Cops going after drivers who text

As part of April’s Distracted Driving Awareness Month campaign, South Lake Tahoe police officers will be joining more than 200 other local law enforcement agencies in a monthlong zero tolerance enforcement campaign to curb texting or operating hand-held cell phones while driving.

Special high visibility enforcement operations to cite cell phone violators will take place on April 3, 8, 17 and 22.

The increased enforcement aims to persuade drivers to recognize the dangers of distracted driving and reduce the number of people impacted by this perilous behavior.

The minimum ticket is $161, with subsequent tickets costing at least $281.

Cocktail prices continue to climb

By Catey Hill, MarketWatch

You’re not seeing double: Your bar tab really is that big.

Margaritas, screwdrivers and Bloody Mary’s are among the cocktails that could become more expensive in coming months. And drinkers can’t blame the actual alcohol for that. Thanks to a convergence of factors ranging from weather to bacteria,

the price of many of the ingredients in cocktail mixers has jumped. In general, the prices for fresh fruits – including many used as cocktail mixers – climbed 2.5 percent from January to February this year, compared with just 0.4 percent for food overall. And Vernon Crowder, the senior vice president and senior analyst at Food & Agribusiness Research and Advisory, says that fruit prices could continue to climb through the summer.

Take limes and lemons, used in everything from a Long Island iced tea to margaritas (not to mention sour mix). The retail price of limes has jumped 152 percent to $0.53 apiece since last year, according to USDA data. Lemons too have seen a price jump with the cost climbing nearly 41 percent to $0.62 apiece.

Read the whole story

Then and now: Scarce Barton Ranch remnants



Boarded up Barton Ranch building in South Lake Tahoe. Photo/Bill Kingman

Today, the historic Barton Ranch front building still stands unobtrusively on highways 50 and 89 near the Y in South Lake Tahoe across from Pier 1 Imports.



The Y today. Photo/Bill Kingman

The original Barton Ranch extensive land holdings, which were on both sides of the highway, included where today's Barton Memorial Hospital stands.



Tahoe Sierra Market Photo/Lake Tahoe Historical Society

Next to the Barton Ranch home building and across the driveway

is the end wing of today's South Y Center.

Until the late 1960s, left-to-right on this same site were Tahoe Sierra Market, Miller's Cabins, and Tahoe Valley Lodge , and more, up to the 50-89 junction.

According to long-time (since 1947) local



Miller's Cabins
Photo/Lake Tahoe Historical Society

resident Dave Wakeman, Tahoe Sierra Market was



Tahoe Valley Lodge
Photo/Lake Tahoe Historical Society

owned and operated by local meat purveyors Fenn Barkley and his brother-in-law Harvey Gross, who also founded Harvey's Gambling Hall and Saloon at Stateline in 1946.

– Bill Kingman

Museum captures life inside Folsom Prison



Folsom Prison from across the American River at the Folsom Lake State Recreation Area. Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

REPRESA – While Johnny Cash didn't really shoot a man in Reno just to watch him die, he has been to Folsom Prison. It was to

give a concert.

He is credited with making the prison famous beyond the inmates and riots.



The museum is open 362 days a year.

Every vehicle owner in California is driving around with a piece of Folsom prison. Since 1947 the facility has been making the state's license plates; 40,000 are made a day.

People can get a sense of the institution's history and what it might be like today to be behind bars through the prison museum, which is on the prison grounds.

On the road in there is a sign that says, "No stopping or turning on prison road: Warden." What happens if you do isn't known.

The 1,000 acres are initially pastoral, welcoming, even.

"In custody inmates do the mowing," Pino Ramacher tells *Lake Tahoe News*. Ramacher retired as a correctional sergeant in 2005 and now works at the museum.

Prison labor is also used to maintain the gardens.

Across the river is a walking path with views of the prison. It also means the prisoners have views of freedom that are

beyond their reach.

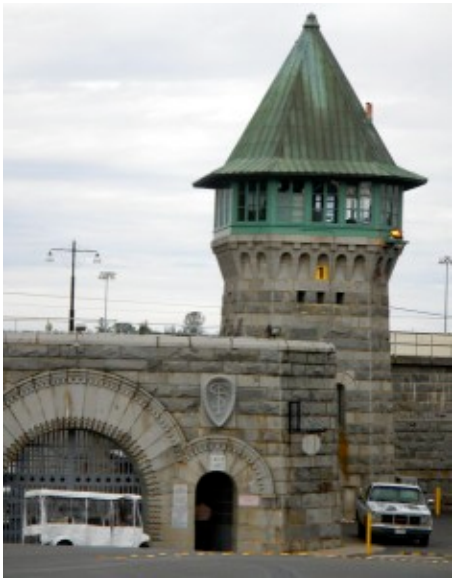


The prison road is inviting.

Arriving at the prison, the first building is where visitors check in. A long list of attire is not permitted – no blue clothing, no shorts, no hats, no clothes with logos, no toe strapped sandals, and no metal underwire on bras. People cannot take in purses, food, cameras, make-up, pennies or gum.

A line on the ground leads to the museum. And at the far end of the museum is another line. It’s to stop people from going farther onto the grounds. A stone’s throw away is the prison gate. It’s not known if sirens wail and the person stepping across that line would be carted off in handcuffs.

In many ways the outside looks like some ornate castle because of all the stonework. All native stone was used to build the facility and inmates handcrafted it.



Stone for the prison was quarried on site.

Their handiwork can also be seen along Highway 50 leading to South Lake Tahoe. The inmates made the granite mile markers.

“We had our own power plant. We had a quarry where all the stone for the prison came from. Much of it was dug out by hand,” Ramacher said. “There’s a lot of detail in the rock.”

The first inmates arrived on July 26, 1880. They came from San Quentin, which was overcrowded. That is why Folsom was built.

A movie gives some details about the early years as well as a tour of inside the prison.

Artifacts in the museum include a wealth of weapons inmates have made and ones that were smuggled in. The gun used in 1937 during a riot where Warden Clarence Larkin was killed is included in the display.

It used to be that prisoners could be buried on the grounds, but that has not happened since 1959.

The plan is for this 900-square-foot museum to be replaced by a 35,000-square-foot museum that will have information from prisons across the country. That could happen in three years.



Confiscated contraband.

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Other things to know:

• There are other ways into the prison besides committing a crime or visiting someone who did. The annual Race Behind Bars mountain bike race is May 18. More info is online.

• The Johnny Cash Trail broke ground in February. The 2.5-mile trail will cross prison grounds and link El Dorado and Placer counties to the American River Parkway as well as to Folsom's historic district. It should open in a year.

• The $3.8 million overcrossing at Folsom Lake Crossing Road will be built to resemble the prison's guard towers.

• Museum fee is $2.

• Museum is open daily 10am-4pm, except for Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day.

• More info is online.

Opinion: Water bond proposal

full of leaks

By Dan Walters, Sacramento Bee

Anthony Rendon, a first-term Democrat from Southern California who chairs the Assembly's water committee, is proud of a water bond issue that he wrote after eight public hearings around the state, calling it "an open and transparent process" in contrast to the backroom deals that had marked previous water bonds.



Dan Walters

On Monday, his office touted it as "the only current bond proposal that has made it out of its house of origin …" and declared that Tuesday's hearing in the Senate's water committee was the "perhaps final" airing before it reached the Senate floor.

Fat chance.

As soon as Rendon took his seat in the hearing room, he found his handiwork on the receiving end of sharp criticism from the Senate water committee's chairwoman, Sen. Fran Pavley, other senators and representatives of stakeholders in the notoriously fractious issue.

Read the whole story

Nev. OKs rules for medical marijuana

By Cy Ryan, Las Vegas Sun

CARSON CITY – Regulations for setting up medical marijuana clinics cleared their final hurdle Friday, a week before and the law allowing the dispensaries take effect.

The Legislative Commission, without discussion, unanimously approved the rules written by the state Division of Public and Behavioral Health.

Steven Cooksey of MedMen, a consulting firm on marijuana issues, said it may be late this year or early 2015 before marijuana is available for sale.

Read the whole story

Lessons outside college benefit students

By Matt Stewart

These days, it seems as though Americans are spending more for college while getting less value in return.

The average cost for an in-state public college is $22,261, and a moderate budget for a private college averaged $43,289

for the 2012–2013 academic year; for elite schools, we're talking about three times the cost of your local state school.

Making matters worse, adults in their 30s have 21 percent less net worth than thirtysomethings 30 years ago, according to a new Urban Institute report.

More students are being saddled with long-term debt while getting less value for their education," Stewart says. Because of the difficulty recent college grads are having finding jobs in today's tough economy; today's students may have even less worth in their 30s than 30-somethings today.

To add value to their professional career, I encourage students to seek outside-the-box avenues for increasing their career stock while in college. Running a business is a great way to do that; he explains why.

• Employers love ambition. A college degree is the minimum qualification employers are seeking. What hiring managers are looking for is that something extra when reviewing a stack of qualified resumes. At the heart of the economy is innovation; it's the difference between simply existing in a market, and thriving in one. Employers know they need people with creativity and gumption for innovation.

• Real-world management of time and money. College is a time when young adults learn to live autonomously. It's the rare student, however, who learns to manage his or her own affairs and the most precious resources in the business world – time and money. Managing employees, driving sales, developing specific skills for a real market and building strong customer relationships are best learned with hands-on experience.

• Learn where they need help. What do you do well and where do you need help? The best way to know with any certainty is through experience. Running a business while attending college allows students to circle back to their education and focus on their trouble areas by adjusting their curriculum in future

semester.

• Develop meaningful bonds. One of the most meaningful aspects of the college experience is the relationships students develop with each other, which often have professional consequences after college. Enlisting the help of fellow students for a common business purpose tends to have a powerful bonding effect.

• Immediate ROI – finding phenomenal success. Most students who run a business during college will not prove to be the next Steve Jobs, Mark Zuckerburg or David Geffen, which is precisely why students should not drop out of college like those pioneers did. However, a student doesn't have to be the next Zuckerburg to experience amazing success as an entrepreneur. College Hunks Moving Junk is just one recent example that began in an entrepreneurial student mind.

Matt Stewart co-founded National Services Group, which operates College Works Painting, SMJJ Investments and Empire Community Construction.

No poker exception in online gaming legislation

By Karoun Demirjian, Las Vegas Sun

WASHINGTON – Authors of the new online gaming bill in Congress have issued a challenge to Nevada, where online poker is legal, and any state that may want to legalize it.

"If you want to have online gambling, then come to the Congress. … If you want to have a poker exception, offer an

amendment and see if it will pass," said Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., who introduced the bill this week along with Rep. Jason Chaffetz, R-Utah.

The bill, on its face, is simple: It would roll back the 1961 Wire Act to the days before late 2011, when all transactions for online gaming were illegal.

But dig into the details, and it seems certain that this three-page piece of legislation is going to inspire some pretty heavy political conflict.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• There will be an open house April 10 from 11:30am-1pm to say goodbye to Douglas County Manager Steve Mokrohisky and welcome interim manager, Larry Werner. It will be at the Minden Inn, 1594 Esmeralda Ave., Minden.

• Kiwanis is sponsoring a bingo night April 12 from 5-8pm at the South Lake Tahoe Recreation Center, 1180 Rufus Allen Blvd. Each winner will take home an Easter ham or children can select an Easter stuffed animal. Proceeds benefit the South Lake Tahoe Children's Choral Society. Tahoe Kris Sweet Delights will be selling handmade chocolates jams with 100 percent of profits donated to the Lake Tahoe Aktion Club.

• The Kings Beach Commercial Core Improvement Project has a new website.

• The Karma Ultra Lounge at Stateline is working on its gaming

and liquor licenses. It’s going in at the old Bill’s Casino complex.

• University of Nevada Cooperative Extension has launched a Living with Drought website.

Truxlers, LTVA to resume fireworks talks

Mediation in the South Shore fireworks case will resume Monday.

Joan and Joe Truxler of Marla Bay, who brought the lawsuit against the Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority and Pyro Spectacular, and their attorney will be meeting with representatives of the LTVA and their attorney.

Lew Feldman, attorney representing the LTVA, told *Lake Tahoe News* it would be a confidential meeting per federal rules.

The lawsuit was filed in federal court in Sacramento. The March 31 meeting is in Sacramento.

“Joe and I are determined that this thing can get settled,” Joan Truxler told *Lake Tahoe News*. “It will be settled once LTVA understands how they have gravely deceived the community they are charged with promoting.”

The Truxlers believe an agency other than a fire department should be permitting the fireworks shows that are put on Fourth of July and Labor Day weekend so any pollutants put into the lake are monitored. A problem with that is no state

or federal agency says a permit is needed.

In the lawsuit it says each mortar that has been launched in the last five years should count as a penalty under the Clean Water Act, which would to a fine of more than $70 million for the LTVA.

The Truxlers say the debris from the two 2013 events continues to wash up on Pinewild Beach. The LTVA has cleanup protocols and is willing to improve trash pick up.

The deadline for a resolution is April 4.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report