Litigation expected over ‘values’ license plate

By Sean Whaley, Las Vegas Review-Journal

CARSON CITY – Nevada residents may soon be able to proclaim their support for the right to life for unborn children by requesting a special license plate from the Department of Motor Vehicles.

The Nevada “Values Life” vanity license plate was approved last month by a panel of lawmakers serving as the Commission on Special License Plates. The vote was 3-1 to approve the plate with the lone Democrat, Assemblyman Richard Carrillo, opposed.

The plate could be subject to litigation, however, from Planned Parenthood, the panel was told by its legal counsel.

Read the whole story

K’s Kitchen: Muffins like a morning dessert

By Kathryn Reed

Eating these muffins for breakfast is almost like having carrot cake first thing in the morning.

Skip the cream cheese spread and the muffins are a whole lot healthier. Butter would suffice. And because they are so

flavorful, there really is no need to add anything to them.

They are quick to assemble. Anyone who bakes is bound to have all of the ingredients on hand, so they can be whipped up spur of the moment.

Even cold a couple days after first baked they were still good.

**Carrot Muffins**

1 1/3 C water

1 1/3 C sugar

¼ C butter

1¼ C shredded carrots

1 tsp kosher salt

1 tsp cinnamon

1 tsp allspice

¼ tsp cloves

1 C all-purpose flour

1 C whole wheat flour

1 tsp baking powder

1 tsp baking soda

4 ounces cream cheese

1 T orange zest

Preheat oven to 375 degree. Put sugar, butter, carrots, and water in a medium saucepan. Stir occasionally until mixture comes to a boil.

Add dry ingredients together. Then gradually add warm carrot mixture to dry ingredients.

Once mixed, spoon batter into greased muffin cups.

Bake for about 15 minutes or until brown and toothpick comes out clean.

Combine cream cheese with orange zest and spread on muffins.

Teachers using phones as a tool in classrooms

By Daniela Gerson, Los Angeles Times

Priscilla Farinas, an English teacher at Social Justice Humanitas Academy in San Fernando, faced her 31 students recently and made an announcement that seemingly violates official Los Angeles Unifiedpolicy.

“This is the one and only time I will have you take out your cellphones,” she said, instructing the students to share their definitions of “privilege” via text message as part of a lesson on “The Great Gatsby.”

Students immediately grabbed their mobile devices. Their texts populated a screen in the front of the classroom. Every student appeared focused on their schoolwork.

Farinas wanted to flip the script: Rather than reprimanding her students for using their phones, she wanted to put them to work as a learning tool. She is among a growing number of teachers who are instructing students to use their phones to conduct research, listen to music, calculate math problems or photograph assignments.

Read the whole story

California's working poor grow poorer

By Pauline Bartolone, CalMatters

After a day of picking grapes for $9.25 an hour, Eva Montes waits in line for food aid in the parking lot of the Veterans Memorial building in Earlimart, a community of 8,537 people.

"You can't make enough money for what you spend," Montes says in Spanish while waiting with other farmworkers for her number to be called. Today she'll take home a box of bagged greens and other produce distributed by a local non-profit.

"Sometimes, you don't earn enough to buy things for what the children need for school, or food for the house, or personal expenses … like house payments or bills."

Montes is part of a growing economic problem in California: low wage workers are getting poorer, and there are more of them.

There were about 354,800 Californians working full-time and year-round in 2013 living under the federal poverty limit, according to the nonprofit California Budget and Policy Center. That’s 3.1 percent of California’s full-time workforce, double the rate it was 35 years ago.

Read the whole story

Care providers needed for EDC program

El Dorado County needs people to assist clients in the county’s In-Home Supportive Services program.

Care providers help clients stay safely in their homes by completing tasks such as cooking meals, doing laundry, shopping for groceries, running errands and/or helping with personal care services.

Applicants should have experience providing care, and have a driver’s license and reliable transportation; they must also be fingerprinted and pass a criminal background check, reference checks and other screening requirements. Applicants pay for the cost of their fingerprinting.

Hours vary and are mutually determined by the care provider and IHSS recipient.

Interested applicants may call 530.621.6287.

USPS set to deliver letters from Santa

There is a Santa Claus, just ask the U.S. Postal Service. How else could kids get letters with a North Pole postmark?

Here are the steps to ensure Santa writes back:

- Have your child write a letter to Santa and place it in an envelope addressed to: Santa Claus, North Pole.
- Later, when alone, open the envelope and write a personalized response.
- Insert the response letter into an envelope and address it to the child.
- Add the return address: SANTA, NORTH POLE, to the envelope.
- Ensure the envelope is affixed with a first-class mail stamp.
- Place the complete envelope into a larger envelope with appropriate postage, and address it to: North Pole Postmark, Postmaster, 4141 Postmark Drive, Anchorage, AK 99530-9998.
- “Letters from Santa” must be received by the Anchorage postmaster no later than Dec. 15.

The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations.

El Nino watch – Pacific Ocean abnormally warm

By Brian K. Sullivan, BloombergBusiness

The Pacific Ocean is warm. Very warm.

Last week, the U.S. Climate Prediction Center announced temperatures reached 5.6 Fahrenheit above normal in a key section of the Pacific called Nino 3.4, touching off a Twitter typhoon among some El Nino watchers alarmed that they were so high. Monday, the agency said readings had edged up to 3.1 degrees above normal.

It's probably too early to add this to the list of signs of the impending apocalypse. Instead, it's likely just an indicator that the sea-surface component of El Nino is getting ripe, said Kevin Trenberth, senior scientist at the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colo.

The weekly readings "are less reliable" than their monthly counterparts, which tend to be a bit cooler, he said. And El Nino isn't just sea-surface temperatures: It's also atmospheric changes that upend global weather patterns.

Read the whole story

Letter: Tahoe Cross Country shares appreciation

To the community,

The snow is falling. Temperatures are staying cold. We're scraping storage wax off skis and readying our machines for opening day. Winter is coming and Tahoe Cross Country is ready.

Thanks to you, the community, Tahoe City PUD, California State Parks and California Tahoe Conservancy we are venturing into 2016 with our facilities staffed, stocked, and ready to ski. This is undoubtedly thanks to your donations.

In January 2015, we initiated a Low Snow Fundraising Campaign with a goal of raising $80,000 to cover operating fees and general costs. Our supporters answered our call, but we only raised $57,192; leaving us shy of our needed funds. Inspired by this deficit, one anonymous donor challenged the community again. If we raised $40,000, this donor would match it, all or nothing. On August 14, 2015 we launched our Matching Funds Campaign and within three months individuals including full-time residents, homeowners, visitors from as far away as Washington, Arizona, Wyoming, Florida and beyond donated anywhere from $1 to hundreds of dollars. We exceeded our goal and now have $48,883 as down payment for our future grooming machine, plus the additional matched $40,000 to help cover general costs. In 2015, this community raised a total of $146,075 for Tahoe Cross Country and we cannot thank you enough.

TXC and the Taheo City Winter Sports Park serve thousands of residents and visitors every year and it is our intention and privilege to continue to do so. Not only have you donated when we truly needed it, but the Tahoe City Public Utility District funded us $28,000 in late October to cover utilities, insurance, snowplow and other facility expenses. Additionally, the TCPUD approached the California State Parks on our behalf and both the California State Parks and the Tahoe Conservancy waived last winter's trail fees, saving TXC an estimated $12,000 in fees.

Our ability to promote nordic skiing to youths and adults alike is augmented by the outstanding generosity of our community. It is why we reached as far as we had to and why so many individuals stepped up to support us. For this, we thank you. And we'd like to invite you to our Pass Holder Appreciation Party on Dec. 6 at Jake's on the Lake.

The best way to continue supporting TXC is to buy a season pass, buy a day pass, buy a pass for your dog, your neighbor, your kids. From the board of directors, the management and staff, thank you for supporting Tahoe Cross Country and we'll see you out on those perfectly groomed trails!

Most sincerely,

The board of directors, management and dtaff of Tahoe Cross Country

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Letter: Rethinking Hwy. 50 realignment

To the community,

Regarding the Stateline loop road project. I personally don't like the loop road concept of moving traffic around the casinos, uprooting business and people from their homes. And by realigning Highway 50 after tearing town homes for the move, you now have the remaining homes that were in a quiet setting now next to the new Highway 50. It doesn't seem like the right thing to do.



Les Wright

I would prefer we spend the money and do the job right. In my opinion the right way to do it is to put through traffic underground starting somewhere around Tahoe Meadows and exiting before Kingsbury Grade.

That would mean cutting through the Harrah's to Harveys pedestrian underpass for the underground Highway 50 road. The casinos should then be given permission for pedestrian overpasses between Harveys and Harrah's, and MontBleu and Hard Rock.

I'm told it will cost more and realize it will be an inconvenience to build, but in the long run it would be the best solution. The old Highway 50 would become an open mall between Park Avenue and the eastern loop and I think that is the desired outcome.

Caltrans and NDOT would have to come up with the money. It would take some good planning and good politicians to get this project built.

Les Wright, South Lake Tahoe

LTUSD working to help

homeless students

By Kathryn Reed

Thanksgiving weekend so often is about gatherings of families in a warm home with an abundance of food.

That isn't the case for 300 Lake Tahoe Unified School District students. They are homeless. Another 44 are in foster families.

The school board this month voted to expand the duties and hours of the foster-homeless student advocate. This person will now be full time and will work in the elementary schools, not just at South Tahoe Middle and High schools.

"The current staffing is insufficient to meet the needs of these students and further does not allow time to service the elementary schools where early intervention would be ideal," the staff report from the Nov. 17 meeting reads. "Additionally, the number of homeless students typically increases by 20-30 throughout the school year as local seasonal employment is gained and lost."

Through the state's McKinney Vento program the district receives $34 for each student who is identified as homeless or in foster care. Homeless means living in a non-traditional residence like a hotel, car or multiple families in a dwelling designed for one family.

While the money from the state is not much, the district will tap community organizations to help supply the basics – from toiletries to clothes to food. The thinking is that by reaching students sooner they will more likely do well in school at an earlier age.

"A lot of those kids are resilient. They don't want to stand out. They want to fit in. We try to give them that

opportunity," Superintendent Jim Tarwater told *Lake Tahoe News*. "By identifying them early we can continue up through middle school and high school. The hope is they are better prepared."

The aide helps the child and his or her parent/guardian be acquainted with the social resources that are available. This includes getting vaccinations, dental checkups and other medical care.

The district is able to provide added tutoring and counseling when appropriate, as well as school supplies and backpacks.

When the basics are taken care of students are more likely to attend school as well as perform at a higher level.

While enrollment has been increasing, the percentage of students qualifying for free or reduced lunches remains at about 60 percent, or 2,370 students.