

Panel at Squaw to debate merits of fracking

Squaw Valley Institute is sponsoring a panel discussion Jan. 16 about fracking.

California has the largest underground supply of natural gas in the country and is currently under the microscope to handle these resources responsibly.

The night will start with a background presentation followed by a moderated panel debating the potential positive and negative impact of hydraulic fracking on energy independence, environment and economy. Panelists include Catherine Reheis Boyd, president of the Western States Petroleum Association; Abrahm Lustgarten, environmental reporter with ProPublica; and David Baker, business reporter with the San Francisco Chronicle.

The cocktail reception is at 6:30pm and discussion at 7pm at PlumpJack Squaw Valley Inn. Tickets are available online.

‘Made in USA’ may be redefined

By Dan Nakaso, San Jose Mercury News

It seems simple enough: To be labeled as “Made in America,” a product sold in California must include only components manufactured and assembled in this nation.

But that’s a tougher standard than elsewhere in the country,

where small amounts of foreign parts don't invalidate the label. And now it's touched off a debate among business interests and consumer rights groups, as state lawmakers consider lowering the threshold included in the state's 52-year-old labeling law.

Richard Russell, chairman of the board of Russell's Furniture, is opening a new store in San Mateo on Feb. 1 that he originally planned to call "Made in America."

But he changed the name to "Russell's Furniture American Pride/Bringing Jobs Back Home" after his suppliers – including Amish craftspeople from Ohio – could not guarantee that every single component originated in America, which would meet the California standard for labeling a product Made in America.

The idea of watering down California's standard bothers Richard Holober, executive director of the Consumer Federation of California, which opposed an earlier draft of the bill that would have allowed products to carry a "Made in America" label if 90 percent of the parts were made and assembled in the United States.

Read the whole story

Map leads to El Dorado County film shoots

By Gus Thomson, Auburn Journal

Living so close to Tinseltown does have its advantages on occasion, including having a troupe of thespians filming literally in your backyard.

Placer County has had its share of movie shoots – think “Phenomenon,” “The Godfather II” and even Charlie Chaplin’s “The Gold Rush” – but El Dorado County has been no slouch over the years.

With that in mind, the El Dorado Lake Tahoe Film & Media Office has compiled an impressive lineup of films and locations into a map, guide and smart phone link promising a fact-filled film-oriented road odyssey that includes trivia and directions to exact locations.

Thirty locations are on the map and Kathleen Dodge, executive director of the El Dorado County film effort, pointed out that they’re all either on publicly accessible land or in private locations where owners have agreed to be part of the tour and all that entails.

Read the whole story

Study: Eat nuts while pregnant to reduce child’s allergy risk

By Nicole Ostrow, Bloomberg

Children whose mothers ate more peanuts and tree nuts while pregnant are less likely to develop allergies to those foods, according to a study that reverses previous doctor recommendations.

The study from Boston Children’s Hospital found that the children of moms not allergic to peanuts and tree nuts who ate five or more servings a week of the foods had a reduced risk

of allergies than kids whose mothers ate less than one serving a month. The study is published this week in JAMA Pediatrics.

Previous guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics in 2000 recommended avoiding these nuts during pregnancy yet the prevalence of allergies to these foods still tripled from 1997 to 2010, said Michael Young, a senior study author. Studies examining the link were inconsistent, causing the academy to rescind those recommendations in 2008.

Read the whole story

One-time problem gambler now helping others

By Chris Sieroty, Las Vegas Business Press

Carol O'Hare discovered the Nevada Council on Problem Gambling in 1991, about the same time she sought help for her own gambling addiction by attending Gamblers Anonymous meetings.

Today, O'Hare's problems are behind her, but as the nonprofit's executive director, she remains passionate about educating the public about problem gambling's impact on Nevada and about what the council has to offer.

The council's mission matters – 6.4 percent of the state's population is categorized as problem or pathological gamblers, a year 2000 study funded by the state of Nevada found. A similar study found 2.2 percent of Nevada's adolescents were classified as problem gamblers and another 9.9 percent were "at risk."

Read the whole story

Olympian to relive history at Tahoe ski museum

The Museum of Sierra Ski History and 1960 Winter Olympics in partnership with Granlibakken Resort will present living history with Joe Pete Wilson from Dec. 26-Jan. 3 from noon to 4pm each day.



Joe Pete
Wilson

Wilson was a member of the 1960 U.S. cross country team that competed in the VIII Olympic Winter Games at Squaw Valley. Wilson raced against international skiing stars in the 30km race near Tahoma. Later he was a member of the two- and four-man U.S. Olympic bobsled teams, winning a bronze medal in 1964 during World Cup competition.

He coached the USA biathlon team and co-founded the first commercial cross country ski area in the United States at the Trapp Family Lodge in Stowe, Vt.

The Museum of Sierra Ski History and 1960 Winter Olympics is

located at the Boatworks Mall, 760 North Lake Blvd., No. 2, Tahoe City. The museum exhibits artifacts from early 20th century skiing, memorabilia from the early years of Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows ski areas, Bill Briner Olympic photo collection, and artifacts and memorabilia from the 1960 Winter Olympics. The museum is open daily 10am to 6pm through the holiday season and weekends and holidays during the ski season. Admission is free.

Put writing a will on your to-do list

By Jeff Gorton

Of the trendy terms to come around in the past decade, “bucket list” remains among the most useful.

As a neologism, I hope it endures because it reminds us of how precious our time is – and that it’s important to plan wisely.

Unfortunately, after some have listed their items and even checked a few things off, they forget about one important item that really counts after they’ve “kicked the bucket” – their will.

Only about 40 percent of adults in America have a will, which is probably due to people not wanting to be reminded of their own mortality and that life will go on without them.

But what’s the alternative? If you die without one, the state decides what becomes of your property, without regard to your priorities.

I also advocate clients make use of a written income plan

(WIP), a living document that helps organize financial priorities.

Why not enjoy the fact that a will is an instrument of power? You get to decide who gets what.

Since so many adults don't have a will, many don't understand how they work.

Here are a will's four basic parts:

- **Executors** – Most wills begin by naming an executor, the person responsible for carrying out the wishes outlined in the will. Duties include assessing the value of the estate, gathering the assets, paying inheritance tax and other debts if necessary, and distributing assets among beneficiaries. It is recommended that you name at least two executors in case your first choice is unable to fulfill the obligation.
- **Guardians** – A will allows you to designate a guardian for your minor children. Whomever you appoint, you will want to make sure beforehand that the individual is able and willing to assume the responsibility. For many people, this is the most important part of a will since, if you die without naming a guardian, the court will decide who takes care of your children.
- **Gifts** – This section enables you to identify people or organizations to whom you wish to give gifts of money or specific possessions, such as family heirlooms or a car. You can also specify conditional gifts, such as a sum of money to a young daughter, but only when she reaches a certain age.
- **Estate** – Your estate encompasses everything you own, including real property, financial investments, cash and personal possessions. Once you have identified specific gifts you would like to distribute, you can apportion the rest of your estate in equal shares among your heirs, or you can split it into percentages. For example, you may decide to give 45

percent each to two children and the remaining 10 percent to a sibling.

You're not legally required to have a professional write a will for you, but I highly recommend you get certified help because these documents are often contested by people who are unhappy with the decisions you made. After working a lifetime for your assets, you deserve to have them go where you want after you're gone, and your family will be grateful to you for not leaving them with the headache of trying to sort out your estate.

Jeff Gorton is a certified public accountant and a certified financial planner specializing in individual tax and retirement planning.

Memory of art often better without a picture

By Ellen Gamerman, Wall Street Journal

As museums swarm with visitors snapping photos in their galleries, new research suggests people who take pictures of art with their camera phones remember less about the works than those who don't.

A study released this month found that people remember 10 percent fewer objects and roughly 12 percent fewer details about the objects they've seen if they've photographed them rather than simply looked at them.

"When you press click on that button for the camera, you're sending a signal to your brain saying, 'I've just outsourced

this, the camera is going to remember this for me,'" said Linda Henkel, a psychology professor at Fairfield University in Connecticut, who led the study. "The photos are trophies. You want to show people where you were rather than saying, 'Hey, this is important, I want to remember this.'"

Read the whole story

Poll: Most in U.S. celebrate Christmas, but not all for religious reasons

By Lois M. Collins, Deseret News

QUEENS, N.Y. — Stafford Gregoire and his wife, Linda Chandler, love Christmas. They love getting gifts and giving gifts, and they'll happily greet you with a "Merry Christmas." But the season is, to them, a secular American holiday.

For Rachelle and Don Glenn of Holladay, Utah, Christmas is what the name says: A day to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. And while the family enjoys Santa and the gifts, the day's meaning will always revolve around its religious significance.

"We try to do the Sunday before with worship at our church," said Rachelle Glenn. "And Christmas Eve is more religious. We read the Christmas story from the Bible. We enacted it when the kids were younger, talked more about Jesus and read Luke 2. We keep (the religious and the secular) a bit separate."

With their eight kids, now 29 to 19, they let Christmas Day revolve around the Santa, gift-giving, playful side of the

holiday.

These two families represent the two main approaches Americans have to celebrating Christmas. A poll by the Pew Research Center says most Americans do celebrate the holiday – nine out of 10 of them – but only half see it as a mostly religious holiday. A third see it as a mostly cultural holiday.

Read the whole story

16-week science institute open to students

High school students interested in science have until Jan. 10 to apply for the Youth Science Institute.

This after school program is offered on Wednesday evenings from 4-6 at the Tahoe Center for Environmental Sciences in Incline Village from Jan. 22-through May.

UC Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center (TERC) will be hosting the eighth annual Youth Science Institute. This 16-week program is for students in grades 9-11 who have an interest in exploring different scientific disciplines. Students will conduct experiments and activities including stream monitoring, fish dissection, earth science geology hikes, astrobiology, biochemistry, green building demonstrations, lake science on the UC Davis Research Vessel John Le Conte and more.

Not only will participants gain knowledge and skills in various scientific fields and work with scientists, but will also receive opportunities for paid internships, fulfill

community service hours, and receive letters of recommendation.

All applicants will go through an interview process and accepted students will need to pay tuition of \$250. Full and partial scholarships are available..

Send applications or any questions to Kylee Wilkins at knwilkins@ucdavis.edu or (775) 881.7560, ext. 7474.

Additional details and the application are available online.