

Saving fish species could cut summer water supply

By Ryan Sabalow, Dale Kasler and Phillip Reese, Sacramento Bee

This year was supposed to be different. With Northern California's reservoirs finally brimming and cities liberated from stringent conservation rules, farmers were expecting more water for their crops. The worst of the drought seemed over.

Or maybe not.

Despite a winter of fairly abundant rain and snow in the north state, federal fisheries regulators are considering a set of plans that would put Sacramento Valley reservoirs on a tight leash again this summer. Their aim is to prevent two endangered California fish species from going extinct.

Critics say two federal plans under discussion could cause another year of water shortages in farms and cities across the state. The Sacramento area's main reservoir, Folsom Lake, could get drawn down below average levels once more, although the situation wouldn't be as severe as last year's record low. Fifteen members of Congress from California sent a letter urging the Obama administration to reject the dam-management proposals, saying they would "significantly reduce the water supply available to Californians."

Read the whole story

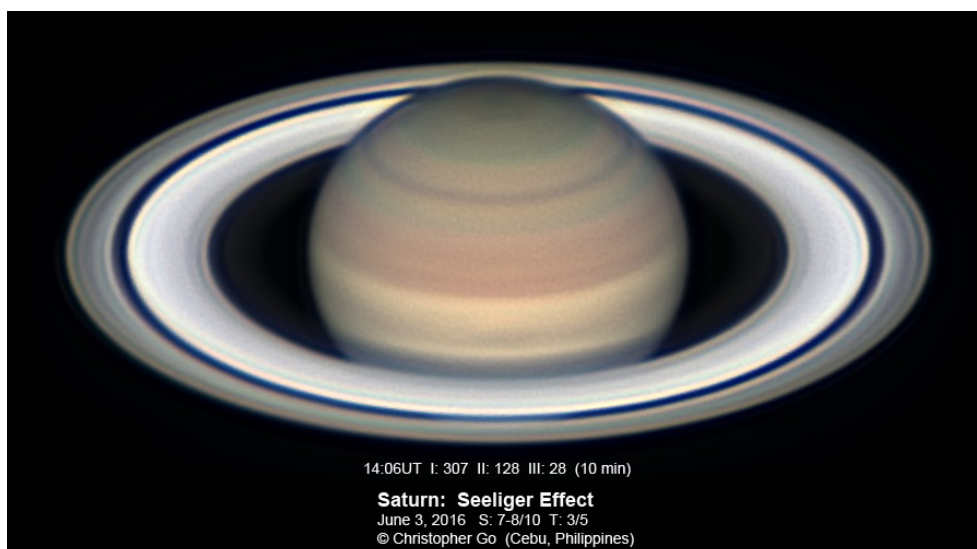
Star Guide: Saturn making itself known

By Tony Berendsen

On the night of June 2, Saturn was at opposition to the Earth. There was no sound or rumbling of the ground to announce the event, but for astronomers there was signal of light.

Opposition happens when one planet is opposite another relative to the sun. It happens to the Earth and every outer, or superior, planet once a year when Earth swings around its orbit in between them and the sun. Not only is opposition when we are closest to our planetary neighbors, it is the best time to view them.

Since a planet at opposition rises in the east just as the sun sets, it's the easiest time to find them with the unaided eye. To find Saturn in the evening sky shortly after sunset and look to the eastern horizon approximately where the sun rises in the morning. You will have some help from Mars this year because it's just above Saturn to the right.



Saturn will be visible for most of the summer.
Photo/Christopher Go

Planets describe an arcing path across the sky, similar to the sun. The name of the arcing path is the ecliptic. Using ecliptic path as a guide find the brightest red star (Mars) near the eastern horizon, at about 9:15pm, and trace halfway back to the horizon. There you will find a fairly bright yellowish looking star – Saturn. For those who are familiar with the constellations, Saturn is in Scorpio.

Even though Saturn is at its close approach for the year it's not very close at all at 9 AU (astronomical units). That's nine times the distance between the Earth and the sun (837 million miles). Even at light speed it's an hour and a half travel time.

Opposition is also the best time to view Saturn through binoculars or a telescope. And if you are a planetary imager, like Christopher Go of the Philippines, you might find yourself staying up late to capture Saturn high in the night sky away from the heavy atmospheric distortion near our horizon to catch the Seeliger effect.

Go says, "The Seeliger effect occurs during opposition where the ice particles of the ring reflect sunlight without any shadows. This causes the ring to brighter."

His image, taken on June 3 from his home in the Philippines shows the brightened ring face. The effect is named after Hugo von Seeliger, 1849-1924, as a result of his study of the changing albedo of Saturn.

For casual observers like myself, Saturn is a jewel of a planet to see through the eyepiece of a telescope. Saturn will be up in the evening sky all summer, so there will be plenty of warm weather evenings for viewing. If you don't have a telescope and want to take a peek, the **Fleishmann Planetarium** and the **Astronomical Society of Nevada** will be offering free viewings on selected evenings. I'll be watching all summer long from the **Dark Skies Cosmoarium** at Northstar.

Tony Berendsen runs Tahoe Star Tours. He may be reached at 775.232.0844 or tony@tahoestartours.com.

Key Common Core test in Nevada rebounds

By Ian Whitaker, Las Vegas Sun

Around this time last year, Nevada's new Common Core test had only succeeded at being broken.

Due to the testing company's technical problems, schools were thrown into chaos for weeks as teachers and staff struggled to get the computer-based Smarter Balanced test to work for the thousands of third- through eighth-graders required to take it.

Fast-forward to this year, and the situation has almost completely reversed.

The Smarter Balanced test assesses students' mastery of English and math skills set out in the Common Core, and is mandated by the federal government to ensure schools are doing a good job of educating students. But due to last year's issues, officials were unable to collect that information.

Read the whole story

Gold panning event looking for contestants

Registration to compete in the 40th annual World's Gold Panning Championship is available online for experienced and novice panners.

The Olympics of Gold Panning will take place in Placerville, just miles from where the California Gold Rush began, during a countywide, weeklong celebration Sept. 11-18. Competitors from all over the world will be participating at the El Dorado County Fairgrounds.

For the seasoned competitors, there are nine categories.

The "fun" gold panning categories include "pixies" for ages 5 and under, children 6-10, and adult beginners.

For more info, call 530.334.6531.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- BlueGo is offering free bus rides on routes 50 and 53 every weekend through Labor Day. For more info, go **online**.
- Tahoe City is having a Solstice Festival June 17-19. For more info, go **online**.
- Girl Scout Troop No. 143 gave Bread & Broth 4 Kids a \$250 gift card for food for local children in need. This is in addition to filling bags of food all year for the nonprofit.
- El Dorado County Search and Rescue's fundraiser at

Riva Grill in South Lake Tahoe is June 22 from 5-7pm. Cost is \$22.

· McAvoy Layne as Mark Twain kicks off the Dangberg Rang Chautauqua series on June 22 at 6:30pm in Minden. Tickets are \$5 for adults, free for 16 and younger. Tickets are available in Gardnerville at Battle Born Wine, in Minden at 88 Cups and More and **online**.

Working to preserve the night sky

By Kate Siber, Outdoor

On May 24, 2015, at 3am., filmmaker Ben Canales sat on a ridge overlooking the gleaming lights of Telluride, Colo. One by one, blocks of streetlamps winked off far below. Canales had convinced many residents to turn off their lights as part of a special event during Mountainfilm, the annual outdoors-focused movie festival. He also persuaded the town's maintenance department to flip the switches to all of the municipal lights.

"No town has ever turned the lights off," he says. "By doing this, it makes a statement that we control our technology. It's here to serve us. We're not in servitude of it."

About 80 people gathered downtown in the middle of the night to experience a sliver of what every generation before our grandparents knew intimately as a birthright: darkness. It was a milestone in the growing movement to preserve the night sky.

By any estimate, it's a losing battle. According to a study in

Science Advances released this month, 99 percent of the population of the United States lives under a night sky polluted by artificial lights in places like parking lots, gas stations, streets, and backyards.

Read the whole story

Yacht club putting on skills clinic

Lake Tahoe Windjammers Yacht Club is offering sailing skills clinic on July 16.

The first part of the day will be classroom instruction, with an optional on-the-water lesson. No prior experience necessary, but those who have sailed before are invited, too.

Preregistration is required because space is limited. The cost is \$35 for WYC members, \$45 for others.

The clinic will be at the clubhouse located above the harbor master's office in the Tahoe Keys Marina in South Lake Tahoe.

Sign-in begins at 8:30 am with coffee and beverages; class starts at 9am, lunch at 11:30am, on-water instruction after lunch, and social hour at 5pm.

Bring multiple layers of clothing and life jacket if going out on the water, white soled shoes, a hat and sunscreen.

Nev. bill kept legislators from being investigated

By Bethany Barnes, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Nevada Legislature staffers last year quietly supported a bill that helped them win a legal battle to keep the state's Ethics Commission from investigating legislators.

The new law flew under the radar as an "emergency measure" in the final days of the 2015 session and passed with little scrutiny. Commission officials would have testified against the bill, but by the time they figured out it existed, the bill had passed – born and approved in less than 48 hours.

The bill not only appeared to commissioners as being tailor-made to torpedo their legal stance, they believe it expanded what's known as legislative immunity, making it almost impossible for the commission to hold legislators accountable for anything.

Read the whole story

Burning Man organizers buy Nev. ranch

By Reuters

Organizers of Burning Man, an annual counter-culture festival

that climaxes with the burning of a wooden effigy in the Nevada desert, has bought a ranch in the southwestern state to run year round art and self expression activities, the group said on Friday.

Funded by donations from supporters, Burning Man paid \$6.5 million for Fly Ranch, a 3,800-acre (1,538-hectare) property about 20 miles north of Gerlach, Nevada, it said on its website.

The festival, which has drawn more than 60,000 participants to create a temporary city in northern Nevada's Black Rock Desert, will remain in its current location and not move to the ranch, the organizers said.

Read the whole story

New faces on DC school board, commission

By Kathryn Reed

Term limits guaranteed the lake would have new representation on the Douglas County School District board. Voters had the choice of three men; now it's down to two in November.

CPA Keith Byer of Glenbrook and retired teacher Michael Kiger of Stateline were the top vote getters June 14, with businessman Nicholas Shepack of Zephyr Cove taking third.

Byer (46.67 percent) and Kiger (30.34 percent) learned of the results when *Lake Tahoe News* called Tuesday night. Byer, a Republican, was woken up as he is in Portugal on vacation and deferred comment until later. Kiger, a Democrat, said, "It's

all about our students and that is the most important thing.”

Kiger came to the district about 35 years, having retired from Whittell High School as a math teacher about 12 years ago.

“One of the things I would like to stand for is I would like to have more communication from the board to the people in the community and to the parents because it is their school district,” Kiger told *Lake Tahoe News*.

School board members cannot serve more than 12 years. Cindy Trigg had been representing the area for three terms.

Teri Jamin was also forced out because of term limits. In many ways she was like a second rep for the lake because she knew the area so well based on the number of years she worked for the city of South Lake Tahoe’s planning department.

Running for her seat were Linda Gilkerson and Larry Lippmann. Lippman lost to Jamin in 2012. “That race will actually be on the November ballot, because it more than one candidate but less than twice the number of open positions,” Douglas County Clerk-Treasurer Kathy Lewis told *Lake Tahoe News*.

It was eight years ago that Greg Lynn and Dave Nelson faced each other in the June primary for District 1 commission seat. Lynn prevailed in 2008. This time Nelson came out on top, with 56.1 percent of the vote. He lost by 354 votes eight years ago and won by about 800 this time.

Nelson told *Lake Tahoe News* the budget would be his primary concern when he takes office in January.

As for the debacle going on with the Stateline sewer district and the county, he said someone should have been watching the situation closer so the problems didn’t exist today.

District 3 Commissioner Doug Johnson did not seek re-election. Vying for his seat were Carson Valley residents Larry Walsh and Frank Godecke. Walsh prevailed with 58.41 percent.

Douglas County received 4,695 ballots by mail before election day. There are 26,138 registered voters. Turnout was 34.5 percent Tuesday in the county, whereas primary election turnout in Nevada is usually about 20 percent.

A law passed in 2015 says if a race has candidates from only one party, the primary winner will be on the general election ballot, but only needs one vote to win. Where there is a candidate from two or more parties, there will be runoff in November.

The law also says that in nonpartisan races a candidate who receives more than 50 percent wins outright with no need to proceed to the general election.

In all, there were 32 positions up in Douglas County on Tuesday. Many were for water and sewer districts, or seats in the valley.

In other races affecting Lake Tahoe:

- Kathy Lewis—unopposed for clerk-treasurer, incumbent.
- Barry Penzel – unopposed District 5 supervisor, incumbent.
- Karen Chessell – unopposed District 1 school board, incumbent
- Neal Freitas – unopposed District 4 school board, incumbent.