

ACC recognizing vets at annual golf tourney

Rodney Gorman, retired Army sergeant major, will join the American Century Championship field of golfers in July.

This is the second year the Stateline celebrity golf tournament has invited the winner of the George W. Bush Presidential Center's Warrior Open.

Gorman is a Gulf War veteran who has also experienced multiple deployments to Afghanistan and Iraq. He now trains Special Operations Forces for the Department of Defense. Now 49, Gorman received multiple injuries, most significantly his right forearm and hand where he took enemy fire.

At the Warrior Open, Gorman shot 145 in 36 holes over two days, and finished two strokes in front of Cpl. Chad Pfeifer Pfeifer, the three-time defending champion.

At this year's American Century Championship, Gorman will join Pfeifer, the retired Army corporal who lost his left leg to an IED explosion in Iraq in 2007. Pfeifer led the American Century Championship after the first round in his debut last summer and went on to finish fifth.

American Century Championship will once again offer complimentary tickets for all U.S. military when the event tees off July 14-19 at Edgewood Tahoe. For more info, go online.

UNR exhibit focuses on Tahoe recreation

Students at the UNR have created an exhibit called the Tahoe Recreation Experience: Fun at the Lake. It highlights the history of recreational activities at Lake Tahoe such as boat racing, skiing, hiking and camping as well as the historic environmental impacts on the lake.

The project is part of the university's Shared History Program and will be on display in the Shared History Lab of the University's Mack Social Science in Room 109 for one year starting May 4.

The class partnered with the Tahoe Maritime Museum to learn about the rich history of boat racing. The students were originally planning on focusing on the exhibit solely on the history of boat racing at Lake Tahoe but expanded the project to include more activities.

There will be a reception to celebrate the opening of the exhibit and to honor the graduating seniors in the class between 1:45 to 2:15pm on May 4.

USDA vague on benefits of organic produce

By Peter Whoriskey, Washington Post

Are consumers right to think that organic food is safer and healthier?

It seems like a straightforward question, especially for Miles McEvoy, the chief of the National Organic Program at USDA. That's the section of the federal government that champions organic farming practices and defines what food deserves the coveted organic label.

But in an interview Wednesday, McEvoy wouldn't speculate about any health benefits of organic food, saying the question wasn't "relevant" to the role of the National Organic Program. Nor would he say whether growing consumer demand for organics reflects widening public skepticism of conventional U.S. agriculture.

Maybe McEvoy is unwilling to tout organics over conventional agriculture because, after all, conventional agriculture is the larger part of the USDA's realm. Or maybe he thinks, as some others do, that the science on organics is too tentative.

Read the whole story

Controlled burns to resume in basin

Weather permitting, the U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit may conduct prescribed fire operations starting May 4 off Ski Run Boulevard near Heavenly and near Logan Creek Drive on the East Shore. Operations may last through the week as conditions allow.

Each operation follows a prescribed fire burn plan, which considers temperature, humidity, wind, moisture of the vegetation, and conditions for the dispersal of smoke.

Smoke from prescribed fire operations is normal and may continue for several days after an ignition depending on the project size. The Forest Service updates the local fire information line at 530.543.2600, ext. 6.

Big fish expert to give talk at UNR

Zeb Hogan, an aquatic biologist at UNR and host of the Nat Geo WILD “Monster Fish” show, has been traveling the globe for 10 years to find the biggest freshwater fish on the planet.

He will be giving a free lecture May 7 at 7pm about his adventures, travels and work to find, study and protect behemoth fish – fish that are more than 6-feet long or weigh more than 200 pounds.

The first 100 children will receive a copy of one of Hogan’s monster fish books, geared for young adult readers. There will also be a book signing following the lecture.

His research is documented in his “Monster Fish” show and in the new featured exhibition Monster Fish: In Search of the Last River Giants on display at the National Geographic Museum in Washington, D.C. through Oct. 12.

The talk is in the Redfield Auditorium in the Davidson Mathematics and Science Center on the UNR campus.

5 arrests in EDC counterfeit credit card ring

By Cathy Lockeclocke, Sacramento Bee

Five Bay Area residents have been arrested in El Dorado County, accused of being part of a counterfeit credit card ring.

Sheriff's deputies responded to Red Hawk Casino in Shingle Springs about 1pm Thursday regarding a report of fraudulent use of a credit card. Casino security personnel reported that a man and woman in the casino attempted to use forged or stolen credit cards to obtain cash.

Deputies learned that the man had left, but security employees identified him as Edmundo Gomez Ruiz, who was last seen accompanied by another man in a silver BMW, according to an El Dorado County Sheriff's Office news release.

[Read the whole story](#)

California Chrome still a contender in horse races



Steve Coburn, right, with Joe Asher of William Hill Sportbook and Sharkey's owner Harold holder. Photo/LTN file

By Chris Murray, Reno Gazette-Journal

It's been a year since Steve and Carolyn Coburn experienced one of the greatest days of their lives.

You remember the Coburns. They're the couple from Topaz Lake, about 70 miles south of Reno, who used some wisdom, a lot of fortune and an unbending belief in California Chrome, the fairy-tale horse, to get within 1.5 lengths of winning the first Triple Crown in 36 years.

The whirlwind experience, which pushed the Coburns into the national spotlight and took them to New York, Hawaii and even Dubai, all began a year ago at Churchill Downs in the Kentucky Derby.

With the Derby crowning a new champion today, Coburn recalled his crazy year.

"This year has gone by so fast," Coburn said this week. "This year has literally flown by for me."

[Read the whole story](#)

Human trafficking a problem in Lake Tahoe

By Linda Fine Conaboy

STATELINE – Not many people spend much time thinking about human sex trafficking. It's often a daunting and maybe even intangible topic. Just exactly what is human sex trafficking?

Law enforcement focuses on the human aspect of the topic, identifying human trafficking as the primary vehicle, and defining it as the recruiting, harboring, transporting, providing or obtaining a person for compelled labor or commercial sex acts through force, fraud or coercion.

There can be commercial sex trafficking such as domestic servitude, agricultural farm laborers can be illegally obtained and there are other work environments where employees may be coerced illegally such as at hotels, sweatshops and even forestry jobs. Human trafficking is often described as modern day slavery and as such is an immensely underreported crime.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Michelle Rodriguez gave a talk April 29 to Soroptimist International South Lake Tahoe at Harrah's Lake Tahoe. The federal prosecutor is well schooled in the topic of human sex trafficking. Her presentation was titled Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Minors: A Federal Perspective.



Michelle Rodriguez,
assistant U.S. attorney for
the Eastern District of
California, says human
trafficking is an issue in
Lake Tahoe. Photo/Linda Fine
Conaboy

When describing the role of the pimp in human sex trafficking, Rodriguez displayed a photo of a stereotypical person dressed in white fur from head to toe, puffing on a big cigar, and leering at the camera.

There's a new face for the pimp now, she said. He's usually a regular, run-of-the-mill person – and doesn't have to be male. The new pimp is typically younger, gang affiliated and may have a reliance on drugs and alcohol. And this person can have direct ties to the families of the girls with whom he or she becomes involved.

The astronomical use and acceptance of social media makes it easy for primarily young girls to be recruited into a life they would probably not choose had they been schooled in the perils that await them by logging onto some of the questionable sites constantly popping up. Even legitimate locations such as Facebook can hold danger for those who are young and easily led. In other words, anyone with access to a computer or a smart phone can be recruited. In the past, Rodriguez said, recruitment was normally by word-of-mouth – not anymore.

She pointed out that boys can also become victims, although fewer males than females are victims of human sex traffickers. Why? Because prime recruitment time happens when girls seem to be rebelling, discovering their sexuality or have a bad life at home. Not that boys don't have a problem, Rodriguez said, but girls more so. Those who feel underappreciated with no strong parental role model or guidance tend to be the most vulnerable.

Pimps are always looking for a fresh face, she said. They can find them, besides via social media, at bus stops or shelters, through others, in the mall or even at school.

Other offenses falling under this genre include engaging in pornography and/or circulating photos of it. Receipt, distribution and possession of child pornography is a crime. There is a lot of this type of activity at South Lake Tahoe, Rodriguez said.

"It's a fiendish activity," she said. "It's a compulsion and some people are wired that way. They can't stop themselves.

"But it is still a crime. There is a very graphic law that describes this. Sometimes a person will move into a home, but with designs on a specific family member. When these cases are being prosecuted, even the sexual act must be proven."

Additionally, when a sex trafficker is finally apprehended, it's a laborious process to establish a case and to prosecute them. It then becomes the role of the prosecutor to identify the elements of the specific violation and to present the facts to establish each element.

The Lake Tahoe Basin has a human sex trafficking problem. People come here looking for minors, Rodriguez said.

"It's an ongoing problem and we all have to be vigilant for it. South Lake Tahoe is not immune from the same social ills and criminal activities that other communities face. They may

appear to be rarer here, but it's not that they're not here," Rodriguez said. "People have sexual interests and some are not healthy and are criminal. South Lake Tahoe is not insulated, it would be absurd to think that it is. So being vigilant is no less a concern in South Lake Tahoe than in other communities."

Some of the signs that a person may be at risk or being held against her will include:

- Evidence of being controlled
- Visible signs of physical abuse
- Recently from a foreign country
- Non-English speaking
- Transient residency
- No engagement with the community
- Afraid to talk
- Runs away.

Signs a person may be a victim of sex trafficking:

- Tattoos reflective of a pimp
- Advertising on websites
- Older boyfriend (or girlfriend)
- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Unusual gifts.

After Rodriguez's talk, there was a round-table discussion about human trafficking in South Lake Tahoe.

The group identified several key needs. They include:

- A need for more foster homes
- Emergency placement sites
- Specialized treatment
- More public information on this issue
- What can be done when a problem is detected
- A need for children aging out of foster care
- Prevention and awareness of online solicitation

“I would like the coalition to meet within two weeks to decide where we want to go with this. We need to get our feet on the ground and do something. We’re not clear yet what it is, but at least we’re headed in the right direction,” Cindy Archer, Soroptimist president, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Opinion: The fire fee shell game

By George Runner

Democrats in the California Legislature seem to be facing the reality that the fire tax they passed with the governor’s help in 2011 is unfair. Californians who live in rural areas rely on a range of public services from multiple levels of government to combat fires. These residents already pay taxes to fund essential fire services.

The original fire fee was a scheme Gov. Jerry Brown came up with after diverting about \$90 million a year in fire prevention funds to help “balance” the state budget. Residents

have gained nothing since this shell game passed. Not a dime of fire fee revenues can be used for actual fire suppression – trucks, planes or hoses. The funds can only be used for “prevention” efforts, which seem to be few and far between.



George Runner

However, instead of simply repealing this onerous fire prevention fee, Democrats now want to replace a really bad policy with an even worse one.

AB1203, authored by Assemblyman Reggie Jones-Sawyer, is currently awaiting consideration by the Legislature. The bill would repeal the fire fee but replace it with a 3 to 5 percent insurance surcharge on all commercial and residential property statewide. The money collected from this fee would then be used to create a disaster response fund in the state treasury.

Right now, this proposal is nothing more than a massive tax increase designed to further fund government bureaucracy. The current fire tax brings in about \$80 million a year in revenue to the state coffers. If AB 1203 were to pass, that number could skyrocket to \$500 million or more a year. That's a colossal difference.

At a time when California is collecting record revenues, does Sacramento really need more of your money? For the month of March alone, revenues have come in \$547 million higher than anticipated by the governor's budget.

Based on a \$1,000 premium, a small-business owner could end up paying tens of thousands of dollars more for insurance. And if

you're a residential property owner, you'd get hit with an insurance surcharge as well.

Why should Californians have to purchase additional insurance for something their tax dollars should already guarantee? Imagine having to purchase a crime insurance policy to ensure that local and state police respond to your 911 calls – that wouldn't be effective or fair public policy, and neither is AB1203.

Protecting Californians shouldn't require new taxes or fees; public safety should be first, not last, in line for spending existing public dollars. If the state's emergency readiness lacks adequate funding, California needs to do a better job prioritizing the more than \$100 billion in taxes that taxpayers are currently sending to Sacramento each year.

Jones-Sawyer's legislation requires a two-thirds vote. I hope Democrats and Republicans will oppose this new tax proposal. It's hard to imagine why the Legislature would replace a bad policy with an even worse one. Sadly, though, stranger things have happened in Sacramento.

The Legislature should repeal California's illegal fire tax not replace it with a massive insurance scheme that will make life even more costly for Californians.

George Runner represents more than 9 million Californians as a taxpayer advocate and elected member of the State Board of Equalization where he serves as vice chair.

Rim Fire's alleged igniter will not face charges

By Kurtis Alexander, Fresno Bee

Federal prosecutors said Friday that they intend to drop charges against the bow hunter accused of starting the devastating Rim Fire that burned through Yosemite two years ago and convulsed into the largest wildfire in Sierra history.

In a motion to dismiss the case, U.S. Attorney Benjamin Wagner said the two witnesses who needed to show that Keith Emerald, 33, of Columbia ignited the blaze by making an illegal campfire had died.

One person who spoke with Emerald shortly after Emerald was rescued from the fast-moving fire via helicopter died in a workplace accident in February, according to prosecutors. The second witness, the helicopter pilot, died last month of cardiac arrest, prosecutors said.

Read the whole story