

# THE UNION



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Friday, July 29, 2016

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## THAT'S A WRAP

Photos by Laura Mahaffy  
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**TOP:** Daniel Walmsley and Lolo Millir-Walmsley perform karaoke. **RIGHT:** Bailey Kimbrough prepares chicken quesadilla for Sierra Concessions. **TOP LEFT:** Owner of Gold Bug Jewelers, Jeff Petty, blows glass. **BOTTOM LEFT:** Bella Holland, Jaden Myers and Abby Richards enjoy Grass Valley's Thursday Night Market.



For more photos from this event, visit us online at [www.TheUnion.com](http://www.TheUnion.com)



## Sheriff to grand jury: No body cameras

By Alan Riquelmy  
Staff Writer

The Nevada County sheriff has declined to buy body cameras for his deputies, telling the Civil Grand Jury that the devices are cost-prohibitive and unnecessary because of his office's few complaints. Sheriff Keith Royal, in a response to the grand jury's recommendation that he use the cameras, also notes that California has no guidelines for storing the videos captured by the cameras, arguing there's been little thought given to

potential legal issues. "The Nevada County Sheriff's Office budget for Fiscal Year 16-17 has already been approved," Royal states in his response. "We feel it prudent to wait for state guidelines, analyze the experiences of similar law enforcement agencies regarding the benefits and drawbacks associated with the use of body worn cameras before we make this a budget priority." According to Royal, it would cost \$90,000 to buy 70 cameras and associated equipment. The annual

upkeep cost is unknown. Truckee police said they paid almost \$39,000 for their 28 cameras, with an annual cost of over \$20,000. Royal's letter to the grand jury stems from the panel's May recommendation that his office use body cameras and have the Board of Supervisors partially fund them. Both supervisors and Royal told the grand jury they wouldn't buy the cameras. Supervisors on July 19 voted 4 to 1 in favor of issuing their response. Supervisor Richard Anderson, who

represents eastern Nevada County, opposed the vote. According to Anderson, Truckee's police have seen reduced investigation times and cut their risk of litigation since they began using body cameras. He said local police departments could benefit from their use. "This is one way to remove that distrust," Anderson added. "I do support a transition to body cameras at some time." In his response, Royal states that his office

**CAMERAS, A6**

## PG&E steps up prevention efforts in bark beetle epidemic

By Teresa Yinmeng Liu  
Staff Writer

For video, visit us online  
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Pacific Gas and Electric has been conducting a daily aerial patrol of its service areas since 2014 as part of its emergency drought response plan to mitigate safety hazards caused by drought-stricken forests and bark beetle infestations. But with the tree mortality rate rising steadily every year, PG&E recently stepped up its efforts. "The stress that the trees are under from the drought, combined with the bark beetle problem, has created a serious problem, not only for fire agencies, but for PG&E, especially near our power lines," said spokeswoman Brandi Merlo. Bark beetles, a grain-sized bug, have been a natural part of the ecosystem in California for eons. But when trees became overstressed due to water shortages, it is more difficult for them to fend off bark beetle attacks. Dead and dying trees situated close to power lines are

a safety issue, Merlo said. "A tree falling onto our power lines could create an outage, it can create a safety hazard," she said. "So we want to do everything we can to ensure public safety and employee safety, and do our best to mitigate those issues before they cause problems." According to Merlo, the company has increased aerial patrol using fixed-wing planes to look for vegetation in its service areas that is affected more by drought and bark beetles. Once pockets of dead trees are spotted in the air, the company sends a crew on foot to the affected areas to verify the condition of the trees and then work with property owners to come up with a plan to remove them. If staff identifies trees near PG&E facilities that pose a threat, the company

**BEETLES, A6**



TERESA YINMENG LIU/TLIU@THEUNION.COM  
Many trees surrounding this property in Nevada County have been attacked by bark beetles.

## GV man stays patient, positive while waiting for kidney donor

By Emily Lavin  
Staff Writer



family previously started a GoFundMe page in Rennert's name, in part to help cover some medical costs that insurance won't, but primarily to help spread the word about Rennert's situation. The family hopes someone will step forward either as a direct donor for Rennert, or as a participant in a donor exchange, which

Twenty-one-year-old Daemon Rennert is in advanced stage renal failure, and his need for a kidney is urgent. So far, about 25 people — family members, friends and a few strangers — have signed up to undergo testing, but none have been viable donors. Rennert and his family, who live in Grass Valley, are determined to continue the search — and they're appealing to the community in hopes of finding a donor who might be a match. His

**RENNERT, A6**

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Barbara Ericksen, 56

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### WEATHER



H: 100° L: 72°  
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Sunny

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**Bones found on shore identified as missing Berkeley student**  
SAN FRANCISCO — Officials say bones found by hikers on the Northern California shoreline in April have been identified as those of a missing University of California, Berkeley graduate student.

The San Francisco Chronicle reports that 22-year-old Shuqin Zhang was pursuing her master's degree in statistics and last seen in Berkeley on Jan. 7. Officials confirmed Wednesday that the bones found on Drakes Beach in Point Reyes National Seashore were Zhang's.

Friends had told authorities that Zhang seemed depressed, failed a class and missed an important flight to China before disappearing. Officials tracked Zhang's phone and determined that she was headed to the coast.

— Associated Press

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