

Opinion: Change of seasons brings out wildlife

By Toogee Sielsch

As we've seen over the last couple of weeks the weather in the High Sierra has been all across the board with early summer temps in mid-February giving way to a major winter storm in early March. And as we all know living here in the basin and how it pertains to weather it can be unpredictable at best this time of year. But what is predictable this time of year is the emerging activity of our local wildlife.

In the last month there has been multiple bobcat sightings and even talk of a mountain lion being seen around the South Shore. Coyotes are on the go seven days a week, 12 months a year. I've even been hearing of multiple bear sightings throughout the winter as well. Is any of this unusual? Absolutely not. Bobcats, mountain lions, and coyotes don't hibernate, and not all black bears may hibernate in mid winter when food sources like trash are readily available and close at hand.

But as we actually segue into spring, one thing is for sure, and that is we will see almost daily an ever increasing number of wild animals making their presence known as they become more and more openly active. Over the last eight or so weeks black bear sows have been busy giving birth to their cubs of the year and will soon be allowing those cubs to experience a new world beyond the den. And sows that have yearlings that have spent the winter denning with her will very soon be dispersing them to find a place for themselves in this big world.

Also just around the corner is when many species of birds making their migration North for the summer via the Pacific

Flyway will be passing overhead and resting on many area lakes and reservoirs along their journey.

And each and every year at this time I anticipate hearing my first “Cheeeeeeeese-Burger” whistle from a mountain chickadee.

So what does all of this mean to we human residents of and visitors to the Tahoe basin? Aside from meaning we will once again be blessed with the chance to see wildlife up close and personal. It also means that we humans have not only the capability, but the responsibility to do all we can to mitigate any negative impacts that we may have on wildlife, and to prevent any unwanted wildlife/human interactions. The best part is that it’s a relatively easy goal to achieve by following a few easy steps:

- Never leave any food or drinks in your vehicle. Black bears have the strength and smarts to get into your vehicle, so please don’t tempt them.
- Always keep your trash stored where wildlife cannot access it, and if you don’t have a bear box trash bin please don’t put it outside until the morning of collection.
- Do your best to deny access to your home or out buildings by wildlife. Keeping doors and floor level windows closed and locked is a good idea. Also keep your garage door closed and try to make sure wildlife has no access to walls or crawl spaces by securely covering any openings into those areas large or small.
- If you put out bird feeders please bring them in at night, because they often attract more than just birds.

It is my personal goal, and the main part of the missions of the three wildlife rescue/advocacy groups that I belong to, to find coexistence between we humans and the wildlife we share this planet with. If you have any issues, questions, or need suggestions on how to bear/wildlife proof your home please call us at the BEAR League at 530.525.7297. If you know of or

have encountered an injured or sick wild animal you can call us at Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care at 530.577.2273. I hope to put on a South Shore BEAR League training along with Ann Bryant sometime in May and would love to hear from anyone interested in attending. I can be reached at toognian@gmail.com.

I view having the chance to see wildlife in it's natural environment as a gift. I hope that all of you, like me, relish each and every encounter you have with the wildlife we live among and will do all you can to insure that future generations are able to derive that same pleasure. Let's do our best to make it a great year for ourselves and our forest friends.

Toogee Sielsch is a resident of South Lake Tahoe.

Nevada was a place of reflection and recreation for Nancy, Ronald Reagan

By Ed Koch, Las Vegas Sun

While driving home to California following his less-than-triumphant two weeks at the Last Frontier in Las Vegas in February 1954, song-and-dance man Ronald Reagan, then at the lowest point in life, shared his sorrows with Nancy Reagan.

"I hope I never have to sink this low again," said Ron Reagan, whose acting career had been on a nosedive since the release of the 1951 film "Bedtime For Bonzo," in which Ron's co-star was a chimp – and after Reagan was forced to play Vegas because he was \$18,000 in debt, out of work and badly in need

of a paycheck.

Nancy, his wife of less than a year, consoled the future two-term Republican president and vowed to strongly support her husband through whatever lay ahead – and she would continue to do so until his death 50 years later.

Nancy Reagan's death Sunday at 94 conjured memories of how she helped lift Ronald Reagan's spirits on that desolate Nevada highway, how she and Ron fought to preserve Lake Tahoe and how Nancy tried unsuccessfully to persuade Ron to pick former Nevada Gov. Paul Laxalt – and close friend – as his vice president.

Read the whole story

Legal marijuana doing what drug war couldn't

By Christopher Ingraham, Washington Post

Legal marijuana may be doing at least one thing that a decades-long drug war couldn't: taking a bite out of Mexican drug cartels' profits.

The latest data from the U.S. Border Patrol shows that last year, marijuana seizures along the southwest border tumbled to their lowest level in at least a decade. Agents snagged roughly 1.5 million pounds of marijuana at the border, down from a peak of nearly 4 million pounds in 2009.

The data supports the many stories about the difficulties marijuana growers in Mexico face in light of increased competition from the north. As domestic marijuana production

has ramped up in places such as California, Colorado and Washington, marijuana prices have fallen, especially at the bulk level.

Read the whole story

Survivor of deadly Alpine Meadows avalanche recounts five-day ordeal

By Bran Branan, Sacramento Bee

MAMMOTH LAKES – Anna Allen survived the most deadly avalanche in U.S. ski history, fighting through frostbite and severe dehydration during the five days she was buried beneath heavy snow and debris at Alpine Meadows.

The March 31, 1982, avalanche took the lives of seven people, including Allen's boyfriend and three of her colleagues at the Truckee-area ski resort. Allen attributes her survival to her faith in the search and rescue system, but understands that luck played a role. She was in a building when the great wave of snow slammed into it; the building was crushed but the debris helped create an air pocket that saved her.

In the more typical avalanche scenario – a victim encased in snow – Allen would not have survived. According to one widely cited Canadian study, people buried in an avalanche are unlikely to survive if not rescued within 20 minutes, because of the dangers posed by trauma and suffocation.

The return of significant snowfall to the Sierra this season, after four years of below-average precipitation, has brought

skiers back to the mountains – and raised the risks for avalanches. Leaders of Sierra search and rescue teams say stories such as Allen’s have given them greater motivation to continue intensive recovery efforts for avalanche victims even when circumstances suggest they are dead.

Such determination was on display in late January, when crews from across the state braved storms and high avalanche risk for five days as they looked for 23-year-old Carson May, a Sugar Bowl ski instructor who went missing.

Read the whole story

Prescribed fires to be set in Tahoe basin

California State Parks, Nevada Division of Forestry and U.S Forest Service may continue prescribed fire operations beginning March 7, weather permitting.

On the East Shore, operations may take place near Camp Galilee, Spooner Summit and Sand Harbor. On the South Shore, operations may take place near Spring Creek, Panther Road, and Lake Tahoe Boulevard near Sawmill Road. On the North and West shores, operations may take place in Burton Creek, Sugar Pine Point, D.L. Bliss and Emerald Bay state parks. To view a map with project locations and details, go **online**.

Residual smoke may be seen in locations where operations have taken place over the last several weeks.

To receive prescribed fire notifications, send an email to pa_ltbmu@fs.fed.us.

Letter: Heavenly gives back at Bread & Broth

To the community,

Volunteering at Heavenly Mountain Resort's Feb. 22 Adopt A Day of Nourishment dinner, Kyle Hayes was very excited about his time spent helping the B&B volunteers and serving the evening's dinner guests.

"Having the opportunity to serve the community alongside the Bread & Broth volunteers was an amazing experience for all of us," he said. "To feed citizens in need; to share a conversation and positive experience is something that always leaves a lasting impression."

Hayes, a member of Heavenly's grooming team, was able to be a part of the B&B dinner experience due to the generosity of Heavenly Mountain Resort and the Vail EpicPromise Grant. The grant provides funds to host six Heavenly Mountain AAD dinners annually and give their employees the opportunity to participate in serving the nourishing meals and food giveaways and interfacing with the dinner guests who gratefully enjoy the meals they are provided.

In addition to Hayes, Tyler Lehman, grooming manager; Dave Hager, snowmaking manger; Gary Terrazas, snowmaker; and Frank Papandrea, environmental manager, took the opportunity to donate their time to be a part of Heavenly's sponsorship dinner. B&B would like to extend a big thank you to Heavenly for their on-going participation in B&B's dinner sponsorship program. Kudos to the great job that Heavenly's grooming and snowmaking crew members do on the slopes and for their commitment to helping others.

Truckee going after OHV grants

The Truckee Police Department OHV Preliminary Grant Application will be available **online** for public review and comment from March 8 to April 4.

Instructions on how to comment are on the OHMVR's website under Public Review Instructions. Comments may be sent directly to the police department by emailing rwomack@townoftruckee.com.

Truckee Police Department will be submitting a grant application for education and enforcement activities related funding, along with an equipment request to complete the outfitting of a patrol vehicle.

Sgt. Robert Womack commented that grants of these types serve a variety of purposes. "Our philosophy for OHV activities has always been education based, with enforcement being one of the components of that philosophy. A grant like this gives us the opportunity to engage the public through comments on their expectations of programs we are involved in."

Timely snowstorms help avert another disastrous year for California ski industry

By Hugo Martin, Los Angeles Times

Peter Smith is dreaming of a white Independence Day.

The longtime ski junkie from Claremont knows that the El Niño weather pattern has yet to put a significant dent in the state's drought, but a series of storms over the last few months has him fantasizing about a monster ski season that can stretch deep into summer.

If big snow dumps continue through spring, Smith said, his ski club could schedule an extra trip to Mammoth Mountain for the Fourth of July weekend.

Thanks to well-timed storms blanketing California peaks this winter, ski resort operators in the state say lift ticket sales have increased as much as 50 percent compared with the last few years, a feat that they attribute to pent-up demand among snow fans who have had to suffer through a four-year drought.

The season could even stretch for two or three more months if Mother Nature cooperates.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



- *Outside* magazine lists Tahoe Mountain Brewing Co. in Tahoe City as one of the five high-altitude breweries worth visiting.

- Here's a **video** from Caltrans about what it takes to clear the snow from Highway 89 around Emerald Bay.

- Former South Lake Tahoe resident and Lake Tahoe Community College graduate Ryan Row (pen name Alan Wor) won the Writers of the Future Contest. His short story will be published in "L. Ron Hubbard Presents Writers of the Future Volume 32".

- Dean Dow has been named president and CEO of REMSA, the Regional Emergency Medical Services Authority.

Bears beginning to wake in Truckee-Tahoe region

Truckee is warning residents to be bear-aware as the animals start to wake from their winter slumber.

Here are tips to coexist with bears:

- Never leave food of any kind in your car, including chewing gum.
- Roll up car windows, lock the doors. They know how

to open car doors if unlocked.

- Never leave ground floor windows and doors open, even if you are home.
- Remove garbage and get it away from the house and garage by taking it to a dumpster or by installing a bear-proof enclosure.

If you encounter a bear, give them an escape route to run away from you, make lots of noise, and call the police at 530.550.2320. Truckee officers work closely with BEAR League volunteers to divert bears from populated neighborhoods when possible. The BEAR League has a 24-hour hotline – 530.525-7297.