

Opinion: Parents need to monitor what kids watch

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The humorist Josh Billings, who lived and wrote about the same time as Mark Twain, once said, "To bring up a child in the way he should go, travel that way yourself once in a while." This wisdom applies today, even in the example parents set by what movies or TV shows they watch.

The Annenberg Public Policy Center conducted a survey in 2014 with the goal of finding out how parents gauge which movies are fitting for their children. Family Studies shared the survey; the results are shocking.

One thousand parents of children ages 6-17 were shown eight clips from popular movies. The shortest clip was 14 seconds long; the longest was 54 seconds. All eight clips contained some degree of violence or sexual content. Parents were asked to judge which clips were appropriate for which age groups.

Every time, although the clips were shown in random order, the first clip was seen as suitable only for older teenagers. But by the last clip, no matter the order the clips were shown in, parents always said it was suitable for younger viewers, as young as 6.

These results should be a reminder of how easy it can be to grow desensitized to invasive material over just a short time period.

Read the whole story

Challenging day on slopes for U.S. women

By USSA

BEAVER CREEK – It was another day full of action on Monday at the FIS Alpine World Ski Championships in Beaver Creek for the women's alpine combined. Slovenia's Tina Maze displayed speed in the morning's downhill and technical prowess in the afternoon's slalom to win her ninth career World Championship medal. Rounding out the women's combined podium were Nicole Hosp and Michaela Kirchgasser, both from Austria.

Hopes were high for Lindsey Vonn (Vail), who took seventh in the downhill before straddling in the slalom and did not finish. Laureenne Ross (Bend, Ore.) was the top finishing American in 14.

The U.S. Ski Team started four athletes in the women's combined – Jacqueline Wiles (Aurora, Ore.), Ross, Julia Mancuso (Squaw Valley), and Vonn. The four American athletes skied hard and courageously on Monday against an international field comprised of the best 27 female skiers in the world. However, the downhill and slalom runs in the combined event proved to be a tough challenge for the American women.

The one-day women's combined event was full of action. The morning's downhill track was very fast due to the slick, icy surface and the technical course. Maze sat atop the downhill standings after the morning run, trailed by Lara Gut of Switzerland and Austria's Anna Fenninger. Vonn, the highest American in the combined downhill, sat in seventh place. Vonn's downhill time was 1.31 seconds off Maze's, meaning she would have to ski a flawless slalom run in the afternoon to

have a shot at medaling. Ross was the second American finisher, taking 10th, while Mancuso was 17 and Wiles 18.

After trading long skis for short skis, the athletes transitioned from a downhill mindset to the technical slalom course. Salted because of warm temperatures and set by Maze's Slovenian coach to favor the speed skiers, the slalom track was in prime condition for the female skiers to set an edge. However, the slalom specialists put on a clinic and left an indelible mark on the women's combined event.

Auditions set for 'Pippin' at LTCC

Lake Tahoe Community College is having auditions for the Tony Award-winning musical "Pippin", on Feb. 17 at 7pm in the Duke Theater. Callbacks will be Feb. 21 at noon.

LTCC is looking for actors, singers and dancers of various ages and types, including one boy to play a 9 to 11 year old. Strong dancers as well as aerialists, gymnasts, jugglers and acrobats are also needed. Actors are required to sing selections from "Pippin" for the audition. Audition material and information may be found online.

This high-energy, award-winning musical follows the story of Pippin, a young prince who longs to find passion and adventure in his quest to live an extraordinary life. His journey is encouraged by the seductive, yet sinister leading player, a Mephistophelean figure who, along with a troupe of players, lures the naïve prince into a variety of "extraordinary"

experiences, to the final "One Perfect Act."

Rehearsals will be Monday through Thursday evenings beginning April 6. Performances are June 12-21.

For more information, call 530.541.4660, ext. 240.

Feds boost drought funding by \$50 mil.

By Fenit Nirappil, AP

SACRAMENTO – The federal government is making available up to \$50 million in drought-relief funds for western states, with the largest portion earmarked for parched California, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell and Gov. Jerry Brown announced Friday.

The additional funding includes about \$20 million for the Central Valley Water Project for efforts such as water transfers, drought monitoring for endangered species and diversifying water supplies. California is entering its fourth year of drought.

"California is ground zero for the drought. There is no state that is worse off," Jewell said.

Farmers and local water departments can also compete for another \$14 million for projects to help reduce water use and develop response plans to continuing drought conditions.

The funding announcement came as the first major storm of 2015 moved into Northern California, bringing with it the potential for up to 10 inches of rain in places. It arrived after an

exceptionally dry January. Last week's survey of water in the snowpack, California's primary water source, found only a quarter of its normal level

The Department of Interior funding is a sliver of previous drought-relief commitments. Last February, President Obama pledged \$183 million, mostly for farmers who lost livestock and food banks to help unemployed agriculture workers. Brown in March signed a \$687 million drought-relief package, including for emergency drinking water and accelerating infrastructure supplies.

Efforts to pass a federal drought-response bill in Congress failed late last year. House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy and other Republicans say the Obama administration's approach to dry conditions continues to prioritize fish over farmers and other residents in California.

The State Water Resources Control Board announced this week that Californians cut monthly water use by 22 percent in December, meeting Brown's call to slash residential water use by 20 percent for the first time. The board may impose further limits on outdoor water use as the state tries to protect supplies, but Brown said he's not ready for mandatory restrictions statewide.

"I'm reluctant to expand the coercive power of state authority," Brown said. "In a democracy, it is fundamental that citizens be the driving force. It's my job to encourage and inspire and monitor, but before we have, you know, full-scale rationing we have to have a few more problems than we currently have."

California is only delivering 15 percent of the water requested from the state's vast reservoir system to farmers and local agencies this year. The Interior Department will announce how much water it will send to Central Valley farmers under a separate reservoir system later this month.

Whooping cough vaccine fails for many

By Phillip Reese, Sacramento Bee

As debate simmers nationwide about whether parents should be forced to vaccinate their children, Elk Grove residents have made their choice: Only 80 of the suburb's 4,500 kindergartners opted out of vaccinations last year, state data show.

Despite those precautions, whooping cough ripped through Elk Grove's classrooms and cul-de-sacs in 2014. Infection rates within the large Sacramento suburb were three to five times higher than rates elsewhere in the county, local health records show.

The paradox – high infection rates amid high immunization rates – underscores a disturbing truth about the current whooping cough vaccine: It is wearing off after just a few years, and many Californians who thought they were protected instead are catching the disease.

"Children who were vaccinated did not receive the protection desired," said Kate McAuley, program coordinator of communicable disease and immunization at the Sacramento County Public Health Department. "We had many high-school-aged children who had pertussis. They had received vaccines. The vaccine is lasting two to three years."

Read the whole story

Traffic stop ends with 2 people in custody

A routine traffic stop ended with two arrests, and firearms, drugs and stolen property being confiscated by El Dorado County sheriff's deputies.

Deputy Jeff Tucker stopped a Nissan Maxima on Feb. 4 at 4:20pm on the West Slope for a possible code infraction. Tucker knew one of the occupants is a member of the Sureno gang in Placerville. The deputy asked to search the vehicle.

A stolen Toshiba laptop computer from Santa Cruz was found as well as mail and bank checks. Rafael Cardoza, 27, of Diamond Springs was arrested on charges of possession of the stolen computer.

Nalana Omega, 31, of Placerville had an unregistered .40-caliber Glock handgun loaded with a high capacity magazine in her purse, according to authorities. In a backpack, a loaded .22-caliber revolver was recovered. The revolver was confirmed stolen from Citrus Heights, according to deputies. Omega was arrested on charges of possession of a concealed weapon in a vehicle, carrying a loaded firearm, and carrying a loaded stolen firearm. At the jail, it was discovered she had suspected heroin, hypodermic needles and a meth pipe. Charges of possession of a controlled substance while armed, possession of narcotics, and possession of narcotic paraphernalia were added.

The two other occupants of the vehicle were not detained.

– *Read the whole story*

Businesses learn to thrive by sharing

By Kelly Zhou, Orange County Register

Tennis rackets hang from the wall alongside Babolat bags, rows of string and colored grips. The other side of the shop features Bodyglide balm for chafing, Asics shoes and energy gel blocks for long-distance runs.

In the difficult world of small business, Tony Krogus and Aaron Faygenov are taking an unexpected approach to lower costs and expand their customer base.

“It was kind of a no-brainer,” said Krogus, owner of String Tennis Shop. When Krogus first looked for a retail space to open his shop, he only wanted about 500 square feet: enough room to sell equipment, shoes and bags. But the places he found were all 900 square feet or more, meaning he had to offer more clothes and inventory on the floor to fill the space.

He settled into Blue Lantern Plaza in the beginning of 2012, even though “it was a lot bigger than what I needed, but the smallest I could find.”

Krogus later met Faygenov, who opened Running World on Pacific Coast Highway in 2010, when Faygenov was trying to figure out ways to better market his business.

“We came up with the brilliant idea: Why don’t we offer both services in one place?” Krogus said.

The duo decided to combine forces in early 2014, with Krogius moving into Faygenov's space and cutting each man's rent in half.

"This is the perfect synergy for two small businesses, to help each other out without wasting money," Krogius said.

The owners believe they have the only store in the area operating under such a business model. For the two easygoing, affable business owners, it helps them fight their largest competitor, the Internet – from Amazon to Zappos to Tennis Warehouse.

Read the whole story

No matter the wedding size – get married in Tahoe



Tahoe weddings often come with a view. Photo/LTN file

By John Spinola

So you want to get married? And you want to get married in Lake Tahoe. *Aaand* you're on a budget.

Well, let me just mention that in 15 years of me being a wedding officiant in Lake Tahoe I have never come across a couple that said, "We aren't on a budget and can spend any amount of money you can come up with." So, if you are like 99.9999 percent of the couples out there, you have a budget.

Let me start with my first piece of advice if you are on a budget – elope. Really, elope. If it is just the two of you, you will have fewer obligations to meet both monetarily and time-wise. You won't have to purchase food for people, you don't need a big venue and all the amenities that go with it. You won't have to purchase bouquets or boutonnieres for your bridal party, hair and makeup for one is less than hair and make up for a group, you don't have to offer lodging and you won't have friends increasing your spending with all of their suggestions.

If it is just the two of you, you can hire a minister, get a marriage license and I would highly recommend a photographer so you have pictures to share with people after you get back. Eloping offers more locations in the area. If you have group, you will need parking, bathrooms, seating. bridal room, etc. If it is just the two of you, there are some very nice ceremony locations here. I call them ceremony locations because they really aren't "wedding" locations. In other words, they don't work well with a group of people.

Eloping also has the advantage of increasing your free time. You don't have to cater to all the production stuff that shows up with groups – rehearsal dinner, ladies' events, guys' events, picking up people at the airport, meeting people after they arrive, etc.

Eloping allows your vision to stay true to what you want. When you involve your friends and family you will inevitably hear – you should do, you have to do, you could do, you can't do, the book says, this is tradition, I did do, I didn't do. Guests add drama, time, as well as costs.

And, yes, my wife and I eloped.

If you are like most people, you want to have guests. That is fine and I am all for it, but just remember what I have said above.

Lake Tahoe and guests

Consider a morning ceremony (11am, noon). Morning ceremonies tend to flow into a lunch reception rather than a dinner reception. Lunch is less money than dinner and people drink less at lunch than dinner. A morning time also allows any guests that live close to drive home after the reception. Earlier time slots might also be discounted because most couples want an afternoon time.

Consider a day other than Saturday. Saturday is the busiest day for weddings. Most vendors and venues offer discounts for non-Saturday weddings. Also, lodging is less during the week. Rates for lodging go up over the weekend.

Consider a smaller guest count (50 people venues/receptions cost less than 100 people venues/receptions). Also, fewer people means less drama.

Things not to cut from your budget

Get a cake locally. I have never seen it go well when someone travels with a cake. I have seen people's car breakdown or lose air conditioning. Melting cakes are very sad. I have seen friends run late with the cake. I have seen people show up with a cake and not have any flatware or dinnerware to serve it. Also, most venues do not have a place for you to store your cake, so you have to provide your own refrigeration. Really, get a cake locally.

Hire a professional photographer. There is a saying among wedding vendors: "Friends don't let friends shoot their weddings." A professional knows you are on a timeline. They

know the shots that are important and know how to get them. A professional is not emotionally attached to you or your event. They are emotional and passionate about their work and the final product they provide. I have seen friendships end because of poor quality wedding photos. I have seen friends/family get tipsy and forget that they are the “photographer” for the event. You want your friends and family to be guests and not vendors.

Have your flowers done by a florist or flower shop. You need refrigeration for flowers that is completely separate refrigeration from food. Food gases will wilt/kill flowers. You also need time to put them together and supplies to put them together.

When are you going to put yourself together if you are putting flowers together? You as a bride (or groom) must stay focused on being the bride/groom. You cannot be the coordinator, flower person, baker, decorator. You can be involved in the choices and process, but you need to remember to be the bride/groom first. I have seen people become more of a host rather than the people that the event is about.

Some good advice

If you are flying here, ship your dress. About four to six weeks before your event pack up your dress and ship it to the local dry cleaners. They will unpack and prep your dress for when you arrive. Send it certified so you know it has arrived. This will eliminate one more thing for you to keep track of and will also eliminate the possibility of the airline losing or damaging your dress right before your wedding.

Please, please – secure your ceremony time and venue before you plan your reception time and venue. I cannot tell you how many times I have had brides call and say “I need X” time because I already have my reception planned. Start with your ceremony time.

Rent tux locally. Go to a Selix dealer in your area. Pick out a style and get measured. Tell them you are getting married in Lake Tahoe. We have a Selix dealer here. If you rent a tux from the Tahoe dealer, you only have to rent it for a day. If you rent a tux from your area, you have to rent it for the length of your trip and you have to travel with it.

Arrive the day prior. Wake up where you are getting married. I have never seen it go well when people want to drive up the day of their wedding. Consider traffic. What if there is an accident. Car troubles? If you get a late start, you cannot make that time up on the road. What if your flight is late or luggage and rental car don't go as planned? Where will you get ready for your event after you arrive. Most hotels have a check in time between 3-4pm. If your event is scheduled for 5 (or even earlier), that doesn't give you any time (or place) to get ready. Again you really want to wake up where you are getting married.

Parents and money

All I have to say is that, "If they pay, they get a say." If possible, have your guests ship presents to your residence after the event. It will save them the hassle of traveling with a gift and you the hassle of having to bring it home.

If you are planning an event on the South Lake Tahoe, be sure to stay in South Lake Tahoe. I have seen people make lodging arrangements in North Shore and then pick a venue in South Shore that they like. You don't want to add 45 minutes to an hour in the car on your wedding day. This also applies to a North Shore event. Stay in North Shore if your venue/event is in North Shore.

If you can visit the area before hand, please do. This will give you the opportunity to meet vendors and see the locations in person (and what surrounds the locations). Please remember that it looks very different in winter than summer and also

schedule your visit during the week. Most vendors will not have a chance to offer consultations on Saturday because they are busy doing weddings. Monday-Thursday work best for visits.

Look for small print on the websites. There is a lot of it. Some places don't include a license, some have the minister's fee separate from the package. Some hide a Saturday surcharge in the small print. Ask for a total price. Ask who is the minister? Who is the photographer? And ask to see samples of their work or if you can meet them or talk with them ahead of time. Use the 800 number to talk with people. It is a personal service/experience, so be sure to interact a bit with the people that will be handling your event. They should make you feel comfortable. They should also answer your questions and listen to what you have to say. There should be some kind of "click" between you.

Ultimately, do what you as a couple want to do. It is your wedding. Don't let friends or family pressure you into a large event if you don't want one. I have seen family members and friends pressure couples into events that they really didn't want. Again, people add drama and costs.

In closing

I hope the above doesn't discourage you from having a destination wedding. I just want to make you aware of the things you will encounter with planning a wedding whether here in Tahoe or where you live. I have helped many couples in the 15 years that I was doing this and 99 percent of them have been very happy with my services. (If you are in customer service you know you cannot please everyone.)

The Rev. John Spinola has been a wedding officiant for more than 15 years – which includes more than 3,000 weddings, from two to 200 guests – from formal gatherings to rock climbing.

Ernie's restaurant changing hands

After 34 years, Paul and Judy Bruso are selling Ernie's.

The South Lake Tahoe restaurant on Emerald Bay Road has long been a favorite for locals and tourists.

Ernie's first opened in 1968. It had a few owners until the 30-year-old Paul Bruso bought it in 1980. One of the biggest changes occurred in 2003 when the Brusos went from renting the building across the street to having a larger building constructed for Ernie's.

Kent Baer and Nathan Bergner will be taking over Aug. 1.

"In the interim, Kent and Nathan will be employed by us as they learn all facets of the business. Judy and I as well as Kent and Nathan believe that this will ensure a smooth transition of ownership as well as a period of adjustment as they work and bond with our excellent employees," Paul Brusso told *Lake Tahoe News*. "Judy and I have been extremely fortunate to own and operate Ernie's for 34 years with the continuous support of our amazing Tahoe community."

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Ice carving competition in Truckee

Truckee River Winery is hosting its fourth annual Ice Carving Competition, as part of SnowFest, on March 4 from 1-7pm.

Watch talented local professionals transform large blocks of ice into works of art while listening to DJ Chango.

Cost is \$10, which includes souvenir wine glass, mardi gras beads, as well as a donation to High Fives Foundation.

Mountain Valley Meats will be selling food, with proceeds going to High Fives.

The winery is at 11467 Brockway Road, Truckee.