected shooter's name and address were posted on a Facebook page established by a bear advocate to shame businesses with unlocked and overflowing dumpsters.

Reaction was swift – and, at times, disturbing:

I hope the person who did this is not only prosecuted to the fullest, but suffers the same fate Sunny did.

Can we have open season on the person who shot the bear??

Burn his cabin down.

Early November, and Lake Tahoe is dozing. Boats are gone for the winter, the notorious summer traffic has ebbed and neighborhoods of vacation homes are silent as ghost towns.

The bears, though, are hard at work.

An adult black bear will consume upward of 25,000 calories a day to prepare for hibernation. That's a lot of berries and pine nuts. Or, in the case of Lake Tahoe's bears, a lot of dumpster diving.

More than a thousand bear complaints a year are reported to officials on the lake's California side alone. They break into homes to forage in refrigerators, at times surprising terrified residents. They den under porches and have learned to twist the tops off food jars. They make the trash-can exploits of the Southern California bruin nicknamed Glen Bearian look like the fumbblings of an amateur.

"It's been an enormous evolutionary change," said Bryant, who

runs the Bear League, a self-styled detachment of some 250 volunteers who respond to calls round the clock from residents who've had a bear encounter. "The bears living here with us are evolving far faster than we are. They've learned to take advantage of us. We haven't learned to coexist with them. And they're dying for it."

At any given time, there are between 500 and 1,500 black bears around the lake. A mild winter in 2011-12 meant more cubs, and the parched backcountry was forcing more bears to scrounge for food in populated areas.

At one resort, three bears were legally killed after they entered numerous cabins; a cafe was evacuated when a bear strolled in during dinner.

The killings – among the approximately 90 bears handed death sentences here by game officials since 2009 – angered bear lovers.

Those killings lit the fuse. Sunny's death turned the anger to fury.

To say Sunny's poaching has spawned conjecture, rumors and conspiracy theories is like saying Lake Tahoe is kind of deep.

After the shooting, suspicion immediately turned to the owner of a property near where Sunny bled to death. Game wardens found no physical evidence; the shotgun left no ballistics. The man whom they call "a person of interest" got a lawyer, left town and has refused to be interviewed.

People reported hearing shots fired at 11:30pm – and at 6am. It was said that blood was found on the man's property and that he baited Sunny; there's no evidence of either, authorities say. A video taken earlier by locals purportedly showing the man loading a shotgun on his porch while Sunny was in a tree is of such poor quality it's impossible to tell who the person is and what he's doing.

“It’s still a very active investigation,” said Lt. John Lawson of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. “But we need solid evidence. I’ve been trying to convey that to people – you can’t arrest and convict somebody without evidence.”

The bar is considerably lower in the anonymity of the Internet. The threats made in the aftermath of Sunny’s death are not taken lightly in Lake Tahoe.

It’s not uncommon for people who have sought state approval to have a bear killed to receive an onslaught of threats. Homes have been vandalized. Even complaining about a problem bear to game wardens – who some see as the enemy – can bring scorn.

“People have been approached and yelled at in grocery stores simply for reporting bear activity,” said Placer County sheriff’s Capt. Jeff Ausnow. “They’ll say, ‘You can’t do that because they’re going to kill it.’ This is a very emotional issue here.”

Russ Tonda has owned property in Lake Tahoe for 40 years. He and his wife are self-described bear lovers. Their home decor had a bear motif: A carved wooden bear stood sentry in a bedroom; when the cuckoo clock chimed, dancing bears celebrated.

In early 2005, a sow and two cubs that had dened under the Tondas’ home broke in while they were away and trashed the place. The Tondas sought state approval to kill the mother. When the men they hired to do the job were charged by the cubs, they shot them too.

Threatening phone calls poured in. Strangers drove by Tonda’s place hurling insults.

“I hired two security guys for a time because I was afraid they were going to burn the place down,” said Tonda, 69.

They broke in instead.

"The vandalism was worse than what the bears did," Tonda said. "They broke all the windows, the lighting fixtures. They threw bottles of wine against the walls."

And they put Tonda's wooden bear in the open front doorway. It was a message of sorts: The bears had taken revenge.

Bryant's cluttered cabin in the woods is a menagerie of wounded and orphaned wildlife. Birds and chipmunks. Squirrels and raccoons. A porcupine, the victim of a car accident, relaxes on a shelf.

"I grew up around wildlife," Bryant, 61, said of her childhood in Minnesota. "I feel like I can look into their faces and communicate with them. They have as much right to life as we do."

Game officials applaud her work educating the public on how to secure their homes and what to do if they encounter a bear. ("Make noise. Pound your feet. Scream like you frickin' mean it," she says.)

With a long blond mane and forceful nature, Bryant is no bear whisperer. She responds to bear calls with a paintball gun and a shotgun loaded with rubber buckshot. Bears are quick learners; a few body blows, she says, can do wonders to put the fear of humans back into them.

She also has no compunction about getting into someone's grill if she feels a bear is in danger. Her ability to work up a lather no doubt played a role in landing "Blonde vs. Bear," a three-part reality show that aired on Animal Planet in 2011.

"For a lot of people, anything a bear does to cause them an inconvenience is a reason that bear should die," said Bryant, whose work has made her a polarizing figure, both beloved and hated. "They have no regard for nature or wildlife and they want it all to be gone. And whenever we speak up on the bears' behalf, we become the enemies."

But Bryant says she has no tolerance for vigilantism, even though the Bear League also published the name, address and phone number of Sunny's suspected shooter on its Facebook page. "All I want is for him to be brought to justice," she says. "I don't want his house to burn down."

Reports taken by Bear League volunteers read like a police blotter – lots of breaking and entering, vandalism, prowling and loitering.

Some callers are head-scratchingly clueless, such as the woman who reported she was "mad, angry about buying a house in Tahoe. No one told her about the bears. Had a break in. Not happy."

Others are clearly fed up, such as the man who reported that he tried to secure his home but it "didn't work" – a bear leveled a garage door and cleaned out a refrigerator.

"Has gun for next time he comes back," the report reads.

Standing in the way of détente is disagreement over what constitutes a problem bear.

"I don't care if you leave your doors and windows open. If you have a 500-pound bear who's comfortable with walking into somebody's home – that's not good," said Carl Lackey, a Nevada Department of Wildlife biologist. "That bear has no fear of humans. That bear needs to be killed."

Lackey, like Bryant, has become a lightning rod in the debate over bears. He has gotten "a death threat or two" over the years, he says.

But he and Bryant have much in common. Both have a deep respect for bears. Both say humans are the root problem. But both also concede that coexistence would require a level of voluntary mass behavior that would rival a migrating flock of birds.

“People up here don’t want to put up with property damage. But at the same time, they don’t want to prepare either,” Lackey said.

Unlike grizzly bears, black bears rarely attack humans. Since 1900, only 14 people have been killed by a black bear in the continental United States, according to a study published last year in the Journal of Wildlife Management. None was in California or Nevada.

“We’ve never had a death,” Lackey said. “But it’s coming. I just hope it doesn’t happen on my watch.”

Bryant takes a similarly bleak view. Not of nature, but of human nature.

“I think a human is going to hurt a human before a bear does.”

Power back on in Tahoe for all NV Energy customers

Updated Jan. 11 3:50pm

Power has been restored to all NV Energy customers on the South Shore.

Crews have identified the mechanical problem at the Round Hill substation and are working to fix it.

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Updated Jan. 11 2:30pm

Two-hundred NV Energy customers remain without power Friday afternoon. All are in the Lower Kingsbury Grade area of

Stateline.

Customers are gradually being brought on line as crews switch their service to an operational substation.

The Round Hill substation problem has not be resolved, according to an NV Energy spokesman.

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Updated Jan. 11 11:45am

Power remains out for about 500 NV Energy customers on Lower Kingsbury Grade. The company does not have an estimated time when the lights will come back on.

The problem with the Round Hill substation has not been fixed as of this time. Power is being rerouted to service customers on the South Shore.

Karl Walquist with NV Energy told *Lake Tahoe News* it appears one of the lines has come off an insulator. Crews are out looking for the problem.

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South Shore customers of NV Energy have been without power since about 5:30 Friday morning when the circuits at the Round Hill substation went out.

There is no estimated time when the nearly 5,000 customers will have electricity again.

“They have not spotted any clear cause for the outage at the substation,” Karl Walquist, spokesman for NV Energy, told *Lake Tahoe News* at 8:55am.

Customers in Stateline, up Kingsbury Grade and to Cave Rock are affected. The casinos, though, are serviced by a different substation.

Traffic lights are also out. This means the intersections should be treated like a four-way stop.

The outage briefly affected about 2,000 customers of Liberty Energy in South Lake Tahoe. Their power was out for about 10 minutes.

Walquist said NV crews have been at the substation for hours trying to figure out why the circuits are out. He said repairmen are looking at possibly rerouting the affected customers to a different substation until the Round Hill problem is fixed.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Man who robbed 2 Lake Tahoe banks going to prison

Known as the “fedora bandit” because of the hat he wore, David Griffith Osborne, 74, pleaded guilty Jan. 11 to three counts of armed robbery.

The former Carson City resident pleaded guilty to robbing the Gridley Bank of the West, Rancho Cordova’s American River Bank, and Paradise’s Chase Bank – all in 2010.

Osborne is scheduled to be sentenced March 29 by U.S. District Judge Garland E. Burrell Jr. He faces up to 25 years in prison, followed by five years of supervised release, for each of the three armed bank robberies.

Osborne also admitted to four other bank robberies and will be required to pay restitution for all seven robberies. The other robberies are:

- Bank of the West, 2160 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe, Feb. 18, 2010;
- Bank of the West, 200 Bear Street, Kings Beach, March 9, 2010;
- Bank of the West, 736 Taylorville Road, Grass Valley, Dec. 22, 2009, and March 31, 2010.

For all seven robberies Osborne wore a hat, sunglasses, a fake mustache and goatee, and demanded money while brandishing a firearm.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*