

Scam artists ripoff older Douglas County residents

Two Douglas County residents lost money in a gift card scam.

According to Douglas County sheriff's investigators, a resident received a phone call from someone claiming to be from Apple who said the victim's computer had been compromised. The caller ID also said Apple Inc. so the resident didn't question the call. The caller claimed to have fixed the computer remotely. The suspect then asked the victim to purchase a protection plan by buying \$400 in iTunes gift cards.

In the second case, a Douglas County resident received a phone call from a caller claiming to be a grandson, and then later a call from a man who claimed to be the attorney for the grandson who was handling his arrest for driving under the influence. The caller wanted and received \$2,500 in WalMart gift cards for handling the incident.

Both victims were older, which is normal in these sorts of cases, according to the FBI. Seniors are perceived to have more money, are more trusting and have memory problems.

DCSO tells people to never answer personal questions, never tell a stranger bank information, Social Security information, or Medicare numbers.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Counterfeit currency material confiscated in Truckee

A Vallejo man was arrested in Truckee on Wednesday after officers found counterfeit currency manufacturing devices in his vehicle.

Officers conducted a routine traffic stop on March 14 on eastbound Interstate 80 near Overland Trail.

The driver, David Honsinger, 33, had several outstanding felony warrants for assault with a deadly weapon, felon in possession of a firearm, hit and run resulting in injury, and felony evading, according to officers.

A subsequent search of his vehicle resulted in items being located that are commonly used in the manufacturing of counterfeit currency and government documents, police said. They added that Honsinger was also found to be in possession of an imitation firearm and a high capacity handgun magazine.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Lawmaker: Calif. needs laws to boost earthquake safety

By Rong-Gong Lin II, Los Angeles Times

A Los Angeles lawmaker says California needs new statewide laws that boost earthquake safety, and wants to toughen rules on how strong new buildings should be and require cities to

identify buildings at risk of collapse.

Assemblyman Adrin Nazarian, D-North Hollywood, said the bills are important for keeping California functioning after a major earthquake.

California's construction requirements are so minimal that even a new building can be legally built to a weakness that would leave it severely damaged in an earthquake – so much that it would have to be torn down, Nazarian said.

Read the whole story

1 man released, 2 others arrested in EDC homicide

By Benjy Egel And Cathy Locke, Sacramento Bee

A man detained for questioning has been released and two other men arrested in Tuesday's stabbing death of a 35-year-old Pollock Pines man.

The El Dorado County Sheriff's Office identified the victim as Jeremy Fortuin. Deputies found him with multiple injuries when they responded just after 4pm Tuesday to a report of a stabbing on Pony Express Trail in Cedar Grove.

Read the whole story

Last Calif. drought one of the worst since 1600s

By Dale Kasler, Sacramento Bee

Just how bad was California's last drought?

For most of Southern California, it was either the worst or second worst since the century Columbus landed in the New World, the Ottoman empire was started and Joan of Arc was burned at the stake.

In other words, it was one of the worst since the 1400s, according to a study released Monday by the California Department of Water Resources.

[Read the whole story](#)

More states consider animal abuser lists

By Mary Esch, AP

Son of Sam, Ted Bundy, Jeffrey Dahmer and the Columbine High School shooters are among the infamous criminals who had a history of hurting animals before they went on to target humans, a tendency that's part of what's behind a movement to create public online registries of known animal abusers.

New York is among 11 states with animal abuse registry bills pending in their legislatures, following Tennessee, which started its in 2016 along with a growing number of

municipalities in recent years, including New York City, and the counties that include Chicago and Tampa, Fla.

“Animal abuse is a bridge crime,” said the sponsor of New York’s bill, Republican state Sen. Jim Tedisco, who noted that Nikolas Cruz, accused of killing 17 people in the Parkland, Fla., high school shooting on Feb. 14, reportedly also had a history of shooting small animals.

Read the whole story

Calif.’s reliance on solar becoming a problem

By Sammy Roth, Desert Sun

Less than 2 percent of U.S. electricity comes from the sun. But last week, on a cool Sunday afternoon when there was plenty of sunlight and no need for air conditioning, the bulk of California briefly got 50 percent of its electricity from solar power.

It was a record for the Golden State, and it wasn’t the only one. The next day, more than 10,400 megawatts of solar power hummed along simultaneously on California’s main power grid – 500 megawatts above the previous record, which was set last summer.

The world’s sixth-largest economy kept building sprawling solar farms and installing rooftop panels during the first year of the Trump administration, despite the president’s efforts to support dirtier energy sources like coal. But the people responsible for keeping the lights on say California’s

growing reliance on solar is starting to become a problem.

Read the whole story

Shots fired in S. Lake Tahoe roommate squabble

A roommate dispute in South Lake Tahoe ended with shots being fired and one person arrested.

Robert Choate Jr., 34, was arrested on March 14 on charges of assault with a deadly weapon. He was being held on \$100,000 bail.

The incident started March 12 about 10pm when people called 911 about shots being fired in the 3700 block of Aspen Avenue. While officers were there, a man went to the police department to report what happened.

The victim, who was not shot, was roommates with Choate. He told officers that Choate had been stealing from him and wanted Choate to move out.

“During a confrontation between the victim and Choate, Choate pulled a shotgun out and pointed it at the victim. The victim wrestled Choate for the shotgun, during which the shotgun discharged. The victim was able to get the shotgun away from Choate and brought it to the police department to report the incident,” officers said.

Choate was located at a Stateline area hotel and arrested without incident.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Student march a different experience in DCSD

By Kathryn Reed

Douglas County high schools experienced very different outcomes to the nationwide student protests on March 14.

At Whittell High School more than 15 students left class at 10am and walked around the campus in silence for 17 minutes.

Seventeen is significant – it pays homage to the 17 people who were shot and killed at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla., a month ago today.

“They were all respectful. It was pretty good, actually,” Principal Crespin Esquivel told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Unlike at **South Tahoe High**, at Whittell there had been no discussion about an organized event prior to today.

At Douglas High School there was an “unsubstantiated threat which caused a lockdown while being investigated,” according to sheriff’s Sgt. Bernadette Smith.

School district Superintendent Teri White described Wednesday’s incident in the valley like this, “DHS received a threat to students and it was decided that it was safest to put the school into a stay put. There was no lockdown, nor bomb threat, nor counter protest.”

Before the incident at DHS, White told *Lake Tahoe News*, “We are not planning walk out activities, but our schools are each engaging in and encouraging other types of remembrances and honors for the lost lives. Some are conducting moments of

silence, some are encouraging walk-up activities.”

She described walk-up activities as “an effort to help the students who might be outliers or otherwise not connected, become connected and thus works to eliminate the isolation and feelings of despair that may cause someone to want to do a mass shooting. It is a mental health/social health movement to help kids connect.”

STHS kids make a statement in nationwide march



South Tahoe High students express why they were marching March 14. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

We march because ...

- *Things need to change.*
- *Too many lives have been lost.*
- *I march for those who are afraid to.*
- *Mental health matters.*
- *We march because this is happening to us. We are the ones who have to go to school and be scared.*

That's what South Tahoe High Schools had to say about why they left their classrooms at 10am on March 14. They marched to the front of the school where three students and a teacher shared their thoughts about guns, safety, mental health and the need for adults to do more. Then everyone assembled in the gym where they could write why they were there, offer condolences to the family and friends of the Florida school shooting, register to vote, express how they want their campus to be safer, or meet with a counselor.

Student marches were happening through the country on Wednesday as a way to mark the one-month anniversary of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting in Parkland, Fla. It was to show solidarity, a chance for students to say enough, to point fingers at the adults who are not protecting them, and say gun violence matters.

For 17 seconds the hundreds who gathered at STHS stood in silence to remember the 17 people who were gun downed in February.



STHS student Daniella Valdivia honors the 17 who died at a Florida school in February. Photo/Kathryn Reed

While some say this won't happen in Tahoe, that is being naïve. Bad things happen everywhere.

It was in Columbine, Colo., that the country first seemed to be truly awakened to gun violence at school. That was April 19, 1999, when 15 people were killed.

But years before Columbine there was the Cleveland Elementary School shooting in Stockton. On Jan. 17, 1989, Patrick Edward Purdy took three minutes to kill five children, wounding one teacher and 19 students. He had once lived in South Lake Tahoe. So, the South Shore already has a connection to a deadly school shooting.

"I'm not against guns; I'm against gun violence," Daniella Valdivia told her peers. She advocated for students to be

kinder, to talk to those who are “wall flowers.” She said saying hello can change the world in so many ways.

Student Cole Proctor said, “We have so little regard for mental health. Instead of trying to solve that problem, we want to box them in. We see them as killers instead of kids who have problems.”

He would like better mental health programs on camps.

For Tevan Martorana he believes this is his generation’s moment to make a difference. He is going to fight until every student feels safe at school.

“If we want to make change, we need to recognize the humanity in all of the other people around you,” teacher Barbara Bedwell said.



Hundreds of South Tahoe High students march in unison on March 14. Photo/Kathryn Reed

For senior Jessie Brown what she has noticed in the last month since the Florida massacre is teachers at STHS are talking more – about security, what can be done.

She carried a sign promoting building bridges, not fences. This was in reference to the school district’s proposal to put

a fence around STHS.

That, Brown said, would only isolate people more and create a sense of fear, not protection.

It wasn't just students who were at the march. Kelly Shanahan showed up with doughnuts for the kids and a sign that said, "Thank you students for leading the way. #Enough."

"We have failed them as adults. I'm here with them 100 percent," Shanahan said.