

Bill would alleviate Nev. teacher shortage

By Ana Ley, Las Vegas Sun

A bill that would make it easier for some immigrants to teach in Nevada's classrooms is gaining momentum in the Legislature because it would help alleviate the state's crippling teacher shortage.

Assembly Bill 27, which has broad support and cleared its first legislative hurdle on Wednesday, has special significance for the state's immigrant community. The bill's success would be a small victory for advocates who are reeling from a blow dealt by a court decision this week that temporarily halted a federal program that would have spared tens of thousands from deportation in Nevada.

AB27 would benefit people who have work permits through the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, which grants deportation relief to undocumented immigrants who entered the United States as children.

Existing law lets the state superintendent give teaching licenses to those who aren't citizens but have work permits only if there's a teacher shortage for the subject that person can teach. Otherwise, only U.S. citizens and legal residents can apply.

Read the whole story

It's official: Americans should drink more coffee

By Roberto A. Ferdman, Washington Post

When the nation's top nutrition panel released its latest dietary recommendations on Thursday, the group did something it had never done before: weigh in on whether people should be drinking coffee. What it had to say is pretty surprising.

Not only can people stop worrying about whether drinking coffee is bad for them, according to the panel, they might even want to consider drinking a bit more.

The panel cited minimal health risks associated with drinking between three and five cups per day. It also said that consuming as many as five cups of coffee each day (400 mg) is tied to several health benefits, including a reduced risk of cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes.

Read the whole story

'The Vagina Monologues' returns to Tahoe

"The Vagina Monologues" returns for its 13th year in South Lake Tahoe on March 6.

The cast is made up of a diverse group of community members including students, mothers, daughters, sisters, new-to-the-stage and seasoned performers.

V-Day is a global activist movement to end violence against women and girls, by raising funds and awareness. Productions like this and other V-Day benefit events organized by volunteer activists take place around the world, educating millions of people about the reality of violence against women and girls. The award-winning play “The Vagina Monologues” is based on V-Day founder/playwright Eve Ensler’s interviews with more than 200 women. With humor and grace the production celebrates women’s sexuality and strength.

Doors open at 7pm at Lake Tahoe Golf Course in Meyers. The show starts at 8pm. Tickets are \$20. There will be a wine tasting and tapas pairing from 6:30-7:30pm for \$25. Must have show ticket to attend.

Proceeds benefit Live Violence Free, Tahoe Youth & Family Services and Zawadisha. Black Jack Taxi will be offering 25 percent off all rides to and from the event. Tickets are available online.

Tahoe National Forest looking at over-snow use

The Tahoe National Forest is preparing an environmental impact statement on a proposal to designate over-snow vehicle use on roads, trails and areas on lands within its boundaries. The EIS will also identify snow trails available for grooming.

Designating OSV use on the forest will ensure over-snow vehicle activity, such as snowmobile riding, is effectively managed to provide access; ensure OSV use when there is adequate snow; promote the safety of all users; enhance public enjoyment; minimize impacts to resources; and minimize

conflicts among users.

The Forest Service has developed a proposed action, however, a decision has not been made regarding the project.

Comments are being taken until March 25 during this initial scoping phase.

Five meetings are planned. All meetings are from 4-7pm:

March 2 – Tahoe National Forest Headquarters Office, 631 Coyote St., Nevada City.

March 3 – Truckee District Ranger Station, 10811 Stockrest Springs Road, Truckee.

March 4 – Sierraville District Ranger Station, 317 South Lincoln St., Sierraville.

March 5 – Sierra City, Sierra City Community Hall, 13 Castagna Alley, Sierra City.

March 9 – Foresthill Fire Department, 24320 Main Street, Foresthill.

For additional information and how to comment, go online.

Playing the Oscar odds with a bettor's mind-set

By David Leonhardt, New York Times

The Academy Awards ceremony will emphasize the suspense of the unknown on Sunday night. But Hollywood insiders are well aware that many nominees have little chance of winning – and know who those nominees are.

Not only will the award for best picture most likely go to

“Birdman” or “Boyhood,” but the best director award also seems destined for one of those two films. Eddie Redmayne (“The Theory of Everything”) will probably win best actor, though Michael Keaton (“Birdman”) has a shot. The other acting categories – best actress, best supporting actress and best supporting actor – appear to offer even less suspense, with Julianne Moore (“Still Alice”), Patricia Arquette (“Boyhood”) and J. K. Simmons (“Whiplash”) each a runaway favorite.

There is nothing new, of course, about Hollywood going into Oscar night with a very good idea of what will happen. That’s been the case for years. The new development is that any of the rest of us who want to know the likely outcomes can do so, with nothing fancier than an Internet connection.

Several betting markets, including European bookmakers, the Wynn Las Vegas casino and a prediction market known as the Hollywood Stock Exchange, publicly list Oscar odds. And their record over the past decade is remarkably good.

Read the whole story

Talk focuses on entrepreneurship

Roland Schumann will be giving a talk called Entrepreneurship: Is it Right for You? on Feb. 25 at Sierra Nevada College.

The free lecture is from 11:30am-1pm in the TCES building, rooms 139/141.

Schumann will offer wisdom and practical advice about entrepreneurship and venture funding to students and community

members. His venture capital-funded company, SwapDrive Inc., was a pioneer in the cloud storage industry and was acquired by Symantec Corporation in 2008. Prior to SwapDrive, he was a senior associate at Booz Allen Hamilton, where he provided technical risk management services; and was a senior project manager and information systems developer for the Advanced Technologies group within Thomson Corporation.

Schumann also serves on the SNC Tahoe board of trustees.

Meeting to highlight building code changes

With the new building season coming up, there are things every contractor, designer and homeowner should know before they start any project.

South Lake Tahoe officials are putting on a free seminar to enlighten people.

Topics will include:

- Radon requirements will be mandatory.
- Sprinklers for additions could be required.
- Take into account in updating all plumbing fixtures when you improve anything in your house.
- Smoke detectors older than 10 years will need to be replaced whenever you pull a permit.
- Recycling documentation for all construction waste is required on all projects.

- When are building permits required?

The meeting is March 11 from 5-7pm at Lake Tahoe Airport.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



- South Tahoe Public Utility District's board is having a workshop March 3 from 2-5pm to review the proposed 2015-16 budget and 10-year financial plan. The meeting is at the district office, 1275 Meadow Crest Drive, South Lake Tahoe.
 - Over the Edge, a mountain bike company, is opening a shop in South Lake Tahoe this year. The company tends to locate where the sport is a destination attraction.
 - Foreigner will be at MontBleu in Stateline on June 6 at 9pm. Tickets are \$55.50, \$65.50 and \$75.50, plus fees, and available through Ticketmaster.
 - Duane Whitelaw, former North Tahoe Fire Protection District chief, is now general manager/CEO of North Tahoe Public Utility District.
 - This is the third time in four years the lack of snow has forced the cancellation of the Great Ski Race. This had been the primary fundraiser for the Tahoe Nordic Search & Rescue Team.
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DCSD board hears how to make WHS better

By Kathryn Reed

ZEPHYR COVE – A roadmap to Whittell High School's future has been laid out to the school district board and staff by a committee of concerned parents and staff.

"This work you've done is a living document," Douglas County School District Superintendent Lisa Noonan said at the end of the special board meeting Feb. 19.

The committee that came about nearly a year ago because of frustration with the district and the board by those at the lake culminated this week with a path to go forward. And while it's understood the recommendations by the committee may not all be implemented, it was an amiable meeting that showed both sides could talk and listen to one another. That in and of itself is progress from last spring.

Noonan said when the board meets at the lake in April she hopes to bring forward some ideas that could be implemented.

The committee proposed having the school calendar and bell schedule be more aligned with Lake Tahoe Unified School District than the valley schools. This would allow for students across the state line to have easier access to individual classes in the neighboring district.

That is another idea – to allow students to take specific classes rather than just attend the other district.

As it is now, DCSD students may pay to attend LTUSD, but the reverse is not true.



Douglas County School District board member Cindy Trigg, center, makes a point Feb. 19 as colleagues Ross Chichester and Karen Chessell listen. Board member Neil Freitas was absent. Photo/LTN

Committee members reached out to LTUSD administrators who are open to discussing a possible memorandum of understanding to bridge the education divide. They would like the district staff to continue the dialogue.

Working with the state Legislature to recognize Lake Tahoe Community College is really the two-year institution WHS students would attend rather than Western Nevada College in the valley is another goal. The problem is LTCC is in California.

Delving into distance education or online classes is another goal of the committee's. This could open up more elective options to Whittell kids. That is an area that is lacking because of the small student population.

As with most things in public education, laws and money govern what can happen. It's possible the district would lose some funding if this were to occur.

Board member Tom Moore was the most vocal about money being a constraint. He said it's necessary for spending to be equitable among all the schools.

Committee member Greg Felton said, "Part of it is how do you judge equity? Cost is one way. Opportunities for students is another. We need to find some way to judge what is equitable."

He pointed out how Douglas High students have so many more course offerings – questioning whether that is equitable.

Taking a formal survey of students and parents to gauge what electives they would like was presented to the board. That could then be the basis for future course offerings.

Offering incentives to teachers to obtain additional qualifications to be able to teach a broader spectrum of classes was brought up. This would help with curriculum choices as well as not be a financial burden to teachers.

The committee would like Whittell to have more autonomy. Exactly how that would look still needs to be ironed out.

All signs are pointing to enrollment increasing in the future. This has to do with the economy on the South Shore improving. It was pointed out that Lake Tahoe Hard Rock hired about 25 percent of its work force from out of the area. The presumption is some of those people are bound to have school-age kids. And other businesses are opening or expanding.

This led the committee to believe discussion of further consolidation of the lake schools is a moot point.

Committee members also foresee their work not being finished and that a group like this could always have a role.

Opinion: 500 miles in one season

By Aaron Hussmann

In summer 2013, I walked a demanding 500 miles and I'm damn proud of it.

After working 60-80 hour weeks for nine months, living in a crowded city, and becoming one of the thousands of tired, nerve-shaken souls John Muir spoke about, I realized the famous naturalist was right when he said, "going to the mountains is going home."



Aaron Hussmann

I packed my old Subaru full of my worldly possessions and headed home to South Lake Tahoe. Breathing in crisp mountain air and soaking in the stillness of the granite peaks surrounding me, I resolved to drag my city slicker feet over 500 miles of trail that summer.

Hiking 500 miles in one season isn't the most difficult task in the world, especially if you're a Pacific Crest Trail through-hiker. But it's also not the easiest thing to do. It can be difficult to stay motivated, to get out of bed, or out of your tent, and hike every day. Hiking 500 miles requires a steady balance of careful planning and wild spontaneity. The end result, however, is an overwhelming sense of pride and accomplishment, a rewarding connection (or re-connection) with

the natural world, and a new appreciation for a slower pace of life.

Here are five tips to plan for and stay motivated during a 500-mile season, but feel free to liberally apply these tips to any hiking adventure.

1. Invest in solid hiking boots and socks. I can honestly count my blisters on one hand after almost five years of dedicated Oboz use. Your feet are your most valuable, yet underrated, piece of gear on the trail, and your fancy, ultra-light thingamajig won't do any good unless your feet are comfortable, dry, and blister free. Seriously, try caring how many ounces your titanium spork weighs when your feet are covered in blisters. The winning combination in my blister-free history has always been an Oboz boot with Vermont Darn Tough socks.

2. Small hikes add up, so get outside every day. Researchers at the University of Michigan and Edge Hill University in the UK have found that weekly walks in nature significantly reduce stress and lower depression. These short walks also significantly add toward your 500-mile goal for the season.

3. Rediscover the familiar and explore the brand new. When embarking on your 500-mile ambitions, ease into the season by hiking familiar trails with a new eye for discovery. Consider buying a guidebook and map for hikes in your local area. For you Tahoans out there, I recommend this book, with over 500 miles of South Lake Tahoe trails (written by yours, truly). In the end, don't be afraid to wake up in the morning, unfold your map, close your eyes, and drop your finger on a new destination for the day.

4. Learn the local flora and fauna. John Muir taught his children the names of dozens of plants and animals on their Martinez ranch that served as a powerful lesson about respect, wonder, and inter-connectedness with nature. Pick up a guide

to the local plants, trees, flowers, and wildlife in your area and bring it with you on every hike. Each step down the trail becomes a learning experience or a re-acquaintance with a familiar friend. Plus, you get to look like a nature badass for knowing what all those different pine trees are.

5. Learn to love (and hate) hiking. You're likely reading this because you're already a fan of hiking. Yet, no matter how much you love hiking, at some point you might want to tell your hiking boots and trekking poles that, "just because I love you doesn't mean I have to like you right now." For me, being stuck in my tent for 30 hours of torrential downpour, having my "waterproof" rain fly soak through, and hiking through seven miles of trail-turned-river is one of these moments. But as my father always says, "the misery makes the memory," and my miserable hiking experiences are ones I will cherish for a lifetime.

In the end, whether you're hiking 500 miles or 50, when you connect the sole of your boots with the dirt on the trail, you're also connecting your own soul with the natural world surrounding you. With these five tips in mind, the only step left is to lace up your boots, grab your map, and hit the trail.

Aaron Hussmann is the community engagement associate with the League to Save Lake Tahoe and author of "500 Miles of South Lake Tahoe Hikes."