$100,000 pension club of Calif. retirees is growing

By Phillip Reese, Sacramento Bee

The $100,000 pension club is growing fast.

Almost 9,000 retirees in the California Public Employees' Retirement System receive at least $100,000 in annual benefits, more than quadruple the number getting that much during 2005, according to a *Bee* review of CalPERS data.

Collectively, these pensioners will receive about $1.1 billion in benefits this year – roughly triple the general fund budget of the Sacramento City Unified School District.

Such payouts are a hot topic as leaders float competing pension reform plans at the state Capitol. Those who want to curtail big pensions say they are a root cause of huge unfunded liabilities – and the growing pension bill presented each year to taxpayers. Others say large pensions are straw men brandished as a tool to cut the modest benefits of most government workers.

"The outliers are driving the discussion," said Steve Maviglio, a spokesman for Californians for Retirement Security, a union consortium. "It's frustrating."

The rapid growth in the number of $100,000 pensions is largely a consequence of enhanced retirement benefits approved by local and state governments during the last decade. Tens of thousands of public safety workers, for instance, can retire at age 50 and get most of their annual salary for life.

Read the whole story

Burger fundraiser at Red Hut

Red Hut on Ski Run Boulevard in South Lake Tahoe is having a burger night June 15 from 5-8pm for Tahoe Douglas Rotary.

Pay $10 for dinner and you will be supporting community projects in the area. You get a burger, homemade chips and a fountain soda.

National Trails Day

National Trails Day is June 2. Events are throughout the United States.

For more information, go online.

Judge denies Garridos private meeting

By Sam Stanton, Sacramento Bee

The last time Nancy Garrido will ever see her husband likely came at 9:26 a.m. Thursday, as she was being escorted out of a Placerville courtroom and headed off to begin her 36-year prison sentence.

“Love you,” she mouthed to Phillip Garrido, who sat shackled in the courtroom jury box waiting for the judge to hand down his sentence of 431 years to life.

She had asked for a final, private meeting with him after they were sentenced, but El Dorado Superior Court Judge Douglas Phimister was having none of it.

“The request to meet with the co-defendant is denied,” the judge said.

Her attorney, Stephen Tapson, asked if the judge would allow her to watch the sentencing of her husband.

“I will not,” the judge said, and with that Nancy Garrido was taken away.

This is how the pairing of these two ends, with the 60-year-old Phillip Garrido soon to be packed off to a state prison.

Read the whole story

Mom who took daughter cross country to Tahoe accepts plea deal

By Tom Haydon, Star-Ledger

In August 1984, after Nancy Dunsavage heard that a judge in Somerville had awarded temporary custody of their 6-year-old daughter to her ex-husband, the mother fled the state with the child.

Friday, in the same courthouse, Dunsavage pleaded guilty to

interfering with custody and was sentenced to 18 days, the length of time she was in custody after she and her now 32-year-old daughter were discovered living in Incline Village last October.

“I feel relief that it’s over,” Dunsavage said after walking out of the courtroom and receiving hugs from her now married daughter, Melissa Olszewski, and a gathering of other relatives.

Although the fourth-degree crime of interfering carries a maximum penalty of 18 months in prison and a $10,000 fine, Dunsavage, as part of a plea agreement, will not go to prison and will not be on probation.

Read the whole story

Intrigue of wild horses draws tourists to rural Nevada

By Bonnie Matton, Reno Gazette-Journal

Ecotourism isn’t a word one hears often in reference to Lyon County, but a significant number of people are willing to travel thousands of miles to visit the area in search of wild horses.

I recently had the privilege of taking two groups of tourists out to see wild horses that roam the Stagecoach area.

As president of Wild Horse Preservation League, I receive many calls, emails and letters from people, not only from Nevada, but other states and other countries. They all ask the same question: “Where can we go to see wild horses?”

Several years ago the league established a Wild Horse Adventure Program, with the goal providing tourists the opportunity to see the wild ones, while bringing ecotourism dollars into rural Nevada communities. The tourists seeking a glimpse of the wild horses hires tour guides, stays in hotels or motels, eat in our restaurants and take in attractions.

On this particular April Saturday a group of nine people in search of wild horses gathered at the Carson Plains Casino restaurant to plan the morning's activities and eat a hearty breakfast.

Read the whole story

UC Davis seminars go online, including ones about Tahoe

By Kathy Garvey, Daily Democrat

Professor James R. Carey knows that the value of seminars is invaluable.

When the UC Davis entomology professor chaired the UC Systemwide Committee on Research Policy, he called for a strategic approach to record, broadcast and archive the hundreds of seminars that take place weekly on the 10 UC campuses. He presented his plan to the Systemwide Academic Council, received enthusiastic approval, and then launched a pilot program at UC Davis to field-test it.

Now, three years later, his strategic approach has become a groundbreaking reality. The UCTV Seminars project is online, free, and available to all.

Described as a higher-education milestone, it’s the first of its kind in the United States.

“This will not only help the UC system become a scholarly resource, but will fulfill our public service mission,” said Carey. “And the cost to capture these seminars is low – a one-time expenditure of about $200 for both the webcam and software.”

“One of the great intellectual achievements of the University of California is its ability to bring the best minds from within the university and across the world to our campuses to share ideas, spark innovation, and build collaboration,” said Peter Siegel, UC Davis chief information officer and vice provost for information and educational technology. “As Professor James Carey has demonstrated through some of his most recent work, technology offers exciting new opportunities for expanding and re-inventing these

conversations.

“Each campus,” Siegel said, “has multiple opportunities each day for faculty, students, and colleagues to join in the great dialogue that ensues within their academic seminars, conferences and colloquia. “What if these rich and exciting dialogues weren’t limited to the faculty on a single campus, but in fact were available to everyone?”

Read the whole story

Minden airport center of

high-altitude research

Douglas County's Minden-Tahoe Airport is preparing to host a series of landmark test flights in spring and summer 2012 by the Perlan Project.

The project, currently in phase two, has a goal of designing and building a high-altitude research glider to study the meteorological impact of a jet stream that circles the Polar Regions during the polar night called the "polar vortex."

Contact Bobbi Thompson at the airport (775.782.9871) to learn more about the project.

Camp Concord making upgrades to South Shore property

Camp Concord is looking to make improvements to its facilities on the outskirts of South Lake Tahoe.

The Bay Area city operates a camp near the trailhead for Mount Tallac.

Bids are being taken on making the family bathhouse compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Improvements will be made to the men's and women's restrooms, showers, creating an ADA accessible shower, building a new laundry room, and storage room.

Bids are due June 22. A non-mandatory bid conference is June 9 at 2pm at the camp – 1000 Mt. Tallac Trailhead Road, South Lake Tahoe.

Estimated cost of the project is $280,000.

For more information, call (925) 671.3361.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Opening reception for lupine photo series

Dirk Yuricich will show his new photo series Aspen Lupine at the Ski Run Marina gallery.

The opening reception is June 8 from 5-8pm.

Refreshments will be served and all attendees can take part in a free raffle to win a matted photograph of one of the Aspen Lupine images.



Dirk Yuricich

The Aspen Lupine opening reception is be part of Midweek at the Marina in which the art galleries at the Ski Run Marina have various events and activities each Wednesday evening from 5-8.

Parking is free for the first hour at the Ski Run Marina parking lot. There is unlimited free parking at Ski Run

Boulevard and Paradise Avenue.

For further information, call Dirk Yuricich Photography Gallery at (530) 542. 2000 or go online.

Dirk Yuricich Photography Gallery is at Ski Run Marina, 900 Ski Run Blvd., Ste. 105, South Lake Tahoe.