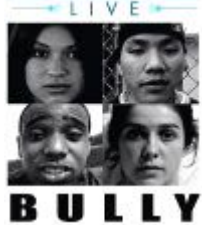


# Bullying – doing nothing isn't making a difference

**TEEN TRUTH**

By Kathryn Reed



As footage from the Columbine shooting unfolded on screen, not a word could be heard, no one fidgeted – eerily, it was dead silent except for the 911 call.

“As far as I know I lost everyone in the library,” the dispatcher says as the phone goes silent on the other end.

This may have been the first time these 300 people had heard the word Columbine, let alone seen anything from that fateful day in April 1999. They are too young to have been affected by the mass school shooting.

It was not an assembly to scare kids or expose them to violence. It was all about empowering them to make a difference.

South Tahoe Middle School students watched “Teen Truth Live: Bully” on Monday. The sixth-graders had a slightly edited version to eliminate some of the more graphic details.

“If you aren’t making a difference, what are you doing?” asked filmmaker JC Pohl as he talked to the students after the 20-minute movie ended.

“Nothing!” was the resounding reply.

That was the point. Doing nothing is bullying. Bullying comes in many forms – it includes excluding others, spreading

rumors, intimidation and physical attacks.

Bullying causes anxiety, anger and may lead someone to kill.

All of this was part of the message.

The students in the movie talk about life being complicated and empty – with more pressure than when their parents were their age. School is a place of status. Changing to fit in is common. Alienation can be routine.

The U.S. Department of Education says 30 percent of students claim to have been bullied. Pohl says 99 percent of the kids he talks to have been bullied.

“The No. 1 reason people bully is because they don’t have empathy,” Pohl told the kids. “They don’t care. They don’t know how to show respect.”

Pohl and Erham Christopher developed Teen Truth Live when it dawned on them that after the deadly Columbine shooting in Colorado 10 years ago, the adult experts kept spouting about why the two boys did what they did without anyone asking the kids why this may have occurred.

“No one was giving a voice to teens,” Pohl said.

Thus began a yearlong project where high school seniors filmed what life was like. That and more became the film STMS students saw Monday.

At the end of Pohl’s presentation he asked the students if they had been punched, kicked, hit or shoved by someone. Everyone stood. Had a rumor been spread about them? Yes, was the overwhelming response. What about making a derogatory comment? Yes.

The point was the majority of students had been on one side or the other of bullying.

Then it was illustrated that negative moments in ones life last longer than positive. The adults in the room were asked to stand if they remembered a time when they were bullied. They all stood. Everyone remembered who did it.

“A bad thing that happened can last a lifetime,” Pohl said, in an attempt to emphasize that an act of bullying today is not soon, if ever, forgotten.

Teen Truth Live has three messages. The one on drugs will come to STMS in the spring. This is because sixth-grade teacher Cindy Cowen won the opportunity.

The third film the company has made is about body image.

Principal Beth Delacour was excited Soroptimist International Tahoe Sierra paid for Monday’s movie and talk.

“There is so much pressure on kids to look a certain way, be in a certain group, to do certain things,” Delacour said. “If we can rearrange that thinking to be one of inclusion, then we could see a change at our school (and beyond). It’s all about empathy. It’s an important message.”

For more information, go to [www.teentruthlive.com](http://www.teentruthlive.com).

---

## **South Tahoe may ban plastic bags**



Canvas - nylon bags are growing in popularity.

### **By Kathryn Reed**

Paper or plastic? One day that question may not be allowed to be asked in South Lake Tahoe.

The city's Sustainability Commission is developing a survey to send to business owners to find out how banning plastic bags in the city would impact them.

The board is leaning toward creating incentives for businesses to voluntarily stop using them instead of dictating policy. Incentives may include creating a consortium to buy more environmentally friendly bags for customers. To do so in bulk would cut the expense dramatically.

The commission intends to work with the Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce through its green team.

Jeff Tillman of South Tahoe Refuse is a non-voting member on the local commission. He said at this month's meeting, "It's going to be up to the consumer and what type of habits they want to have. It's no different than the blue bags we have now (for recycling)."

The amount of petroleum used to create plastic bags is one of the major arguments for ridding the world of them. When they finally decompose after about 1,000 years, the bags leach contaminants into the soil.

Plastic bags that end up blowing along roadways and in the water pose a hazard to birds and marine life.

But they are cheap — about a penny to make. This compares to the nickel it costs to create a paper bag and the dime for compostable bags.

Many stores in Tahoe and elsewhere offer people the opportunity to buy canvas or nylon, reusable bags. South Tahoe with some partners developed such a bag that was a focal point of the 2008 annual Environmental Summit.

Simply switching to paper bags is not the best environmental decision because, according to the Environmental Protection Agency, creating paper compared to plastic bags causes 70 percent more air pollution and 50 times more water pollutants.

This is why reusable bags are all the rage.

Commissioners in November expect to approve the survey and have a plan for distributing it.

---

## **LTWC returns bald eagle to wild**



A bald eagle

is released  
Sunday near  
Carson Pass.  
Photo/  
DanThriftPhoto  
graphy.com

By Kathryn Reed

HOPE VALLEY â€” Seconds after she flew from the arms of Wayne McKnight, the young bald eagle was tested when two other raptors raced toward her.

Holding her own, she dove, darted and averted harm. All three bald eagles landed in trees by Red Lake as a crowd of people above them on Highway 88 watched the spectacle.

â€œThatâ€™s a first,â€ said Tom Millham, who with his wife, Cheryl, runs Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care on the outskirts of South Lake Tahoe.

His guess is the other eagles may have been showing the rehabbed bird that this was their territory.

The female eagle was about 4 months old when she arrived at LTWC in the summer. It had fallen out of a nest near Lake Almanor. The nest was so high a tree trimmer could not reach it.

The eagle at 12 pounds is a little heavier than most 8 month olds would be â€” usually they are 8 to 10 pounds.

â€œSheâ€™ll fly and lose some of that baby fat,â€ Millham said.

Trout caught by Lake Tahoe fishermen is what was fed to the eagles, and remaining bear cubs and river otters.

For the last three weeks members of LTWCâ€™s eagle team have been exercising the bird in preparation for Sundayâ€™s release

along the Carson Pass.

This location is used because no matter what direction they take off there is plenty of food – primarily fish. To the east are the Smith and Carson valleys, north is Tahoe, west is the San Joaquin Valley, and Bear Valley is to the south.

LTWC let another baldy go at this location in July. The third bald eagle it had been carrying for was put down because its wing didn't heal and therefore the animal could not survive in the wild.

LT Wildlife Care is all about returning animals to the wild.

McKnight helped with the release of a golden eagle a few years ago, but this was his first experience helping with a bald eagle.

He and Millham entered the bird's cage about 2:30pm. The magnificent animal with its massive wingspan landed on McKnight's heavily gloved forearms. Her eyes and beak were covered for the ride up to her release point.

She is a talker – but a calm bird, according to her handlers.

–It's respect for the bird that keeps me going,– McKnight said.

McKnight looked like a proud dad letting an offspring into the world.

–See how well she flew,– Millham said – another proud –father.–



Wayne McKnight  
takes the  
eagle from  
Lake Tahoe  
Wildlife  
Care.Â Â Â Â  
Photo/Kathryn  
Reed



Wayne McKnight  
and Tom  
Millham  
prepare for  
the release.  
Photo/Kathryn  
Reed

---

**\$1 million to be cut from**



# state parks in Tahoe



Vikingsholm

## By Kathryn Reed

Keeping California's state parks open doesn't mean they will be fully operational. The governor is still cutting \$14.2 from the parks budget. It's just that the decision how to do that is being made at the local level.

Pam Armas, superintendent of the Sierra District, expects to decide by November how to trim nearly \$1 million, or 10 percent, from her budget. The Sierra District encompasses the entire Lake Tahoe Basin, goes down to Mono Lake and includes Bodie.

In addition to crunching the numbers, Armas must work with fewer people. Politicians in Sacramento axed the seasonal budget.

"I don't have any money to hire park aides to clean the park bathrooms," Armas said. "It's a huge stress on the permanent staff. Typically it's not their job."

The stress will be even greater next year when employees prepare the seven state campgrounds in the basin to be ready for Memorial Day. Anyone who lives in snow country knows what spring is like for cleaning up a yard – multiply that by the acreage in a state park and the workload is pretty hefty.

Staff vacancies are not being filled. The Tahoe Basin usually has seven rangers " it's down to five.

"It costs a lot to maintain parks. We provide recreation, we protect resources," Armas said. "We don't just provide camping. There is a lot that goes into protecting the land that we have. That is our mission and what we are mandated to do by law."

Even though Lake Tahoe Golf Course in Meyers that is on Washoe State Park property is a huge money generator, the cash doesn't stay in local coffers. What's collected at state parks is put into one big pot and then doled out accordingly.

"I don't make enough money through day-use fees, camping and concessionaires to fully fund my district. Very few do," Armas said.

One idea to trim the Sierra budget is to not allow winter camping at Sugar Pine Point on the West Shore. Those wanting to set up a tent in the white stuff can go to Grover Hot Springs near Markleeville.

Other ideas being talked about to cut the \$1 million are closing museums like Vikingsholm and Ehrman Mansion a couple days week, and curtailing camping operations.

"I'm still looking at numbers and doing a cost-benefit analysis," Armas said.

She said the best thing is that even though a decision on what will be cut will be made in the next couple of weeks, she has several months to figure out how to implement the decisions because much of her district is closed during the winter.

"We will get through this. We are resilient," Armas said of the budget fiasco.

---

# **Gaming Board favors Yung to run Horizon casino**

**By Richard N. Velotta, Las Vegas Sun**

Gaming regulators showed that they're keeping vigilant on policing behavior at nightclubs and pool parties in Las Vegas.

The state Gaming Control Board questioned Mark Gore, vice president and casino general manager at the Hard Rock, about the resort's pool party security.

Gore appeared before the board Oct. 1 in Carson City for a key employee license.

**Read the whole story**

---

# **\$1.5 million grant to rid South Lake homes of lead**

South Lake Tahoe has been awarded a \$1.5 million grant to develop a program to test, mitigate and eliminate lead in local housing.

The funding is from the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control. It's to provide funding to protect children from residential health and safety hazards.

Eighty-five percent of South Lake Tahoe's housing was built before 1980 when lead was still in some paints that could have been applied to and remain on houses.

Project N-ABLE will provide free testing to all homes in the community. If lead is found in the paint, funds will be available to mitigate or eliminate the hazard and provide for testing of any children residing there to ensure no lead was ingested.

---

## **Tahoe heating bills expected to be less**

### **Reno Gazette-Journal**

For people worried about winter heating bills, good news is arriving in time for the cold weather.

People using natural gas this winter could save \$105 compared with last year, and propane users will get even bigger savings, the government said. Households that use heating oil or electric heat also are expected to spend less during the heating season.

In Northern Nevada, NV Energy customers will see lower bills after state utility regulators last month approved cuts in electricity and natural gas rates, effective Oct. 1.

**Read whole story**

---

# Swine flu prevalent throughout LT Basin

By Kathryn Reed



This week California and Nevada received their first shipments of the H1N1 (swine flu) vaccine.

This is a good thing because several cases have been reported throughout the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Twenty-four cases were confirmed on the South Shore in July, 11 in August and 29 in September.

El Dorado County has documented 52 swine flu cases, with one person on the West Slope dying from the illness.

Barton Community Hospital has treated two patients with swine flu since May. Hospitals test for H1N1, not doctors' offices.

Throughout California as of this week 2,510 people were hospitalized because of swine flu and 181 people have died. U.S. figures are 16,174 in the hospital and 1,379 deaths.

Placer County officials are estimating 100,000 residents just in the North Shore county may become infected with the potentially deadly flu in the next year.

In a Field Poll survey released this week it showed 51 percent of Californians are worried about swine flu. The theory is with so many not concerned about it, the odds are they will not get the vaccine.

Most cases of H1N1 are not life threatening. Pregnant women, children younger 5 and adults older than 65 are most at-risk.

A notice at Lake Tahoe Community College tells people with flu symptoms to stay home.

Schools everywhere are warning parents to keep kids home if they are sick.

“We have been working with the El Dorado County Health Department and Lake Tahoe Unified School District and have placed an order to cover our usual vaccine population and the school district,” Barry Keil, director of pharmacy for Barton Health, said in a prepared statement. “We anticipate receiving enough Flumist for younger children and enough injections for older children and adults.”

Students in Douglas County School District are vaccinated through the Carson City Health Department.

“Our county will receive the vaccine in several shipments,” El Dorado county Health Officer Olivia Kasirye said in a press release. “For people who are anxious to get the vaccine, we ask that they be patient. We believe that eventually everyone who would like to get the vaccine will be able to receive it.”

Health officials everywhere say the same thing “ people who develop flu symptoms such as fever with cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, fatigue, diarrhea or vomiting, should stay home from work, school and not visit any public places “ even grocery stores. Remain home until the fever has been gone for at least 24 hours.

The Centers for Disease Control and Preventions says the ways to help prevent the spread of H1N1 include:

- \* Cover nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and then throw it away. If tissues aren't available, cough into your elbow or sleeve (not your hand).

- \* Wash hands often with soap and water, especially after

coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners containing at least 60 percent alcohol are also effective.

\* Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth to avoid spreading germs.

\* Avoid close contact with people who are sick (hand holding, hugging, kissing).

\* Avoid sharing items such as food, drinks, and lip gloss with others.

Ways to get more info about swine flu:  
[www.bartonhealth.org/flu](http://www.bartonhealth.org/flu), [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov),  
[www.edcgov.us/publichealth](http://www.edcgov.us/publichealth), <http://www.placer.ca.gov/>,  
[www.cdph.ca.gov](http://www.cdph.ca.gov), and <http://flu.nv.gov/>.

---

## Child averts being taken by stranger



By Kathryn Reed

Law enforcement has beefed-up its presence at Lake Tahoe Unified schools after a stranger tried to lure a 6-year-old from the Environmental Magnet School in Meyers on Tuesday.

The mother of the child did not report the incident to authorities until Wednesday.

El Dorado County sheriff's officials distributed a flyer that all kids were to take home on Thursday.

"This little girl did great for her age," sheriff's Sgt. Matt Underhill said.

When the woman approached her, saying her mom said to go with her, the child said no, that she was waiting for her 8-year-old brother. Her brother walked up about that time and the woman left.

Underhill said the woman drove off in a small green car headed toward San Bernardino Street.

The suspect is described as white, with black curly bushy hair, blue eyes, pierced ears, approximately 5-foot-5, with a medium build. She was wearing a white tank top, brown shorts and white tennis shoes.

"We encourage parents to report things as soon as possible because if they think something is wrong, there probably is. It allows us to act sooner," Lt. Les Lovell said. "If we don't get the information quickly, it handcuffs us."

The school district is advising students not to walk alone or to leave campus with a stranger.

For many, this brings back the horror of Jacycee Lee Dugard being plucked from a bus stop in June 1991 as she waited to go to the Meyers elementary school. Dugard was found alive in August in Antioch. Her suspected abductors are behind bars in Placerville.

Anyone with information pertaining to this week's incident should call the El Dorado County Sheriff's Department at (530) 573.3002 or (530) 573.3300.



---

# Stateline casinos struggling

Stateline casinos recorded their worst August on record.

The \$21.9 million take is a drop of 29 percent from a year ago. Records for casino revenue have been kept since 1983.

Overall, Nevada casinos took in \$847 million in August, which is 9.3 percent less than 2008. This is the 20th consecutive month the state's casinos have had year-over-year declines, the Gaming Control board said Thursday.

The bright spot is the casinos are doing better with baccarat — a more high-stakes game. Slot machines are down the most — 13.4 percent, while table games are off 3.7 percent throughout the state.