

Entire Nevada Supreme Court recuses itself

By Sandra Chereb, Las Vegas Review-Journal

CARSON CITY – The entire Nevada Supreme Court recused itself from hearing an appeal between a lender and a developer because of ties the developer has to another company building a new courthouse in Las Vegas.

It's not unusual for judges to recuse themselves from cases to avoid conflicts of interest, but having the entire Supreme Court step aside is rare.

A three-judge panel instead was appointed to consider a petition filed by RA Southeast Land LLC, which sought to compel a jury trial to hear some of its claims in a complex dispute with City National Bank over the sale of 23 acres in the Summerlin area in 2010.

Read the whole story

Most Nev. sheriffs against gun background check initiative

By Ken Ritter, AP

Sheriffs in most Nevada counties have come out against a background check initiative that gun control advocates are supporting on the ballot this November, but the top cop in the

largest police agency in the state says he'll sit this one out.

"This is a vote of the people," Joe Lombardo, sheriff of Clark County and head of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, told the Associated Press. "I've chosen to remain neutral on this."

In the rest of the state, most of the other 16 elected sheriffs oppose Question 1, the Nevada Background Checks for Gun Purchases Initiative.

"Any bill that does not address mental health, which I believe to be the core cause of the violence we've had across the country, does not meet my expectations," said Kenny Furlong, sheriff in Carson City. "Mental health has to be addressed."

Sheriff Sharon Wehrly in Nye County said she believed the initiative chips away at Second Amendment rights.

"It merely places more restrictions on good people, will make it more difficult, and incur unnecessary costs for law-abiding citizens to manage their personal property," she said.

Backers of the measure say they have broad support – ranging from former sheriffs in Clark and Washoe counties, Bill Young and Mike Haley, to endorsements from groups including the Latin Chamber of Commerce, Nevada Parent Teacher Association, school teachers' union and the Nevada Public Health Association.

"It really shows how gun violence is impacting various areas in our communities," said Jennifer Crowe, spokeswoman for Nevadans for Background Checks. "They know it'll make a difference and save lives."

A yes vote would require background checks through a licensed gun dealer when most firearms change hands, except for temporary transfers of a weapon while hunting or target

shooting, for immediate self-defense, and transfers between immediate family members. A licensed dealer would be allowed to charge a fee for a background check.

Proponents call the lack of background checks a loophole in the law.

The National Rifle Association is the leading opponent of the Nevada measure, while supporters are heavily funded by Everytown for Gun Safety Action Fund, a group affiliated with former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg.

Furlong helped draft a Nevada Sheriffs' and Chiefs' Association letter in February 2013, signed by all 17 sheriffs in Nevada at that time, that opposed expanding background checks for weapon purchases.

Most of the sheriffs in the state met this week in Ely, and considered at that meeting a revision of the February 2013 letter, said Robert Roshak, executive director of the association. Eight sheriffs who signed in 2013 are no longer in office, including Haley in Washoe County.

Chuck Allen, Haley's successor, said he promised voters he'd oppose the measure when he ran for office in 2014.

"The core principle is not to infringe our right to keep and bear arms," Allen said during a break in the sheriffs' meeting on Thursday. "We need to focus on other issues like mental health, keeping firearms out of the hands of criminals, and not imposing more restrictions on law-abiding citizens."

Furlong experienced a mass shooting when a man who had been diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia opened fire in a Carson City IHOP restaurant in September 2011, killing four people, wounding seven others and then killing himself.

He said legal mental health confidentiality would have blocked a background check from flagging the shooter as a person who

shouldn't buy a gun.

"How do background checks break through the wall that guarantees and protects a person's privacy, and still provide for public safety?" Furlong asked

Crowe, however, said data shows low numbers of police officers killed with firearms, gun suicides and rates of women shot and killed by their intimate partners in the 18 states with laws like the one on the Nevada ballot.

"In states that have closed the loophole, they've cut gun violence," she said.

Lombardo's agency, with about 2,500 sworn officers, covers a city and most of a county home to 2 million residents and more than 40 million tourists a year. The area just topped 100 homicides this year – most of them shootings.

He said he'd support stricter background checks if the initiative passes, and didn't foresee it being a burden on law enforcement.

"A system in which a private seller can have access to determine if a buyer is a prohibited person, and in a timely manner, is ideal," he said.

Stateline casino win down for fiscal year

By Sean Whaley, Las Vegas Review-Journal

CARSON CITY – Nevada casinos posted a strong 6.8 percent gaming win in June, helping the state's major industry eke out

a tiny 0.66 percent gain for the fiscal year that ended June 30, the state Gaming Control Board reported Friday.

One of the two down markets was the Strip, which is influenced strongly by baccarat play. If baccarat was excluded from the Strip numbers, the market would have been up 1 percent in fiscal 2016, he said.

The other down market for the year was Stateline at minus 3.8 percent.

Read the whole story

Calif. doctor's notes not valid at Nev. pot dispensaries

By Chris Kudialis, Las Vegas Sun

Medical marijuana dispensaries should no longer be able to accept California doctors' recommendations from out-of-state patients to purchase in Nevada, according to an opinion from the state Attorney General's Office, sent last week to the Department of Health and Human Services.

In a letter from Attorney General Adam Laxalt to health department Director Richard Whitley, obtained by the Sun on Friday, Laxalt's office responds to two department inquiries on the Silver State's medical marijuana program: whether patients can use a copy of a completed application at a Nevada dispensary to purchase medical marijuana, and whether out-of-state residents should be allowed to use a California physician's note to purchase medical marijuana. Laxalt advised

against both practices.

The letter and subsequent recommendations came as a surprise to Nevada dispensary owners, who said they were unaware that Whitley had reached out to the Attorney General's Office. Some went as far as to call the potential effect of the letter "devastating" to business and patients they claim rely on such measures to purchase marijuana while in town.

Read the whole story

Doug Sprague – 1932-2016



Doug Sprague

Former South Tahoe High School teacher Douglas Harmon Sprague died July 19, 2016. He was 83.

Doug was born Oct. 15, 1932, in Colton, Calif., the only child of Guy C. and Euleta Mae Sprague.

Doug was already active in the YMCA when he graduated from Van

Nuys High School in 1950. After earning a bachelor's degree from UCLA and a master's degree from George Williams College, he became a YMCA director and camp leader, influencing and inspiring countless children and adults for the next 25 years.

He wrote a book about his experiences called "It Happened at Camp."

In 1967, as the founding director of the newly-opened Monterey Peninsula YMCA, he hired a young nurse for the summer camp named Virginia Keller. They married in December 1968.

In 1975, the family moved to Tahoe where he built a home and still worked intermittently with the YMCA in the Bay Area. At the beginning of the consumer computer age, Doug educated himself in programming, bought the first computer model available at Radio Shack and by 1982 found himself teaching computer classes to students at STHS in the Regional Occupational Program.

In 1988, at the request of the STHS principal, Doug laid the framework and began the video production program, which included a TV studio within the high school. He started teaching video production classes which produced and broadcast a daily live news program to the entire high school, dubbed Viking Television (VTV). Many of his former students were influenced to pursue successful careers in the television, movie, and journalism industries. VTV continues, and has grown into the new TADA program at STHS. Even after retiring from teaching in 1994, he continued to take groups of VTV and performing arts students on memorable trips to Hollywood, visiting some of his previous students working in the film/TV industry, as well as observing working sets of shows in production. He organized 30 of these Hollywood trips, the last of which was at the age of 80.

He loved living in Tahoe, where he taught numerous people to water and snow ski, coached a Buddy Werner ski team, and

indulged his love of Gilbert & Sullivan musicals by performing in “HMS Pinafore” and “Pirates of Penzance”. As a volunteer with South Lake Tahoe Cancer League, he drove Tahoe-area cancer patients to appointments off the hill. He loved doing magic, performing as Professor Hockenloupier “with a capital Hock!” He loved spending time with his family, especially his extended Kritch family and his grandsons.

He is survived by his loving wife Virginia, son Todd (Amy), daughter Robin (Andy), and two grandsons, Douglas and Nick, as well as a great wealth of close friends.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations to: South Lake Tahoe Cancer League; STHS Performing & Visual Arts Booster Association; Emergency Assistance Fund for YMCA Professionals (Stitzer YMCA Center Second Floor, Springfield College, 263 Alden Street, Springfield, MA 01109).

A memorial service will be Aug. 12 at 1pm at Lake Tahoe Community Presbyterian Church, 2733 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe. Share any pictures or stories via the Facebook page @DouglasHSprague.

Reid betting big on Nev. for Democratic Senate majority

By Paul Kane, Washington Post

LAS VEGAS — The formidable political machine Harry M. Reid built in Nevada will face its most difficult task to date when it tries to hold on to the Senate seat being vacated by the retiring minority leader next year.

After getting crushed in the 2014 midterm elections, Senate Democrats have a chance to win back the majority a year from now. If successful, they would set the chamber's agenda and, more important in the short run, control the nomination process for the next president's Cabinet. That would require a four-seat gain if the Democratic candidate wins the presidency or a five-seat gain if the GOP retakes the White House.

With Reid's retirement, Nevada has the only Democratic-held seat in jeopardy in 2016, and if Democrats can retain it, a lot of pressure would be placed on the five freshman Republicans who are seeking re-election in states that President Obama won twice: Illinois, New Hampshire, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

Read the whole story

Hwy. 89 being repaved on North Shore

Work is set to begin this week on a pavement rehabilitation project on Highway 89 from Tahoe City to Alpine Meadows.

The \$1.28 million project consists of grinding down the existing highway and filling it with hot mix asphalt in order to improve the ride for motorists and cyclists and to extend the life of the roadway. The project area is from a half-mile north of the Y intersection with Highway 28 in Tahoe City to just north of Alpine Meadows Road.

Teichert Construction will be working from 8pm to 6am Monday-Friday. There will be one-way traffic controls through the work zone. The contractor is allowed to start work Sunday

nights. Motorists should expect delays of up to 15 minutes.

The work should be completed by mid-September, but weather or other unforeseen circumstances could extend it.

Renowned poet to lead workshop in SLT

Award-winning poet and human rights advocate Carolyn Forché will lead a workshop on Aug. 11 in South Lake Tahoe.

The intimate craft talk will be limited to 12 participants, who will work with Forché to strengthen their writing skills in a nurturing, fun and educational environment.

Participants should bring one poem for critique.

The event is hosted by the Wordy Girls, a South Lake Tahoe-based writers' organization, and a portion of the proceeds goes to fund writing camps for girls.

Forché's first volume, "Gathering the Tribes," winner of the Yale Series of Younger Poets Prize, was followed by "The Country Between Us," "The Angel of History," and "Blue Hour." Her famed international anthology, "Against Forgetting," has been praised by Nelson Mandela as "itself a blow against tyranny, against prejudice, against injustice," and was followed by the 2014 anthology "The Poetry of Witness."

The fee is \$100. The workshop is from 5:30-8pm. For more information or to sign up, go **online**.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- Elizabeth Carmel, the California Assembly's rep on the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Governing Board, is resigning as soon as a replacement is found.
- Placer County Planning Commission will have a public hearing regarding Squaw Valley's planned expansion in the village. The meeting will be Aug. 11 at 10:30am at the North Tahoe Event Center in Kings Beach.
- The SA BMX State Championship Qualifier will be at Bijou Bike Park in South Lake Tahoe on Aug. 13. For more info, email info@tahoebmx.com.
- TEDx South Lake Tahoe is Oct. 5 from 4-9:30pm at The Loft in Heavenly Village. For more info, go **online**.
- Simpson's Jewelers in South Lake Tahoe is closing its doors after five decades.

Heavenly redefines summer fun in the forest



Looking back toward the start, the coaster winds through the forest at Heavenly. Photo Copyright 2016 Carolyn E. Wright

By Kathryn Reed

Knees against the metal, hands on the cables, helmet securely fastened, nervous chit-chat – and then screams of fun.

This is the ritual at the Hot Shot Zipline at Heavenly Mountain Resort as four people at once fly through the air at at least 30 mph.

For Kiana Gamble, this was the perfect way to spend her 11th birthday – with her parents and 14-year-old brother playing on the mountain that is better known for winter fun. The foursome came from Virginia City for the day.

The coaster ride is what the birthday girl was most excited about. And with good reason.



Lake Tahoe is hard to miss from the coaster. Photo Copyright 2016 Carolyn E. Wright

While the coaster only goes 25 mph, that was fast enough for two in our group to not even notice Lake Tahoe whizzing by in the distance. We went up again – and again – and then they saw it.

It's one of those rides where once is definitely not enough.

It starts off with a slow, straight ascent up the mountain into terrain that was never a groomed ski hill. The metal maze of the course crosses overhead, with the spiral loop-de-loop to the side. People are whooping it up as they zip by.

Then there's a shack at the top and the worker signals now is the time to thrust the handles forward – leaving them up is the same as breaking.



Siobhan Stack fastens Kiana Gamble to the zipline rig, while Aiden Gamble waits for the gate to open. Photo Copyright 2016 Carolyn E. Wright

It's this first curve where the lake comes into view. And from there on it's all about whizzing through the forest. This coaster is considered a bit more advanced than Vail Resorts' other ones – and of course it's the only one with a view of that alpine lake.

For anyone who likes rollercoasters, this is a must-do. But Heavenly officials stress it is not a rollercoaster – and it's technically not, but it sure has the fun factor of one.

The whole ride is 3,000-feet long, with a descent of 300 feet. It's actually one of the least active attractions, making it good for all ages and ability levels.



Every 10 minutes four people fly on the Hot Shot Zipline. Photo Copyright 2016 Carolyn E. Wright

This play land is part of Heavenly's expanded summer offerings. Epic Discovery is available at Vail Resorts' Colorado properties in Vail and Breckenridge as well. The Broomfield, Colo.-based resort owner has invested \$25 million on Epic Discovery so far, though the breakdown at each resort has not been provided.

While the company has said it plans to spend as much as \$100 million on summer programs across its eight major U.S. resorts, Pete Sonntag, COO of Heavenly, told *Lake Tahoe News* there are no immediate plans to expand operations at Northstar or Kirkwood.

Some of the attractions at Heavenly are not new. The **longer zipline** has been operational on and off for more than eight years. The **ropes courses** opened in 2014. **Hiking and tubing** have been around since at least 2011.



Coop Cooper of Heavenly explains educational features of Epic Discovery. Photo Copyright 2016 Carolyn E. Wright

The **2011 Ski Area Recreational Opportunity Enhancement Act** allowed the U.S. Forest Service, which owns most of the land ski resorts operate on, to permit summer activities.

The longer zipline wasn't open when the four of us went up there earlier this month. Staffing has been an issue – as it is at a lot of Tahoe businesses. (Companies can't find reliable help.) Nonetheless, the two of us who have been on both ziplines believe the smaller one is actually more fun and seemed to go faster. Pyramid Peak is in the far distance, while it looks like the roof of Tamarack Lodge could be the landing spot.

A drawback, though, to the Hot Shot Zipline is carrying the 20-pound apparatus on the incredibly slow Easy Rider chairlift and then walking up stairs to the launch pad. This is going to be a problem for some people.



Views of Lake Tahoe are prominent along the 4×4 guided ride. Photo Copyright 2016 Carolyn E. Wright

Right next to the zipline is the tubing hill. It's possible to link tubes together or have the workers to spin the rider for a more exhilarating ride down. The coaster is next to the tubing hill.

All of the attractions are accessed from the top of the gondola. An information station is at the bottom of the stairs to point people where to go. To the right is a loop trail that is accessible to the disabled. Heavenly even has wheelchairs with super fat tires to accommodate people.

While there is plenty of physical stuff to do, there is also an educational component. The dozen pathway stones talk about lake clarity, animals in the forest and other pertinent

information involving the environment.

USFS rangers also lead tours of the mountain. They may also be enlisted to help with crowd control. This is a work in progress for the mountain as it copes with growing pains in this first summer with so many activities. Rangers may pull people out of line to give them a tour, while their spot is reserved in line.



The 4-wheel drive excursion takes people to an elevation of 10,000 feet. Photo Copyright 2016 Carolyn E. Wright

A four-wheel drive tour is an ideal way to see the mountain without exerting energy. It is a bit bumpy, so people with bad backs might want to think twice. The 10-seater vehicle is not likely to be a hit with those who ski or hike the area, but it will be ideal for everyone else. A guide who talked less (and didn't share personal medical stories) would make for a more pleasant excursion. There needs to be time to let guests absorb the serenity of the scenery.

Plan to spend the day on the mountain and not just a few hours. The ropes courses can take $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours, canopy tour 3 hours, and expedition tour $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours. Plus, Tamarack Lodge is open offering a full complement of food and beverages.

Heavenly isn't done with creating summer fun. The bike park is still a few years off. It will be more of a trail system and not the downhill adventure that **Northstar** has. Next summer a fire lookout will be at East Peak to teach people about fire in the backcountry. There will also be fishing available on that side of the mountain.



Various pitches on the climbing wall cater to different skill levels. Photo Copyright 2016 Carolyn E. Wright

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Notes:

- For \$89/adults, \$49/kids: Gondola, Ridge Rider Mountain Coaster, Hot Shot Zipline, Granite Peak Climbing Wall, tubing, three adventure ropes courses.
- Additional costs: Skyway Canopy Tour \$189, Blue Streak Zipline \$68, Summit Expedition tour \$37.
- The resort is still assessing whether any of the summer attractions will be available in the winter.
- A closing date for the activities this season has not been set.
- Some attractions have age, height and health limits.
- Epic Discovery is open 10am-4:30pm.