Candidate wants to trade law practice for bench

By Kathryn Reed

Being able to balance business and the law is what David Combellack believes will set him apart from the other candidates running for El Dorado County Superior Court judge.

The 64-year-old is vying for the seat of retiring Judge Doug Phimister.

The El Dorado County native has run his own law firm for the past 30 years. He has been in private practice for 37 years. The cases he has taken on have run the gamut from criminal to domestic relations to juvenile cases to a broad spectrum of civil cases, as well as probate.



David Combellack

“I understand the importance of making things practical and making things profitable, not that the court will be profitable, but running the court in an efficient manner I think is important to the public,” Combellack told *Lake Tahoe News*.

El Dorado’s courts are known for being backlogged and many have pointed to how judges are running their courtrooms for the inefficiencies and delays in cases being heard.

Combellack has been toying with the idea of being a judge for more than a decade. He said until now the timing had not been right.

He has some experience of what it would like to be on the bench.

“I’ve been involved as a volunteer as a judge pro tem in family court, traffic court, and civil court. (You are) attempting to resolve cases that were on the road to trial through an alternative dispute resolution process,” he explained.

His involvement with Teen Court is one of the things Combellack is most proud of.

Combellack looks forward to going from being advocate for a client to being unbiased.

“I am prepared to listen and I am prepared to make decisions,” he said.

Combellack has also been president of the El Dorado Bar Association, on the Community Foundation board, and Marshall Hospital board as well as involved with other volunteer organizations.

Lake Valley hires 2 apprentice firefighters



Dustin La Chapelle, from left, Conner Alexander, Fire Chief Gareth Harris
Photo/Provided

Lake Valley Fire Protection District swore in two apprentice firefighter-paramedics during this month.

The new employees – Conner Alexander and Dustin La Chapelle – were given the oath of office by board President Dave Huber.

The apprentices will assume full duties as working firefighter-paramedics.

Alexander was born in South Lake Tahoe and graduated from the Lake Tahoe Basin Fire Academy in 2007. He worked for the Fallen Leaf Fire Department before joining Lake Valley.

La Chapelle has been in Tahoe since the age of 6 and attended the fire academy at Butte College. Prior to being hired by Lake Valley he served at Pioneer Fire Protection District as a captain.

Nuts may add years to

people’s lives

By Jenn Harris, Los Angeles Times

Eating nuts may help you live longer – and your best bet for a long life is to munch on them regularly, according to a Harvard University study published Thursday in the New England Journal of Medicine.

In the largest study of its kind, funded by the U.S. International Tree Nut Council Nutrition Research & Education Foundation and the U.S. National Institutes of Health, researchers followed 120,000 people for 30 years. They found the people who ate nuts regularly were less likely to die during the study.

Compared with people who didn’t eat any nuts, people who ate a daily portion of nuts reduced the death rate by 20 percent over the course of the study. People who ate four portions of nuts a week were recorded as having a 13 percent reduction in the death rate.

Read the whole story

Net college tuition not keeping pace with inflation

By Douglas Belkin, Wall Street Journal

Nearly half of the nation’s colleges and universities are no longer generating enough tuition revenue to keep pace with

inflation, highlighting the acceleration of a downward spiral that began as the recession ended, according to a survey by Moody’s Investors Service.

The survey of nearly 300 schools reflects a cycle of disinvestment and falling enrollment that places a growing number at risk. While schools for two decades were seeing rising enrollments and routine increases of 5 percent to 8 percent in net tuition, many now are facing grimmer prospects: a shrinking pool of high-school graduates, depressed family incomes and precarious job prospects after college.

The softening demand for four-year degrees is prompting schools to rein in tuition increases while increasing scholarships. Those moves are cutting into net tuition revenue—the amount of money a university collects from tuition, minus school aid.

For 44 percent of public and 42 percent of private universities included in the survey, net tuition revenue is projected to grow less than the nation’s roughly 2 percent inflation rate this fiscal year, which for most schools ends in June. Net tuition revenue will fall for 28 percent of public and 19 percent of private schools.

Read the whole story

Californians expected to travel for Turkey Day

Expect the roads in California to be about as congested as they were last Thanksgiving.

Word from AAA is there will be a 0.04 percent decline in the number of people traveling Nov. 28-Dec. 1 for the four-day holiday. This equates to about 5.1 million people traveling 50 miles or more. Most of those will be on the roads – 4.4 million.

Others will be getting to their destinations by plane, train or boat.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• The River Ranch near Alpine Meadows is for sale. Asking price is $5 million.

• For its notable economic and environmental efforts, Snow Creek Stream environment zone restoration in North Lake Tahoe earned the Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure's Envision Platinum award.

• "Selfie" is the word of the year, according to Oxford Dictionaries.

• After completing 700 hours of intensive training to become Nevada peace officers, 36 recruits graduated from the Northern Nevada Law Enforcement Academy this week. The graduating class includes 27 from the Washoe County Sheriff's Office, six from the Reno Police Department, two from UNR Police Department and one from the Sparks Police Department.

• Bryce Schussel, 2000 Whittell High grad, is in his eighth

year as head athletic trainer at San Francisco State. The university featured him in this story.

Kirkwood to host megaslope competition in March

Red Bull Megaslope will return to Kirkwood Mountain Resort in 2014, but this time as a full-blown competition.

In spring 2013, professional skier Bobby Brown saw his dream slopestyle course come to life as Snow Park Technologies built a massive line featuring six oversized, custom features that he was able to ski in a single run. The exclusive filming project, known as Red Bull Megaslope, included four other skiers.

The Red Bull Megaslope course, which weaves across three black diamond runs, features a vertical change in elevation that is approximately two and a half times that of a traditional slopestyle course, at 1,200 feet. The length of the course will remain the same as it was in 2013, at 2,750 feet and will incorporate six massive features, some three to four times the size of a traditional contest feature, each of which would normally be built for a big air competition, not a slopestyle competition.

The event is open to athletes by invitation-only and will be finalized when two wildcards are added to the roster during a voting period for Athlete’s Choice and People’s Choice. Initial invites have gone out, and invited athletes include Bobby Brown, Gus Kenworthy, Russ Henshaw, and PK Hunder, all of whom skied the 2013 course, plus newcomers Sammy Carlson, James Woods, Nick Goepper, Torin Yater-Wallace, and Jossi

Wells.

The Red Bull Megaslope course will be built on the backside of Kirkwood Mountain Resort, and the one-day competition will take place during a weather window from March 15-18.

Health care changes not a big deal in Nevada

By Andrew Doughman, Las Vegas Sun

Republicans nationwide are assailing President Obama for the deeply flawed rollout of his health care law.

But that campaign is muted somewhat in Nevada, where Republican Gov. Brian Sandoval has expanded the federal-state Medicaid program and has embraced a state-based health insurance exchange marketplace to serve about 600,000 uninsured Nevadans. Both programs are tenets of the Democratic president's health care law.

Nevada Democrats were happy with the decisions, and most Nevada Republicans have been mum – with the exception of former Senate candidate Sharron Angle, who led protests against Sandoval's exchange this month.

Such proposals have been controversial in other states with Republican governors. But Nevada is an outlier in both the decisions Sandoval made and the political comity surrounding his decisions.

New Mexico Gov. Susana Martinez is the only other Republican governor to have fully implemented both the Medicaid expansion and a state-run health insurance exchange, according to the

Kaiser Family Foundation, a national nonprofit focused on health policy.

Read the whole story

Nevada has money for Tahoe environmental projects

Nevada Division of State Lands is offering grants for projects that will preserve and restore the natural environment of the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Approximately $350,000 generated from the purchase of Nevada Lake Tahoe license plates will be available to public agencies seeking funding. Proposals which include the implementation of capital improvement projects that further the attainment of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency environmental thresholds will be prioritized in this funding cycle.

Applications are due Jan. 31 at 5pm. Proposals selected for funding can expect to be notified in May.

For more info, call (775) 684.2720.

Heavenly and Northstar opening Saturday

Updated: 8:45am Nov. 23

Heavenly and Northstar are opening today.

Kirkwood is looking at opening Monday.

Curtis Fong, the guy from Tahoe, has provided *Lake Tahoe News* with this ski report update Nov. 23 for Tahoe resorts.