

Supreme Court deadlocks on union fees for Calif. teachers

By Bob Egelko, San Francisco Chronicle

The U.S. Supreme Court gave public employee unions and their Democratic allies a political and financial reprieve Tuesday when it deadlocked over a challenge by nonunion teachers in California to their collective-bargaining fees, a case that probably would have rewritten the nation's labor laws but for the death of conservative Justice Antonin Scalia.

The reprieve may prove temporary, however, if a Republican is elected president in November and appoints Scalia's successor. The case underscores the importance of this year's election for a court that appears to be closely divided on crucial issues, including restrictions on abortion, insurance coverage for contraception, and immigration.

Instead of a 5-4 ruling declaring that compulsory union fees violate nonunion members' free-speech rights, the court issued a one-sentence order Tuesday announcing the 4-4 vote that left intact a 1977 decision – by a then-unanimous court – allowing public-sector unions to charge nonmembers for the costs of representing them at the bargaining table.

Read the whole story

USFS gears up to restore Burke Creek

The U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit is proposing to restore the Burke Creek channel and adjacent marsh in Stateline, reduce the amount of sediment that flows into Lake Tahoe and reduce the potential for flooding on Highway 50.

The project area is located on approximately 16.5 acres near Stateline, including National Forest land near Kahle Drive, the commercial parking area located at 177 Highway 50, Douglas County land near the Kahle Drive Community Center and private property.

Funding for the project will be provided by the Nevada Department of Transportation, Nevada Division of State Lands, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and an erosion control grant from the LTBMU.

The project involves Douglas County, Nevada Department of Transportation, Nevada Tahoe Resource Conservation District and the U.S. Forest Service.

The draft environmental assessment looks at two alternatives, no action and the proposed action. Comments on the environmental documents are being sought until the end of April. For more info, go **online**.

Opening of baseball season offers variety of wagers

By Case Keefer, Las Vegas Sun

There's no rest for sports books this time of the year, as the major events keep piling up. A day before the conclusion of the NCAA Tournament on April 4 is Major League Baseball's Opening Day, creating action from early morning to late night at betting windows. To get a sense of the upcoming baseball season from a gambling perspective, here's a glance at the three most popular ways to wager in the preseason.

The Chicago Cubs sit alone at the top of betting boards in odds to win the World Series, including at a price of 9-to-2 at the Westgate Superbook. That standing should make fans cringe as much as celebrate.

If anything, the betting market anointing Chicago the favorite may hint at its 108-year championship drought extending.

Only one preseason Las Vegas favorite in the past 15 years, the 2009 New York Yankees, has lived up to expectations with a title. The six champions that followed the Yankees all came into the season somewhere from 20-to-1 to 30-to-1.

Read the whole story

Scammers posing as WCSO

sheriff

Phone scammers are posing as Washoe County Sheriff Chuck Allen to fraudulently obtain money from people.

After identifying themselves as the sheriff, the scammer tells the person they are in some sort of arrears with the legal system and that their options are either to surrender themselves to the sheriff's office for arrest or make a payment to adjudicate the situation.

Typically with these types of scams, the scammer then provides instruction on how the payment should be submitted, usually through an "eGift" cash card, pre-paid credit card, or similar payment to a specified account or name given by the caller.

These scam artists use pre-paid phones and many times are not even in the jurisdiction where the crime occurred, making their apprehension difficult.

Although the Washoe County Sheriff's Office will sometimes make calls to inform someone about a warrant, the sheriff's office will not ask for payment over the phone or negotiate for payment in lieu of arrest.

Anyone who has suffered a loss as a result of this scam is encouraged to contact the Washoe County Sheriff's Office at 775. 328.3001, ext. 7.

Talks targeted to dog owners

Through a series of talks the Humane Society of Truckee Tahoe aims to give the community information on animal welfare topics, from learning red alert animal behaviors to look for

at the park to the latest in animal welfare policy.

The series will be at the animal shelter, 10961 Stevens Lane in Truckee.

Next up is Sue Sternberg on April 29 from 5:30 to 7:30pm. Sternberg has more than 35 years of dog behavior experience, and will provide a presentation on dog play and aggressive behaviors so pet owners can keep an eye on a group of dogs playing in the park or in the woods to prevent fun from turning into a fight. Cost is \$25.

On May 20 from 5:30-6:30pm, Kevin O'Neill, vice president of state affairs for the ASPCA, will speak about the legislative process, current animal welfare issues pending in Sacramento, and themes in animal welfare policy. There is no cost to attend.

To register to attend, contact Erin Ellis at 530.582.2472 or email erin@hstt.org.

Cinder still in her den, bear buddy shot by hunter

By Ann McCreary, Methow Valley News

Cinder, the young black bear that was badly burned in the Carlton Complex Fire in 2014 and rehabbed at Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care, is still denned at a high elevation site, but the bear that was released into the wild with her last summer was killed by a hunter in the fall.

Cinder was released in a heavily forested area about 30 miles north of Leavenworth on June 3, 2015. A younger male bear was released along with Cinder. The two bears had been together at the Idaho Black Bear Rehabilitation center and seemed to have developed a bond, so wildlife officials decided to release them together.

Cinder was discovered – emaciated and unable to walk on severely burned paws – in the French Creek area in August 2014, about two weeks after wildfire swept through the area. The bear cub drew international attention after she was rescued by state wildlife officials and underwent months of treatment at Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care, followed by rehabilitation at Idaho Black Bear Rehabilitation near Boise.

Read the whole story

Anticipating best whitewater-rafting season since 2011

By Tom Stienstra, San Francisco Chronicle

On the South Fork American River last weekend, 75 rafters and kayakers launched the spring white-water season with an ecstatic 13-mile trip from Lotus to Folsom Reservoir.

“It was great, absolutely euphoric,” said Nate Rangel of Adventure Connection out of Lotus in the Sierra foothills. “We’re expecting the best whitewater season in years.”

The trip was like a celebration. The group selected the South Fork American because of its accessibility and that it is a watershed that will provide great whitewater all summer long

this year in the Sierra foothills.

A mountain snowpack is the fuel for what is forecast as the best whitewater season since 2011 for California, according to early reports from automated snow sensors.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• After six years providing leadership and direction to the Tahoe Rim Trail Association, Mary Bennington will be retiring at the end of May. Morgan Fessler, director of operations, will take over.

• The second annual Mothership Classic hosted by Arcade Belt Co. on Squaw's KT22 raised \$49,000 for the High Fives Foundation, a nonprofit in Truckee that gives grants to athletes recovering from major injuries.

• Diamond Peak has extended its season to April 17.

• South Lake Tahoe will celebrate Earth Day on April 23 from 10am-3pm at Bijou Community Park.

• The free summer music series at Lakeview Commons in South Lake Tahoe will run on Thursdays from 4:30-8:30pm, June 30-Aug. 25.

Nev. minimum wage to remain stagnant

By Associated Press

State officials say Nevada's minimum wage will stay flat for the fiscal year that starts July 1.

The Office of the Labor Commissioner announced the rates Friday after conducting an annual review. A 2006 minimum wage amendment in the Nevada Constitution requires rates be recalculated based on increases in the federal minimum wage and the cost of living.

Nevada's minimum wage is \$8.25 an hour, or \$7.25 an hour if the employer offers qualified health benefits.

Rules and rates for overtime also remain unchanged.

Efforts to raise Nevada's minimum wage through the Legislature failed in 2015, and supporters of a proposed ballot measure to raise the rate recently withdrew their petition.

Lawmakers in neighboring California approved a measure this week that will raise the minimum wage to \$15 by 2022.

Then and now: Tahoe's two biggest ships



Ski Run Marina in the 1950s. Photo/Del Laine collection/Lake Tahoe Historical Society

Known variously as Sapphire Bay, Boundary Bay, Bijou Park, Seagrave's Beach and Taylor's Landing since the mid-1800s, this area is today's Ski Run Marina. The white bridge crossing the channel existed until 2008.



Ski Run Marina in 2014 from the same location as the photo above. Photo/Bill Kingman

When the original M.S. Dixie debuted in 1972 as a cruise ship, it used the sandy Ski Run beach to load and unload its passengers. After locating to different sites including the Timber Cove Pier, its lasting home port was Zephyr Cove.



The M.S. Dixie at Ski Run Marina in 1972. Photo/Bill Kingman

A winter storm with severe winds and waves flooded and submerged the aft portion of the Dixie on Zephyr Cove beach in the 1970s. It was restored and continued operating until the early 1990s when it was replaced by the new M. S. Dixie II, the largest ship on Lake Tahoe. An **earlier Then and Now** relates the fate of the old Dixie.



Tahoe Queen at Ski Run Marina in 2014.

Photo/Bill Kingman

In 1982, a new competitor, the paddle-wheeler Tahoe Queen, arrived in segments on trucks that could fit through the Cave Rock tunnel. The TQ was re-assembled at the Tahoe Keys Marina where it was launched in early 1983. It then operated from the Ski Run Marina where it initially was accessed via that historic white bridge (early picture above) that crossed this channel.



The former competitors now are moored side-by-side at Zephyr Cove while the lake water level is low and the Tahoe Queen is being updated. Photo/Bill Kingman

Today, Aramark owns and operates both ships. The former competitors now are moored side-by-side at Zephyr Cove while the lake water level is low and the Tahoe Queen is being updated.

– *Bill Kingman*