

Opinion: Nev. wants to reform initiative process

By Steve Sebelius, Las Vegas Review-Journal

CARSON CITY – Political language, Orwell said, is designed to make lies sound truthful. But sometimes, even the best political wordsmith can't get the job done.



Steve
Sebelius

Take Senate Bill 434, a bill aimed at reforming the initiative petition process. It passed out of the state Senate on a 12-9 vote with bipartisan opposition on Friday.

The legislative bill drafter gamely tries to assert that the Legislature has enacted provisions intended to “facilitate the efficiency, veracity and clarity” of petitions laid before the voters. Of course, the rules are intended to have the opposite effect, being cumbersome burdens to the right of the people to amend their constitution or state law books.

(It should be noted initiative petitions and constitutional amendments are not, strictly speaking, examples of the First Amendment right of the people to petition their government for the redress of grievances. Rather, initiatives are the people acting directly in their legislative capacity.)

Read the whole story

Classes offered to ease people into retirement

El Dorado County Commission on Aging is planning a three-part series of classes on retirement to help Boomers transition from full-time employment to retirement.

All classes will be at the South Lake Tahoe Recreation Center, 1800 Rufus Allen Blvd., from 5:30-6:30pm.

Classes are:

- June 3: Social Security benefits.
- June 10: Health insurance during retirement.
- June 17: Living your retirement.

A donation of \$5 is suggested to cover the cost of refreshments.

Call Gerri Grego at 530.545.2839 for more information.

Liberty may raise rates more than 17%

Liberty Utilities customers may find their bills going up 17.34 percent starting Jan. 1.

The electric company that serves the California side of the Lake Tahoe Basin, Truckee, Alpine County and other areas of the state has filed for a rate increase with the California

Public Utilities Commission.

Liberty wants to increase its revenue by \$13.571 million to recover costs associated with the distribution of power to its 49,000 customers.

“The increase is necessary to continue Liberty’s focus on delivering safe and reliable electric service to its customers. Components of the increase include vegetation management (trimming trees and branches from infrastructure that may cause outages), compliance with California’s requirements related to drought-related fire prevention along utility power lines, additional funding for the existing energy efficiency programs/incentives and funding to implement a new solar incentive program, as well as maintenance and upgrades to the existing electrical system,” Liberty said in a statement.

The last general rate case increase was 4.97 percent, which took effect Jan. 1, 2013.

The CPUC filing is online.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Federal water bill mired in secrecy

By Michael Doyle, McClatchy News Service

WASHINGTON – Five months into a new Congress, and deep into a lasting drought, California water legislation still stymies and splits the state’s lawmakers.

Draft copies are tightly held, as if stamped Top Secret. Myriad details are in flux. The legislative timing, though a June 2 Senate hearing could yet happen, remains unsettled. Democrats are divided; some are distinctly unhappy.

It all sounds so familiar, and yet there's still no telling how this movie ends.

"Right now, I don't know," a gloomy sounding California Democratic Sen. Dianne Feinstein said Thursday, when asked about the prospects for a bill. "It's very difficult to put something together. Obviously change is controversial, so to propose something and then not to be able to do it makes no sense."

Read the whole story

Train to release Tahoe themed holiday album

By Gary Graff, Billboard

Train will be bestowing holiday wishes on its fans this year.

Frontman Pat Monahan tells Billboard that the group is in the midst of recording a seasonal set, tentatively titled "Christmas in Tahoe" – "because, being a Bay Area band, that's where everybody goes to ski and have fun" – and out most likely in November. The album will feature three originals amidst covers that Monahan will be different from the usual Yuletide fare.

"There's a couple of traditional covers on there, but we tried not to do the same stuff everybody else does," Monahan

explains. “Like, our favorite song on it is from The Band called ‘Christmas Must Be Tonight,’ so it’s that kind of record where it’s a vibey, make dinner around Christmas time and listen to an alternative kind of Christmas album.”

Train has been recording the set since last month at Bear Creek Studios near Seattle, and Monahan says the band “may finish it on the road.”

Train returns to Lake Tahoe on July 21 at Harveys.

Read the whole story

Pay raises approved for Brown, Calif. legislators

By Patrick McGreevy, Los Angeles Times

SACRAMENTO — A state panel appointed by Gov. Jerry Brown voted Monday to give the governor, state legislators and many other officials a 3% pay raise, saying it would make their salaries more competitive with leaders elsewhere.

The increases will take effect Dec. 7.

Thomas Dalzell, chairman of the state Citizens Compensation Commission, said the 2.5 percent raises taking effect July 1 for many rank-and-file state workers also were a basis for the new salaries.

Brown’s pay will go from \$177,466 a year to \$182,789; the base salary for lawmakers will go from \$97,196 to \$100,111. Leadership posts in the Legislature pay up to 15 percent more.

Travel industry responds to rise in solo sojourners

By Stephanie Rosenbloom, New York Times

Vacations have long gone hand-in-hand with company: family bonding, honeymoons, babymoons, bands of oats-sowing college backpackers. Yet today, more and more travelers are going solo – and they're not who you might expect them to be.

Some 24 percent of people traveled alone on their most recent overseas leisure vacation, up from 15 percent in 2013, according to the 2015 Visa Global Travel Intentions Study, which was conducted across 25 countries by Millward Brown, a market research organization. Among first-time travelers, solo travel is even more popular, jumping to 37 percent, up from 16 percent in 2013. And while the stereotypical solo traveler has traditionally been single and looking, a solo traveler these days is just as likely, if not more likely, to be married or in a committed relationship.

As the numbers creep up, more travel brands are paying attention. TakeSolos Holidays, one of the oldest and largest companies in Britain offering guided getaways for solo travelers. The company has been around since 1982, but a few weeks ago it introduced an American arm, Solos Vacations, that's beginning to offer escorted trips (to Italy and Britain so far) throughSolosvacations.com. (Guided tours in general are becoming more popular among solo travelers, according to Visa's research, up almost threefold compared with 2013.)

Read the whole story

Right dose of exercise for a longer life

By Gretchen Reynolds, New York Times

Exercise has had a Goldilocks problem, with experts debating just how much exercise is too little, too much or just the right amount to improve health and longevity. Two new, impressively large-scale studies provide some clarity, suggesting that the ideal dose of exercise for a long life is a bit more than many of us currently believe we should get, but less than many of us might expect. The studies also found that prolonged or intense exercise is unlikely to be harmful and could add years to people's lives.

No one doubts, of course, that any amount of exercise is better than none. Like medicine, exercise is known to reduce risks for many diseases and premature death.

But unlike medicine, exercise does not come with dosing instructions. The current broad guidelines from governmental and health organizations call for 150 minutes of moderate exercise per week to build and maintain health and fitness.

Read the whole story

Drought at Washoe Lake to be discussed

Washoe Lake State Park is putting on drought-related program Memorial Day weekend.

Participants will be taught the reason Washoe Lake is dry. Discussion will include the dynamics of Washoe Lake, the rain shadow effect and the water cycle.

There will be a short 15-minute walk out onto the dry lakebed, and children may participate in making bracelets with beads that represent the water cycle: evaporation, precipitation and condensation.

The event will be May 23 and May 24 from 10-11am each day.

All events are open to the public and free of charge; however, there is an entrance fee into the park of \$7 per vehicle (cash or check). Nevada residents receive a \$2 discount. Washoe State Park is located at 4855 Eastlake Blvd., take the Eastlake Boulevard Exit No. 44 from I-580.

5 must-see places between Reno and Las Vegas

By Kristen Desilva, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Despite the sweltering heat, Nevada was named the sixth best state for a summer road trip, for the drive from Las Vegas to

Reno.

The ranking from WalletHub was determined by driving and accommodation costs, traffic conditions and safety, weather conditions as well as fun and scenic attractions.

There are two main routes one can take to visit the “Biggest Little City in the World,” but the road most traveled is a 450 mile, seven-hour drive on the Highway 95 winding up Nevada’s western border.

Read the whole story