

Lottery proposal: Lifeline for Nev. education or DOA?

By J.D. Morris, Las Vegas Sun

Amid all the discussion in Carson City about improving education, one piece of legislation is refloating an old, but likely ill-fated, idea to help fund Nevada's bottom-tier school system: creating a state lottery.

Assembly joint resolution No. 6 would authorize a lottery through an amendment of the Nevada Constitution, which currently bars the state from running one. The proceeds would support public education as well as "the health and welfare of senior citizens."

A lottery might seem like a no-brainer for a state with such a vibrant gambling industry. But similar proposals have failed in the Legislature numerous times before, so if history is any indication, this one will be a tough sell, too.

Nonetheless, Assemblyman Harvey Munford, D-Las Vegas, is championing the bill because he said he was approached by many of his constituents wondering why a lottery wasn't allowed in Nevada. So the longtime legislator – who's termed out after this session – thought he'd give it a try, despite the issue's poor track record in the Capitol.

Read the whole story

Food Bank distribution in SLT this week

The Food Bank of El Dorado County will be in South Lake Tahoe on March 25 from 10-11am at the American Legion Hall to distribute emergency supplemental groceries and fresh produce to those who need it most.

If you are struggling to make ends meet and live in the South Lake Tahoe, stop by. The Food Bank will provide one allocation per household.

The Food Bank of El Dorado County built its mobile food pantry in 2012 to reach the most rural areas of El Dorado County.

For more information on how to give or get help, call 530.621.9950 or email info@foodbankedc.org.

Women business owners common in Nev.

By Karen Castro, KLAS-TV

LAS VEGAS – A study by American Express says women are the driving force of Nevada's economy and the new face of entrepreneurship.

The study also showed how the business owners were of different ethnicities. When it comes to women businesses owners, Nevada is among the top five states with the fastest growth.

Economic experts say the state of Nevada has the third highest amount of women business owners.

Read the whole story

Classes map course to grow veggies in Nev.

University of Nevada Cooperative Extension is offering eight Grow Your Own, Nevada classes at 12 locations statewide to help Nevadans who want to get on a path to more sustainable, local, healthy living by growing more of their own food.

The series of workshops will run April 7-30, and be Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6 to 8. The workshops will provide gardeners and those interested in growing healthy foods with a back-to-the-basics guide to producing bountiful harvests in Nevada.

The workshop topics will include:

April 7: GMOs: Facts and Fallacies

April 9: Composting and Vermicomposting

April 14: Weeds, Critters and Insects

April 16: Growing Garlic in Northern Nevada

April 21: Wine and Beer Making (heavy on the wine)

April 23: Fruit Trees for High Desert Orchards

April 28: Berry Production

April 30: Walapinis: Experience With a Belowground Greenhouse.

The workshops will be live at the Washoe County Cooperative Extension office, 4955 Energy Way in Reno, and will also be available via interactive video at Cooperative Extension

offices in Battle Mountain, Carson City, Elko, Eureka, Fallon, Hawthorne, Lovelock, Pahrump, Tonopah, Winnemucca and Yerington.

To register for any or all of the classes, go online.

Then and now: Taco Bell a mainstay in SLT

Fast food in South Lake Tahoe has been around for decades.



Taco Bell has had a presence in South Lake Tahoe for more than 40 years. Photos/Bill Kingman

South Lake Tahoe's original Taco Bell opened in the late 1960s or early 1970s in an adobe brick with tile roof Spanish classic building. This is what most Taco Bells looked like at the time.



The original Taco Bell was destroyed in 2006 and rebuilt.

Nearly 40 years later, it was time for a new, larger Taco Bell. An effort was made to save as many trees as possible.



Same food, different physical look.

Reversing its footprint, now parking is at the left and Taco Bell is right behind the big front tree.

– *Bill Kingman*

ZCES students learn from their surroundings

By Kathryn Reed

With Lake Tahoe – the land and water – being a continual scientific discovery, students at Zephyr Cove Elementary School are stepping outside to learn.

Each grade level is being taught something unique about Tahoe as part of the science curriculum. It's called "place based learning" – something Principal Nancy Cauley and the teachers came up with at the beginning of the year and expect to put into full effect in the 2015-16 school year.

Tahoe Institute for Natural Science is helping to facilitate classes with the regular teachers as well as bringing in grade appropriate instruction. All of this will meet the state science standards.

"The Tahoe Institute for Natural Science is excited to work with Zephyr Cove Elementary School to help with their new focus on the natural environment of the Lake Tahoe Basin," Kirk Hardie, TNS co-executive director, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "Teachers frequently comment that we provide their classes with their favorite guest programs. Two programs we are currently working on are geology and plant identification."

Instruction at each level will focus on:

- Kindergarten – feathers, animals that fly
- First – fur, as in animals with fur
- Second – fins, the fish
- Third – forest

- Fourth – water, the lake, streams and rivers
- Fifth – geology
- Sixth – green energy.

“We feel with TINS they will provide quality, hands-on experiential programs with all six different aspects,” Cauley told *Lake Tahoe News*. “They will teach the children how special these resources are, and to care (for) and cultivate the ecosystem of Tahoe so future generations can enjoy it just as much.”

Cauley said staff started discussing what makes ZCES so special. Location is significant. It is surrounded by forest, with a stream out back. Lake Tahoe is walking distance from the school. The small size is another attribute.

Students don’t have to get on a bus to experience what most kids their age would have to. They can walk outside and be immersed in nature. And that then becomes the classroom.

But there are other nearby places that offer learning experiences. Zephyr Cove students went to Taylor Creek last fall to see the kokanee salmon spawning. Third-graders will be going to Spooner Lake for a hike.

“TINS has been working with area schools since 2010 to improve their science education and nature experience opportunities through hands-on, place-based programs that meet both Nevada and California state science education standards,” Hardie said.

Talking to students about invasive species will be incorporated into water issues.

“This could take off in a lot of different ways. It’s in an embryonic stage,” Cauley said of this new science program.

Opinion: Important to reel in teen stress

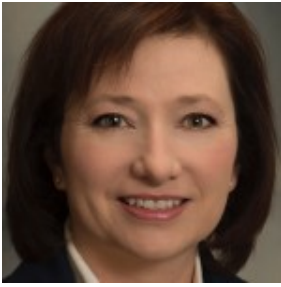
By Sonia Rupp

Any parent will tell you raising teenagers is a stressful time. Are you in that stage? Talk to your teenager about it. Your stress may be similar stress for your teen.

A recent American Psychological Association online survey shows today's teenagers experience greater levels of stress. Stressors include academic pressures, feeling overscheduled, financial pressure, and social pressures – especially with social media. In addition, bad habits teens learn to deal with stress often continue into adulthood. Stress can help some short-term situations like focusing for an exam or having a burst of energy for a sporting event. However, chronic stress can affect mental and physical well-being.

Is your teen stressed? According to the APA, common signs of teenage stress include:

- Episodes of irritability or anger
- Tired or fatigued
- Nervous or anxious
- Insomnia
- Headaches
- Crying spells
- Skipping meals or overeating – changes in diet
- Upset stomach or nausea.



Sonia Rupp

Many young adults develop unhealthy behaviors to cope with stress; such as watching TV, surfing the Internet, or playing video games. Small media amounts may be a good distraction, but stress returns once the media is turned off. Also, for teens with low self-esteem, social media pressures may elevate stress. Violent video games and graphic movies increase nightmares and negative thinking. Of greater concern, your teen may develop other negative behaviors including overeating, anorexia, excessive consumption of caffeine, self-harm, smoking, and drug or alcohol use.

Teach your teen coping habits by being a good example. Help your teen replace unhealthy behaviors with healthier and productive ways to manage stress.

Exercise. Physical activity counteracts heart and blood pressure changes that occur with chronic stress. Outdoor activities help improve mood by supplying Vitamin D from the sun. Team sports also help increase socialization.

Mental exercises. Reading, meditation, puzzles and non-violent games are healthy ways to distract the brain from worries and create a more peaceful mind. Think positive thoughts and avoid being cynical. Breathing exercises also relax the body and brain by increasing oxygen and teaching the mind to focus.

Establish routines. Keep regular eating and sleeping habits and avoid overscheduling to allow time to relax.

Improve diet. Stress can affect digestion and immunity. Healthy eating can boost immunity and prevent an upset

stomach.

Get creative. Get involved with a hobby or creative interest – draw, write, play music.

Socialize. Take time to enjoy friends and family. In stressful times, talking to a loved one can help the problem not feel so big.

Journal. Write down what causes stress. Separate stressors that can be changed or decreased. Use the strategies above to help with things that can't change.

Seek support. After the best effort to manage stress and you or your teen still feel overwhelmed, don't be afraid to reach out for help through therapy, a support group, or talk to your doctor.

Take time to talk to your teenager and start showing healthier ways to deal with stress so they can have a happier and healthier future.

Sonia Rupp is a board-certified child and adolescent psychiatrist who provides diagnostic evaluations and treatment recommendations for children and adolescents at Stateline Medical Center. Rupp will speak about "Stress: Its Effects on Body and Mind" on April 2 at 6pm at Lake Tahoe Community College.

Lawsuit: Calif. wines contain dangerous arsenic levels

By Ben O'Donnell, Wine Spectator

Are some California wineries “secretly poisoning wine consumers”? That’s one of the incendiary charges being leveled in a class-action lawsuit against several of the biggest companies in American wine, filed March 19 in a California state court. At the heart of the suit is that the “defendants produce, manufacture and/or distribute wine in California that contains inorganic arsenic in amounts far in excess of what is allowed in drinking water.”

The spokesman for one company named in the suit and others in the industry argue that the lawsuit is spurious and based on misinformation.

The plaintiffs “decided to file a complaint based on misleading and selective information in order to defame responsible California winemakers, create unnecessary fear, and distort and deceive the public for their own financial gain,” said a spokesman for The Wine Group (TWG), one of the defendants.

The lawsuit names several large companies, including TWG, Treasury Wine Estates, Trinchero, Fetzer Vineyards and Bronco, following claims that a Denver laboratory found inorganic arsenic in 83 brands, including Franzia, Sutter Home, Concannon, Wine Cube, Beringer, Flipflop, Fetzer, Korbel, Almaden, Trapiche, Cupcake, Smoking Loon and Charles Shaw.

“Almost all of them are \$10 or less, and the vast majority of those are under \$5,” said lawyer Brian Kabateck, whose firm is one of three bringing the suit, at a press conference today after the complaint was filed in the Superior Court of California’s Los Angeles branch. “The consumer may be spending less than \$5 for a bottle of wine, but they may be paying with their health in the long run. These are very serious allegations that we’re raising against the wine industry.”

Read the whole story

Top Nev. court extends Whittemore law suspension

By Scott Sonner, AP

RENO — The Nevada Supreme Court ordered a four-year suspension of Harvey Whittemore's law license Friday, more than doubling the punishment a state bar panel recommended after the ex-lobbyist and developer was convicted two years ago of making illegal campaign contributions to Sen. Harry Reid.

The high court decided the 18-month suspension the state bar association's Northern Nevada Disciplinary Board recommended after temporarily suspended Whittemore's license in November 2013 wasn't harsh enough given the crimes the former political power broker committed.

Whittemore, 61, currently is serving a two-year sentence at a minimum-security prison in California on three felony convictions. He's scheduled to be released in August 2016.

The newly ordered suspension is retroactive so he'll be eligible to apply for reinstatement to the bar on Nov. 13, 2017.

The disciplinary panel had recommended its proposed 18-month suspension be extended until Whittemore is released from prison in the event his term expired before the suspension did.

But Chief Justice James Hardesty said in the order signed by five other justices a longer suspension was warranted.

"We do not agree that the panel's recommended discipline is commensurate with the criminal conduct that Whittemore was

convicted of engaging in," he wrote. He noted that one dissenting member of the bar panel would have recommended that Whittemore be permanently disbarred in Nevada.

Dominic Gentile, Whittemore's Las Vegas-based attorney, did not immediately respond to telephone or email messages seeking comment late Friday from The Associated Press.

A federal jury in Reno convicted Whittemore in 2013 of making excessive campaign contributions, making contributions in the name of another and lying to FBI agents.

Federal prosecutors say he used family and employees of his billion-dollar real estate company to funnel more than \$130,000 to Reid's re-election committee in 2007 when the Nevada Democrat was the Senate majority leader. They say he tried to skirt contribution limits by writing the checks to the "straw donors," who would simply hand over the money to Reid's campaign.

Reid was not accused of any wrongdoing, although he had to amend his 2007 report to the Federal Election Commission.

Whittemore argued the checks he wrote to his employees and family members were gifts with no strings attached, and the recipients were allowed to spend it as they saw fit.

The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals denied his appeal in January and earlier this month refused his bid for a re-hearing, rejecting his arguments that the trial court's jury instructions were inadequate and that the campaign limits violated his First Amendment rights.

Hope alive to squeeze money from bankrupt Nevada Fire Safe Council for Tahoe businesses

By Jeff DeLong, Reno Gazette-Journal

Fed up with waiting, Nevada lawmakers are ramping up efforts to have private companies, fire districts and others paid for work conducted years ago to reduce fire danger in vulnerable areas around Lake Tahoe.

The Legislature earlier this month passed a joint resolution urging Congress to pay contractors who performed extensive fuels treatment work in the wake of Tahoe's disastrous Angora Fire of 2007.

More than \$3.4 million is still owed for work conducted through the now-defunct Nevada Fire Safe Council, which filed for bankruptcy in 2012 after a federal audit uncovered financial irregularities in how U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management grants were handled by the nonprofit group.

"It's just really, really frustrating," said Brian Rye, president of Bushwhackers Tree Service, Inc., which is still owed more than \$16,000 for tree thinning and other fuel management work the firm performed several years ago at Tahoe.

Read the whole story