

Opinion: Do fire shelters save lives?

By Fernanda Santos, New York Times

Carrying a fire shelter has been mandatory for anyone fighting a wildfire in the United States since 1977. But in Canada, where a raging fire is threatening to destroy the entire city of Fort McMurray, Alberta, firefighters stopped carrying shelters in 2005. Do Canadians know something Americans don't?

Wildfires are an ever-present threat to both America and Canada, and they burn similarly on both sides of the border: hot, big and tough-to-tame beasts. It's where they burn that's different: In the United States, there are more often homes and people close to the flames.

That means Canadian firefighters may have time to think and strategize, while American firefighters have to take more risk as they rush – risk the shelters can help mitigate. In Canada, where fires often burn in densely forested areas, it can also be much harder to find a clearing or local road where it is safe to deploy shelters, which are not built to withstand direct contact with flames.

Read the whole story

Custody of pets can be tricky in a divorce

By Ben Steverman, Bloomberg

Rudy is a 9-year-old German shorthaired pointer with a regal personality and loving owners who are divorced. The humans in his life agreed to a shared-custody arrangement: Every two weeks, Rudy goes back and forth between their two homes in Western Massachusetts.

It was an informal deal, worked out with no help from a divorce court. During the breakup, however, Christina Trinchero and her ex-husband brought up the subject of Rudy with their lawyers. “Both of them said: ‘Sorry, we can’t help you with that. You have to figure it out on your own,’” she recalls.

Traditionally, the law sees pets as property, no different from a couch or a house plant. That can feel bizarre, given that the average dog or cat has a market value of zero—and, in fact, can cost thousands of dollars to feed, walk, and keep healthy. But emotional attachment can turn a beloved pet into a valuable bargaining chip in divorce negotiations.

Read the whole story

Ed secretary: Bathroom laws are ‘hateful’

By Tyler Kingkade, Huffington Post

BOSTON — Education Secretary John King Jr. called for so-called bathroom laws to be repealed on Monday, hinting that his department won’t sit on its hands if schools ignore federal law protecting the rights of LGBT students.

“They’re hateful laws and should be repealed,” King said at a

conference for education reporters.

Among other things, HB 1523 in Mississippi allows schools and employers to discriminate against people who are trans, while HB 2 in North Carolina requires state universities to bar trans students from using locker rooms or bathrooms corresponding with their gender identity. University of North Carolina officials have said they plan to abide by HB 2, but do not know how they are supposed to enforce it.

Read the whole story

Beetle infestation poses fire risk in California

By Amy Graff, San Francisco Chronicle

A determined beetle the size of a rice grain is drilling into California's trees, turning the lush forest blanketing the Golden State into a sea of dead wood that's highly flammable.

The most recent data from 2015 estimates bark beetles have killed over 29 million trees, and Cal Fire Education Officer Amy Head said that number is now higher, increasing the fire risk even more.

"They're this itty bitty bug that can do an enormous amount of damage," Head said. "This bug is literally changing the face of our state."

Head is encouraging homeowners who live in urban interface areas to clear dead trees from their yards in preparation for the fire season.

Read the whole story

LaVerne Hansen – 1927-2016



LaVerne Hansen

Longtime South Lake Tahoe resident Beverly LaVerne Hansen died April 3, 2016. She was 88.

She was born in Enumclaw, Wash., on July 27, 1927.

In 1948 at the age of 21, she married Ellery Einess and they were married for over 50 years. Together, they had four children, nine grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

The family moved to Fremont in 1960 and established their home at their beloved Lake Tahoe in 1973.

In addition to her work in finance, LaVerne was an avid volunteer for the Barton Memorial Hospital and the Cancer League; accumulating more than 25,000 volunteer hours with the hospital. This is the most hours by any one person and she was proud to show her accomplishment memorialized on the hospital auxiliary plaque.

LaVerne loved to travel and would accompany Ellery on his many destination golf trips. After Ellery passed, she continued to travel with girlfriends to places such as Alaska, Panama Canal and Caribbean.

LaVerne was preceded in death by her husband, her two sons, Paul and Randy, and three grandchildren.

She is survived by son Gregory, daughter Christine, six grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

LaVerne will be laid to rest at the Happy Homestead Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, LaVerne would wish that a donation be made to the South Lake Tahoe Cancer League or Barton Memorial Auxiliary.

NV Energy to ditch plans to build \$1B plant

By Daniel Rothberg, Las Vegas Sun

NV Energy does not expect to build a new fossil fuel power plant in the next decade, making it unlikely that it will go forward with a controversial \$1 billion natural gas plant that the utility had proposed last fall.

The utility, instead, signed an agreement early last month to

purchase an existing Arizona natural gas plant, according to a recent federal regulatory filing. Pending state and federal approval, NV Energy would close on Calpine's South Point Energy Center no later than the first quarter of 2017.

That same year, NV Energy is scheduled to complete a shutdown of the Reid Gardner coal-fired plant and will lose another power source with the expiration of a 10-year contract with a natural gas plant in Arizona. While the purchase of the South Point plant was largely done to replace the natural gas power that will be lost from Arizona, it comes when state energy leaders are grappling with whether the utility should invest more in renewables.

Read the whole story

South Tahoe woman dies in car crash

A South Lake Tahoe woman died in single-vehicle accident on the West Slope on Saturday.

Celina Alexandre, 26, was headed east on Highway 50 near Paul Bunyon Road in Camino when her vehicle drifted off the roadway and struck a tree, according to the California Highway Patrol.

This occurred about 9:35pm April 30. She was pronounced dead at the scene. She was wearing her seatbelt.

The cause of the crash is under investigation.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Woman gets stuck on cliffs at Emerald Bay



El Dorado County SAR brings a woman to safety May 5 at Emerald Bay. Photo/EDSO

An Incline Village woman had to be rescued from the cliffs at Emerald Bay on Thursday afternoon.

Jane Rylander had been climbing in the steep cliff bands from Vikingsholm parking lot down toward the castle. She became stuck on the cliff band after slipping and sliding down the embankment. She was not hurt, but she couldn't climb up or down.

The El Dorado County search and rescue team used ropes to reach Rylander, and then lowered her to safety May 5.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

DRI seeds clouds using unmanned aircraft



Drone America's Todd Richman and Kyle Pruett prepare to test fly the Savant sUAS with cloud seeding flares at the Hawthorne Industrial Airport on April 29. Photo/Kevin Clifford, Drone America

By Sean Whaley, Las Vegas Review-Journal

For the first time in aviation history, a fixed-wing unmanned aircraft has successfully tested a cloud-seeding payload during an experimental flight in Nevada.

Flown at Hawthorne Industrial Airport under the state's Federal Aviation Administration Unmanned Aircraft Systems Test

Site designation, the Drone America Savant aircraft reached an altitude of 400 feet and flew for about 18 minutes Friday.

The drone – named the “Sandoval Silver State Seeder” in honor of Gov. Brian Sandoval’s support for the state’s drone industry – deployed two silver-iodide flares, successfully testing and demonstrating its ability to perform unmanned aerial cloud seeding operations.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- Construction on Cave Rock is expected to start May 9. Traffic near Cave Rock will be reduced to one lane in each direction and routed through the eastbound tunnel.
- The American Council of Graduate Medical Education has identified Barton Health, in conjunction with Lake Tahoe Sports Medicine Fellowship program, as an accredited graduate medical education institution.
- Lake Tahoe Community Presbyterian Church is having a rummage event from 9am-noon on May 21 at the church, 2733 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe. Everything is free.
- Tahoe Tot Spot in South Lake Tahoe is celebrating its grand reopening on May 22.
- Tahoe Arts Project is having a spaghetti dinner fundraiser at Bert’s in South Lake Tahoe on May 12 from 5:30-7:30pm. Tickets are \$10. Call 530.542.3632.