

Opinion: Bighorn sheep in N. Nevada a welcome return

Publisher's note: *This editorial is from the Nov. 4, 2011, Reno Gazette-Journal.*

Return of bighorn sheep to Northern Nevada is a reason to celebrate a wildlife milestone.

For the first time in more than a century, bighorn sheep are back in the Virginia Range of Northern Nevada.

Just days ago, eight of them were released into Virginia mountains east of Reno in the Reno Tahoe Industrial Center.

This marks the first step in an effort to re-establish a population of Nevada's state animal there for the first time since the 1880s. Nevada is home to nearly 10,000 bighorns, the most of any state in the lower 48.

"It's exciting to think that they're going to be this close to Reno," Steve Field, president of the conservation group Nevada Bighorns Unlimited, told *RGJ* reporter Guy Clifton. "We'll be able to go out with a pair of binoculars and see sheep on the mountains."

The release of the desert bighorns on the sprawling grounds of the Tahoe Reno Industrial Center 10 miles east of Reno marks the first time the agency has reintroduced the animals on private property, Nevada Department of Wildlife spokesman Chris Healy told the *Associated Press*.

The department is conducting the effort with the help of industrial center principal and exclusive broker Lance Gilman, Nevada Bighorns Unlimited and the Wild Sheep Foundation.

Read the whole story

Opinion: S. Lake council violating federal drug laws

Publisher's note: *The following is a letter written to the South Lake Tahoe City Council that is reprinted with permission.*

Dear City Council Members,

The California Court of Appeal for the Second Appellate District issued an opinion on Oct. 11, 2011, in *Pack v. City of Long Beach*, that federal law preempted certain provisions of the city's marijuana ordinance.



Steve Kubby

As a result, it is clear that the South Lake Tahoe City Council is prohibited by federal drug laws and the Controlled Substances Act, from creating and regulating conditions which facilitate the cultivation of marijuana. In *Pack v. Long Beach*, it was decided that such ordinances are beyond the powers of any city or county, due to the fact that only the federal government can regulate marijuana.

State law is not in conflict with the CSA or federal drug laws, as it merely decriminalizes possession and cultivation of marijuana statewide, for certain individuals, in a defined

medical class.

The SLT Cultivation Ordinance and its goals are in direct conflict with the federal CSA, and places each member of the SLT City Council at personal risk of criminal prosecution.

I strongly suggest you consult with legal experts to review whether or not this council has violated Federal law with its cultivation ordinance. Furthermore, I would suggest that any and all fees, fines and penalties that are collected by the city under this ordinance could be considered as serious violations of federal drug laws regarding money laundering and facilitating federal crimes.

In the meantime, you should definitely consider protecting yourselves from federal prosecution and possible prison time by immediately suspending the SLT Cultivation Ordinance, while you obtain competent legal advice.

Let freedom grow,

Steve Kubby, South Lake Tahoe

Opinion: Time to change clocks and batteries

By Teri Mizuhara

It's that time of year again, time to change your clocks and change the batteries in your smoke alarms. Set your clocks back one hour before you go to bed tonight and while you're at it, take a few minutes and change the batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms. Then you can rest easy knowing your loved ones are being protected.

“According to the U.S. Fire Administration, 75 percent of fire deaths in residences occur in homes that either do not have smoke alarms or do not have working smoke alarms,” says Kelly Keenan, unit chief of the Amador-El Dorado Unit of CalFire. “It is the cheapest insurance to safe guard you and your family in the event your home catches on fire. Bottom line, a working smoke alarm greatly increases your chance of surviving a house

Smoke alarm and carbon monoxide alarm tips:

- At a minimum, install a smoke alarm and a carbon monoxide alarm outside each sleeping area.
- It is also prudent to install smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms in each bedroom/sleeping area.
- Install smoke alarms on each level of your home including the basement.
- If your alarms are plugged in to an electrical outlet, don’t forget to change the back-up batteries if they have them.
- If you have children, consider purchasing the smoke alarms with recordable voice announcements.
- If you or someone in your home is hearing impaired, there are specialized smoke alarms systems available.
- Make sure all the alarms are linked so that when one goes off they all go off.
- Test your smoke alarms once a month.
- Clean smoke alarms by vacuuming them. This removes dust and bugs that can cause them to malfunction.

For additional fire and life safety tips, go online.

Teri Mizuhara works for CalFire.

Opinion: Understanding the roots of labor in the U.S.

To the community,

When I heard of the general strike in Oakland, I thought of Harry Bridges who led the general strike that shutdown the city of Seattle.

The U.S.A. has a bloody history, maybe the bloodiest labor history among the Western nations. In May 1886, the Haymarket Massacre occurred in Chicago. Seven police died. Seventy were wounded. Seven labor leaders were sentenced to death.



Bill Crawford

In 1892, the Homestead Massacre occurred. It was a steel workers strike for the right to organize. The strike was broken by the company hiring 300 Pinkerton detectives. Seven died. Finally, the state militia (Pennsylvania) was brought in and stayed for four months. No effective steel union was organized until the 1930.

On July 14, 1892, martial law was declared in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. Silver miners were on strike. Federal troops were dispatched to the area.

In 1894, the Pullman strike occurred. President Grover

Cleveland sent federal troops in.

Much of the “unrest” centered around labor’s attempt to organize and bargain for a 40-hour work week and to get a national holiday, Labor Day.

May 30, 1937, the Memorial Day Massacre occurred. Steel workers were demonstrating in South Chicago. They were fired upon by the police. Four were killed, 84 injured.

Presently, organized labor’s numbers are shrinking. There are right to work laws in some states. In an industrial economy, if labor isn’t organized, who will represent the working man and woman? Who will speak for those on the bottom? And as the middle class continues to shrink and sink to the bottom, we are regressing to the day when working people will be reduced to chattel. And the too big to fail banks, etc., will be masters over a nation of Winston Smiths.

Bill Crawford, South Lake Tahoe

Opinion: Lahontan needs to back off on TMDL time line

Publisher’s note: The following letter to Jack Clarke, chairman of the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board, received final approval Nov. 1 from the South Lake Tahoe City Council and is being reprinted with permission.

Dear Mr. Clarke:

This letter is being sent on behalf of the three Lake Tahoe Basin jurisdictions to request that Lahontan extend any consideration regarding NPDES permits until after January

2012. Specifically, we further request that your board also direct staff to defer circulation of a public draft permit consistent with the same time frame.

El Dorado County, Placer County and the city of South Lake Tahoe are making this joint request in order to ensure we have the time necessary to address several unresolved complex issues. Those issues include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Assess whether a TMDL-focused permit that provides more flexibility than what the current draft permit allows would better meet both local jurisdiction and Regional Board needs, especially with regard to the monetary challenges of meeting all current draft permit requirements;
- Outline realistic implementation goals, given the demonstrated significant shortfall in funding availability in comparison with current cost estimates;
- Address the imbalance of regulatory authority and level of enforcement of the Lahontan regulations on the California side of the Tahoe basin as compared to the federal/state stormwater regulatory and enforcement framework on the Nevada side of the Tahoe basin;
- Provide ample opportunity to review EPA input to date, including scheduling meetings to develop a common understanding between multi-jurisdictional technical staff, executives and elected officials;
- Lahontan staff response on recent local jurisdiction comments to draft permit such as registering catchments in areas where capital projects are not planned;
- Better define TRPA's role in regulation and implementation, including BMP enforcement and potential delegation of some BMP regulation that originates with TRPA;

- Identify roles and responsibilities of other agencies for project implementation, maintenance and monitoring, including large state and federal landholders.

We sincerely appreciate your consideration of our request and look forward to working with you and your staff in addressing our issues and concerns as the analysis process progresses.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Montgomery, Placer County district 5 supervisor

Norma Santiago, El Dorado County district 5 supervisor

Claire Fortier, South Lake Tahoe mayor pro tem

Opinion: Vogelgesang's experience will benefit STPUD

To the community,

Randy Vogelgesang is blessed with great common sense and a belief in service to his community. He and his family are long-time South Lake Tahoe residents. He provides professional structural engineering services with his company, Tahoe Engineering Inc.

He has served on the city building code board of appeals, helping make sense out of health and safety technical code issues. He is the president of the local Tahoe Engineers, Architects and Surveyors group, promoting education and coordination with governmental agencies on local, regional, county and state levels.

I have had the pleasure of working with Randy on many building projects. He has an eye for detail, while keeping the big picture in focus. I feel comfortable in recommending your support for him in any elected position.

Keith and Mary Ann Klein, South Lake Tahoe

Opinion: Time to understand why youth run away

By Laura Salinas

Homeless youth are living on the streets in thousands of communities nationwide, including ours. However, often we don't stop to think about what led them to find refuge on the streets. Many of these adolescents are runaway and throwaway youth.

Tahoe Youth & Family Services is proud to be participating in honoring National Runaway Prevention Month this November. This national awareness campaign operates in conjunction with many national and local nonprofits including the National Runaway Switchboard and California Coalition for Youth.



Laura Salinas

The goal of this campaign is to promote awareness and to

educate the public about solutions to prevent youth from running away. There are many factors that lead youth to run away or to be thrown out of their home. Some of the most common factors include: family conflict, abuse, sexual orientation, drug/alcohol related issues or escaping state care, such as foster care services.

For whatever reason youth choose to run away, life on the streets further exposes them to life threatening risks such as pregnancy, suicide attempts, substance abuse, sexual exploitation, or participating in criminal activity. This way of life may seem unimaginable to many of us; but the truth is that there are many youth in our community sleeping in the wilderness, wandering the streets and trying to find the means to survive.

Tahoe Youth & Family Services' Drop In Centers strive to provide information, resources and supportive services to all youth who are homeless, couch surfing, living in poverty or who may be at risk of becoming homeless. Our Drop In Centers offer food, clothes, showers, laundry services, hygiene essentials, and help in obtaining proper identification.

Besides offering basic necessities, our Drop In Centers are a great place to relax and get off the streets. TYFS also offers a 24-hour crisis line: 800.870.8937.

Our current "wish list" for our Drop In Centers includes: socks, boxer shorts, disposable razors, blankets, sleeping bags, tents and backpacks. For more information on how you can help provide for our homeless youth, please contact Outreach Coordinator Cheyanne Lane at our South Lake Tahoe office (530) 541.2445 or email cheyanne@tahoeyouth.org. You may also contact Communications Coordinator Julie Franklin at our Gardnerville office at (775) 782.4202 or email her at julie@tahoeyouth.org. Our South Lake Tahoe Drop In Center is open 1-5pm Tuesday-Saturday. Our Gardnerville Ranchos Drop In Center is open Tuesday-Friday 3-7pm and Saturdays 2-7pm.

Please “Like us” and Follow us on Facebook.

“How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.” – Anne Frank

Laura Salinas is a youth advocate with Tahoe Youth & Family Services.

Opinion: Tax rule change could pull rug from under charities

By Ruth Blank

For a region still struggling with some of the worst economic conditions on record – a region that, even before the economy tanked, lagged the rest of the nation in philanthropic giving – proposals by the Obama administration and the so-called supercommittee to decrease the deductibility of charitable gifts are a very bad idea. They could severely damage our communities and set a dangerous precedent.

A recently completed multi-county study of philanthropic giving and attitudes in the region, the Greater Sacramento Generosity Project, highlighted the challenges local nonprofits face.

The project found that in El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento and Yolo counties only 62 percent of households had made a charitable contribution the prior year (compared to the national average of 66 percent). Worse, the average amount reported given locally was about \$700 less, 38 percent below the national average.

These results mirror findings of a study called “How Americans Give” conducted by the Chronicle of Philanthropy several years ago. Using aggregate data from itemized returns, this study found that on average Americans reported contributing 7.12 percent of their after-tax income to nonprofits. In this region (Amador, El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento and Yolo counties), it was 6.85 percent. And the average amount per household given locally to nonprofits was about \$1,100 (32 percent) less per household: \$2,431 vs. \$3,563 nationally.

Ruth Blank is CEO of Sacramento Region Community Foundation, Sacramento; Steve Heath is president & CEO, United Way California Capital Region, Sacramento. This commentary was co-signed by Linda Philip, CEO, Community Foundation of San Joaquin, Stockton; Andy Prokop, president and CEO, United Way of San Joaquin County, Stockton; and Caitlyn Stephen, executive director, Yuba-Sutter United Way, Yuba City.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Reasons Vogelgesang should be on STPUD board

To the community,

My name is Randy Vogelgesang and I am asking for your vote for seat 3 of the South Tahoe Public Utility District board.

My position on the issues was well covered in the *Lake Tahoe News* here.

However, I would like to emphasize a few points.



Randy
Vogelgesang

My engineering experience and my reputation for making common sense, cost effective engineering decisions make me uniquely qualified to represent the ratepayers.

The district and its employees provide an excellent product and we should strive to continue this high level of service, however, all projects need to be evaluated based on necessity, and less expensive options should be considered. In these tough economic times we will need to prioritize our spending and cut costs wherever possible.

I see no reason to justify a rate hike when most of the ratepayers that I know have had their incomes decrease. Wages and benefits for the districts employees should not exceed comparable local private sector jobs.

Until all customers are metered, I would like to lower the metered rate portion of the bill as much as possible. In addition, meter installations need to be done at a more accelerated pace. I don't think it is acceptable to have customers using the same volume of water paying very different amounts for the next dozen years. The current metering amounts are based on average use in order to remain revenue neutral to the district. However, the district is composed of full-time and part-time residents, neither of which fit the average. It has been known for many years that meters were coming, but inaction has caused this problem.

The priority of the board is to represent the public and oversee how the district spends our money. When making decisions on behalf of the ratepayers I plan on using the same

common sense, fiscally conservative, approach that has worked well for my business. The key word in STPUD is public and I will always keep that in mind when making decisions.

Randy Vogelgesang, South Lake Tahoe

Opinion: Candidates need reminder that Nevada is important

Publisher's note: *This editorial is from the Oct. 27, 2011, Reno Gazette-Journal.*

Now that Nevada Republicans have settled on Feb. 4 as the date for their presidential nomination caucuses, their challenge is to sell the idea to the candidates, as well as to the party's own rank-and-file members.

That may not be as easy as mollifying those Eastern states that insisted on keeping some distance between their primaries and the Nevada caucuses, but it's even more important.

With campaign money and time tight nearly a year before the presidential election, the Republican candidates are carefully choosing their spots, campaigning where they believe they have something to gain, or lose. So far, they hadn't shown much interest in Nevada until former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney visited Las Vegas last week and told an audience in the state hit hardest by the mortgage crisis that the foreclosure process should be allowed to play itself out. (That was followed by a quick visit to Vegas, a city he's already insulted several times, by President Barack Obama, who

announced an expanded program to help homeowners refinance their mortgages.)

That's pretty much what happened four years ago. The Republican candidates generally stayed away from Nevada, while the leading Democrats regularly made the rounds. That likely helped Democrats get out the vote in the 2008 election for Obama.

Read the whole story