Government agencies to poison Alpine creek

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service plans to chemically treat Silver King Creek in Alpine County in an attempt to restore native Paiute cutthroat trout.

Retenone will be used along 11 miles of the stream from Llewellyn Falls downstream to Silver King Canyon. The lower reaches of three tributaries – Tamarack Creek, Tamarack Lake Creek and Coyote Valley Creek – will also be treated.

The goal is to have the Paiute cutthroat trout be the only trout species in the creek. The rotenone will kill off the other fish. Then the creek will be restocked with the Paiute.

Plans are for all of this to occur in late August.

Also participating in this fish kill/restocking are the U.S. Forest Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife. This is not the first time the agencies have done this.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Casinos banking on slot players

By Brad Plumer, Vox

The next time you find yourself in a casino, pause for a second to appreciate the architecture.

Casinos put an enormous amount of thought into their designs.

The layout of the tables, the patterns on the carpet, the lighting — they're all explicitly engineered to make gambling more seductive and get you to spend more money.

One surprising example are the curving hallways around the property. Many casinos try to avoid making you ever have to turn at a 90° angle. As Natasha Dow Schüll explains in her fascinating book, Addiction By Design: Machine Gambling in Las Vegas, a right-angle turn forces people to call upon the decision-making parts of their brain — to stop and reflect on what they're doing. "Casinos don't want that," Schüll told me. "They want to curve you gently to where they want you to go."

But as Schüll discovered, almost nothing in a modern-day casino is more carefully engineered than its slot machines.

Slot machines and video gambling were once marginal to the success of casinos — but nowadays, they account for up to 85 percent of the gaming industry's profits. And casinos have devised a dizzying array of strategies to make these machines as addictive as possible, from the elaborate algorithms beneath the hood to the position of the armrests.

Schüll, a cultural anthropologist at MIT, spent 15 years in Las Vegas tracking the evolution of slot machines, exploring how and why they've become so addictive. We spoke recently by phone about how gambling has changed dramatically over time and how the gaming industry has drawn on psychological insights to make its games more addictive — often with tragic consequences.

Read the whole story

Crawfish to be star of festival at MontBleu

The second annual Boil ‘n Fry Day Festival is Lake Tahoe’s version of an old-fashioned New Orleans crawdad feed, complete with live music at the MontBleu Outdoor Event Center, carnival games, hot wings, barbecue, cold crafted beer and all the fried, boiled or barbecued fresh water crustaceans festival-goers can eat.

Last year, MontBleu launched the inaugural festival to celebrate Tahoe Lobster Company, the first commercial outfit to harvest crawfish. Tahoe Lobster Company will supply the Aug. 23 batch of crawdads.

The outdoor party starts at noon. Tickets are $15 for adults, $8 for 12 and under, and free for ages 6 and younger. They may be bought at the event, the MontBleu Box Office, or by calling 888.829.7630.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• The 2013 salary, benefits and other compensation data for 20,428 Superior Court judges and employees is online.

• Sage Francis and Lord Grunge plus special guest Logic One from South Lake Tahoe will be at Whiskey Dicks in South Lake Tahoe on Aug. 17 at 9pm. Must be 21 or older to attend. Tickets are $16 at the venue or go online. Price goes up to $20 that night.

• The second annual Harvest Beer Dinner at Ritz-Carlton, Lake

Tahoe is Oct. 12 from 5:30pm to close at Manzanita. There will be a three-course dinner inspired by fall with select pairings of seasonal beers for $59 per person. Call 530.562.3000 to make a reservation.
• The Oct. 11 Fall Festival is one of Tahoe Donner's biggest events of the year. There will be arts and crafts vendors, doggie dip, seasonal beer offerings, pumpkin patch, kids' carnival with games and food, a rock climbing wall and more at the Northwoods Clubhouse from 10am-5pm. Cost is $15 for an unlimited wristband or $1 per ticket. For more info, call 530.587.9413.

• Here are this week's Caltrans roadwork schedules – El Dorado-Tahoe and Sierra.

Nev. casinos in spending war over online game

By J.D. Morris, Las Vegas Sun

Online gaming remains a divisive issue for Nevada casino companies, which are pouring money into lobbying on the issue while they joust over a potential ban.

The proposed ban, contained in a measure championed by Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., and Rep. Jason Chaffetz, R-Utah, has helped trigger hundreds of thousands of dollars in spending from the gaming industry. One side, led by Las Vegas Sands CEO Sheldon Adelson, is in favor of the prohibition. Others, including Caesars Entertainment, are fiercely opposed.

But amid the flurry of spending, congressional action is moving slowly. Legislators left for their August recess

without seriously advancing a measure introduced in March that would prohibit online gaming nationwide, and its fate for the rest of the year is uncertain.

If enacted, the Restoration of America's Wire Act from Graham and Chaffetz would make gambling on the Internet illegal. The legislation was referred to committees in both chambers but hasn't moved any further.

Read the whole story

New charges filed against ex-CalPERS chief

By Marc Lifsher, Los Angeles Times

SACRAMENTO – A federal grand jury Thursday handed down new and expanded corruption charges against investment deal "placement agent" Alfred J.R. Villalobos, a central figure in the 2009 influence-peddling scandal that rocked the country's largest public pension fund.

The new indictment, superseding one last month, accuses the former board member of the California Public Employees' Retirement System and former deputy mayor of Los Angeles of conspiring with and bribing CalPERS' then-chief executive to close a $3-billion deal with a Wall Street private equity firm.

Villalobos, 64, of Stateline, also is accused of defrauding the United States, engaging in a scheme to conceal material facts, and conspiracy to commit mail and wire fraud, said Melinda Haag, the U.S. attorney in San Francisco.

Read the whole story

Study: Eating out equals eating more

By Randy Dotinga, HealthDay

A study finds that people who eat out consume an average of about 200 calories more a day than when they cook at home.

They also take in more saturated fat, sugar and salt.

The study has limitations. It doesn’t say anything about whether frequent restaurant diners are unhealthier than at-home eaters, and it doesn’t take into account the potential benefits of eating out, such as socializing and reducing the stress of cooking.

Still, the findings show that “eating out at restaurants should be the exception, not the norm,” said study co-author Lisa Powell, a professor of health policy and administration at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Powell said the researchers wanted to better understand the role of restaurant food in people’s diets. “We know that parallel to the rising rates of obesity, Americans have been increasingly eating food away from home, and they now take in, on average, about 600 calories a day from restaurants,” she said.

Read the whole story

Then and now: Stateline through the years



An aerial view of Stateline in 1962. Photo/UNR Special Collections Department

The early aerial photo, above, was taken over the Nevada side of Stateline circa 1962 shows South Shore's first high-rise hotel just finishing construction at Harveys. Across the street (left) from Harveys is Barney's Casino (opened in 1961) and Tahoe Harrah's (now Harrah's Tahoe). The empty area in the upper left on the California side was becoming the Crescent V Center, including Raley's and Lawrence's Department Store.



Stateline in 1972. Photo/Lake Tahoe Historical Society

About 1972, the left side of Highway 50 included First National Bank of Nevada, Barney's Casino, and Harrah's. The lake side of the highway had Harvey's and the Sahara Tahoe, which opened in 1965. Entertainers listed on the Sahara sign include Jack Benny, singer Rouvaun, The June Taylor Dancers, The Modernaires, The Original Caste, Buckley & Collins, and musician Page Cavanaugh. Behind the camera and near Kingsbury, the new Harvey's Inn was under construction. In 1973, it burned to the ground the day before its opening. It is now the Lakeside Inn and Casino.



Stateline looking west in 2014. Photo/Bill Kingman

Today's view is from the same position as the 1972 photo.

MontBleu has replaced the bank, multiple businesses have replaced Barney's, and all the casinos now have hotels.

– Bill Kingman

Tahoe paddle exposes lakefront architecture



Sue and AJ paddle from Cave Rock to Zephyr Cove. Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

GLENBROOK – While normally it's the natural beauty that is so captivating when paddling on Lake Tahoe, last weekend was a bit of an architectural tour.

What I didn't know until last Sunday is that Lake Tahoe has dinosaurs. There are two of them calling a stretch of beach between Cave Rock and Zephyr Cove home. I have pictures to

prove it.

Some of the houses are obscenely sprawling and a bit garish, while others are exquisite and fit into the natural environment. A couple that jutted out on the rocks had such low decks that in a normal or high water year it would seem like the lake would be practically inside the structure.

Many come with their own beaches. Nevada and California have different rules about what is public property. In California, the public has the right to be on the land up to the high water mark. Not so in the Silver State. That is why paddlers must be cognizant not to stop unless they have permission.

Some people had erected little light posts on the rocks as indicators for boaters navigating at night.

While plenty of people want to regulate piers, buoys, what can built on the shoreline and the windows in a home that can be seen from the lake, we thoroughly enjoyed the view of these houses, their docks, boats bouncing in the water, and chairs with perfect views of Mount Tallac and the gorgeous sunsets we've been having.

It's good to see people enjoying their part of Tahoe. And from our vantage point, they were taking care of their property. The only thing I wouldn't like if I lived there is how close the houses are to one another.

I had to wonder if this stretch of Tahoe water is more pristine than in South Lake Tahoe, where I spend the bulk of my time, because there aren't as many people in the water. All those swimmers at public beaches aren't running to the rest rooms. Could that problem mixed with the continual warming of Tahoe be adding to the murkiness of water by public beaches? Plus, there aren't as many regulatory agencies in Nevada. This stretch of Tahoe water was so pristine it reminded me of what the South Shore was in the late 1980s.

An advantage of the low water level at Lake Tahoe is boats are less likely to be near the shore, which makes for an even more enjoyable paddle.

Most of the activity we saw was from people playing on shore or in the water. So many rocks are exposed or barely submerged that at times it looked like people were standing on the water as they stood on a boulder.

Even in a canoe we needed to have our eyes peeled for rocks more than 100 yards from shore. The lake is that low. Other times we could see at least 20 feet to the bottom.

The overcast sky made for interesting lighting on the lake, causing the water's colors to change from cobalt to teal to aqua.

AJ was happy to finally get out at Zephyr Cove. This was her first time in the canoe. We already bought her a lifejacket since now we know she has no problem being paddled around the lake like a princess.

While she enjoyed the lake water, we imbibed on a Zephyr Zombie. Good, strong, but definitely didn't duplicate the original Rum Runner of Camp Rich.

When we started the lot at Cave Rock was full, but they let us launch. Paddlers do so at the beach, not the boat ramp. Had we parked there it would have cost $10 being from California. Nevada residents pay $8. Sue could park the truck on Highway 50. We had to pay $1 each as walk-ins.

By car it is 2.2 miles from Cave Rock to Zephyr Cove.

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Editorial: Stop underhanded attempts to obstruct abortion access

Publisher's note: ***This editorial is from the Aug. 5, 2014, Los Angeles Times.***

Several states have enacted laws in recent years that require doctors who perform abortions at clinics to have admitting privileges at nearby hospitals. These laws, masquerading as measures to protect the health of women, are nothing more than underhanded attempts to obstruct access to abortion services. In every state where such a law has been passed, it would result in the closure of at least some abortion clinics, making it substantially more difficult for women to get the reproductive healthcare to which they are constitutionally entitled.

A federal appeals court panel late last month blocked Mississippi's version of the law from going into effect, noting that it would close the only abortion clinic in the state, in violation of the Constitution. The doctors at the clinic had tried and failed to get admitting privileges at the seven hospitals in the area; at five of the seven they were denied because the hospitals refuse privileges to any doctor who performs abortions, presumably to avoid controversy or for religious reasons.
lRelated Will a federal judge strike down a restrictive Alabama abortion law?

This week, U.S. District Judge Myron Thompson ruled that an Alabama law requiring admitting privileges was unconstitutional and would force three of the state's five abortion clinics to close. If this law doesn't create an undue burden on women, Thompson wrote, then "no regulation, short of

those imposing an outright prohibition on abortion, would.” A similar law in Wisconsin – which has not gone into effect pending a court decision – would close the busiest of the state’s four clinics, overburdening the remaining three, which already have waiting lists. In Texas, a federal appeals court ruling upholding the admitting privileges requirement has shut about half the abortion clinics in the state, according to a team of researchers based at the University of Texas; more than 1 million women of childbearing age now live more than 100 miles from the nearest abortion clinic.

Read the whole story