Nev. went 60 years without official flag

By Guy Rocha, Reno Gazette-Journal

For more than 60 years beginning in 1929, Nevada's state flag had a design that the Legislature did not adopt.

Legislative sessions sometimes exceeded the then-constitutional provision for 60 days in which the legislators would be paid. A hurried amendment to the bill changing the position of the name "Nevada" on the proposed flag was misplaced in the final hours of the session.

Apparently nobody knew of the snafu until researcher Dana Bennett of the Legislative Council Bureau, State Archivist Guy Rocha and staff at the State Library and Archives made the discovery in advance of a bill modifying the design of the flag in 1991. SB396 sponsored by Washoe County Sen. Bill Raggio for the Director of General Services Terry Sullivan and signed by Gov. Bob Miller, finally provided for an official state flag.

Read the whole story

Tahoe-Truckee benefits from alternative art galleries

By Megan Brancaccio, Moonshine Ink

As I walk into the Coffeebar Bakery – located on Donner Pass Road, less than a mile from Highway 80 – it's hard to focus on

anything but the smell of roasted coffee beans and the spread of various baked goods. The shop hardly seats 10 people, and serves mostly as a grab-and-go location.

When my latte is ready, I turn to exit, but I am distracted by four quaint paintings on the otherwise blank, grey wall. According to a placard next to the pieces, the artist is a Reno/Tahoe local named Annika Peterson.

I pause to admire the paintings of lavender and peony before going forth with my day – a day that was altered, even if only for a brief moment – by art.

Read the whole story

Keep orchids beautiful and blooming

By Melinda Myers

Lift your spirits, enliven your indoor décor or give the gift of beautiful blooming orchids. You'll enjoy these exotic blossoms for months with just minimal care – once you know what to do.

Start with a healthy flowering plant. The phalaenopsis or moth orchid is the most widely available and easiest to grow. It's similar to caring for an African violet. When you provide the proper growing conditions, maintenance is a breeze.

The challenge comes with less-than-ideal indoor growing conditions of low light and dry air. Fortunately, there are a few things you can do to create a better environment for your orchid.



Orchids do best with 12 to 14 hours of sunlight and indoor light systems can help supplement the amount of light needed for the plants to thrive. Photo/Gardener’s Supply Company

Keep in mind that most orchids are epiphytes. In nature they grow on other plants and obtain water and nutrients from the air, water and plant debris that accumulates in their environment. This is why they are grown in an orchid mix made of organic material such as peat, fir bark and perlite. This or a similar combination retains water while providing needed drainage.

Give your orchid a good soaking once a week. Pour off any excess water that collects in the saucer. Don’t allow orchids to sit in water and don’t water them too often. This can lead to root rot and death of your plant.

Further improve the environment by increasing the humidity around the plant. Group them with other orchids and indoor plants. As one plant loses moisture, or “transpires,” the

others will benefit from the increase in humidity. Plus, you'll create a beautiful display while improving the growing conditions.

Alternatively, you can create humidity trays. Place pebbles in the saucer and the pot on top of the pebbles. Allow excess water to collect in the pebbles below the pot. As this evaporates it increases the humidity around your plant. This also eliminates the need to pour off the excess water that collects in the saucer.

For larger plant collections use rubber humidity plant tray grids. These save space by allowing you to place several plants on one tray. These are perfect for growing on tables or light stands.

Place your plant in a bright location. Orchids do best with 12 to 14 hours of sunlight. Unobstructed south- or east-facing windows are usually the best. Or give plants a boost with artificial lights. Newer full spectrum LED lights provide needed light while using less energy.

And there's no reason to hide your orchid and light setup in the basement. Indoor grow light systems can be mounted on the wall or set on a table. Either way, your orchids will be in full view for all to enjoy.

Fertilize actively growing plants with an orchid fertilizer. Michigan State University developed a fertilizer that efficiently provides the nutrients orchids need. They have "Orchid Tap Water" and "Orchid Pure Water Fertilizer" formulations. Just follow label directions for best results.

Once the plants are done flowering, you can keep them growing indoors. If you like a challenge, try reblooming. On phalaenopsis orchids, just cut back the flowering stem between the second or third node from the bottom. Or give the plant a rest and cut the flower stem back to the leaves. Continue to provide proper care and wait to see if you were successful.

You can also simply treat an orchid plant like a long-lasting bouquet. That way there's no guilt if you decide to toss it. And if the guilt is too much, just look for an avid gardener. There's always someone who would be happy to adopt and try to rebloom your non-flowering plant.

Melinda Myers has written more than 20 gardening books, including "Small Space Gardening." She hosts The Great Courses "How to Grow Anything: Food Gardening For Everyone" DVD set and the nationally syndicated "Melinda's Garden Moment" TV and radio segments.

Exploring the healing power of nature

By Molly Hucklebridge Coolidge

Carol Bennis was recovering from joint replacement surgery when she was asked to go on a snowshoe hike under the full moon.

At the time, the 75-year-old had never hiked at night or even put on a pair of snowshoes. But when she heard her surgeon and other patients at a similar stage of recovery would be there, she decided to try something new and go.

So Bennis and 12 other patients joined Barton Health clinicians and U.S. Forest Service rangers on a "wellness walk" through the snow, on a clear night in the forest. The rangers guided the hikers and explained the area's natural history. Barton Health clinicians provided medical guidance and, where needed, support for the patients. Bennis loved it.



Nurse Khristy Gavigan with Carol Bennis, center, and Gustavo Yanez Nava with the USFS. Photo/Provided

“This opportunity enabled me to step out of my comfort zone, make new friends, and learn the history of the area,” she says. “I kept thinking, ‘Wow, I just had a knee replacement. Look at this; I can do this now.’ All my inhibitions were gone.”

Learning, connecting, healing

Bennis participated in one of the first Wellness Outings, Barton Health’s newest wellness program. While South Lake Tahoe is surrounded by public lands, orthopedic surgeon Steven Bannar of Barton Health’s Tahoe Center for Orthopedics, noticed many of his patients were nervous about going outside and incorporating physical activity in their recovery process. He and Khristy Gavigan, a registered nurse, saw an opportunity and partnered with the U.S. Forest Service’s Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit to provide a unique healing experience for their patients.

“Having Barton’s medical professionals on hand is key,” says Bannar. “It allows folks to gain the confidence they need to get out of their house, overcome isolation, and connect with others that are living with similar health issues.

“Bringing the Forest Service provides that interpretive piece to support the logistics, help identify the outings, and deliver a message about the connection between community wellness and ecosystem health.”

The health benefits of nature

Barton Health’s Wellness Outings aren’t just for people recovering from joint replacement. They’re also aimed toward people (and their families) with chronic diseases or behavioral health issues, as well as at-risk youth.

Research shows that time spent in nature lowers blood pressure, heart rate, and cortisol levels. It increases concentration, memory, and attention span. It’s even been shown to boost immunity. After her walk, Bennis saw both the physical and emotional health benefits.

“Public lands are special treasures. They’re not to be taken for granted but should be appreciated and respected – not only for their beauty, but for their power to heal,” she says. “The land is truly a gift that must be regifted to each generation.”

Molly Hucklebridge Coolidge works for Barton Health.

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Princess

Princess is an 11-month-old Labrador-Border Collie mix. She loves other dogs and kids, but cannot go to a home with chickens or small pets. She is a sweet young dog who will enjoy getting lots of exercise and going to training classes.

Princess is spayed, microchipped, tested for heart worm, and vaccinated. She is at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many other dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes. Go to the Tahoe animal shelter's Facebook page to see photos and descriptions of all pets at the shelter.

Call 530.573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet.

– Karen Kuentz

Poll: Adult caregivers overwhelmed, undertrained

By Emily Swanson and Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar, AP

Adult caregivers looking after aging relatives and friends

have little training for their stressful roles but still find the experience rewarding, according to a poll released last week.

The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research survey finds that long-term caregivers don’t just provide rides to the doctor and run errands. Nearly half perform some kind of medical care, from changing bandages (30 percent) to inserting catheters or feeding tubes (6 percent).

Only 47 percent of those say they got most or all of the training needed for their often delicate tasks.

Read the whole story

Tahoe author to talk about her first book

The Friends of the Library are hosting local author JoAnn Conner on Nov. 7 at 6pm.

Conner will share the experience of getting her first book published. “Heartwood” is a work of historical fiction set in 1867 Bridgeport The book tells the story of a young man who came west after the Civil War and stops in Bridgeport, where he buys an old ranch.

Historical tidbits are laced through the story, with facts about Virginia City, Bodie, Genoa, and Carson City helping to build the tension to a surprise twist at the end.

Books will be sold and signed at this free event at the library on Rufus Allen Boulevard in South Lake Tahoe.

SLT brewery to host ski movie premiere

Local Freshies is bringing the Lake Tahoe premiere of Transworld Snowboarding's film "Arcadia" to South Lake Brewing Company on Nov. 17.

Doors open at 6pm and the show starts at 7:30pm for this free all ages event.

This Pray for Snow Party is also a fundraiser for the Sierra Avalanche Center.

Local food truck High on Food will be serving gourmet popcorn as well as theater treats like nachos, hot dogs and more.

"Arcadia" documents snowboarders in a perpetual pursuit of paradise.

Road Beat: Kia Niro FE, less is more

By Larry Weitzman

About two months ago, I tested the Kia Niro Touring, the top of the line model of the Kia Niro family. I noticed in the specs, the lower trim line model returned better fuel economy, so I scheduled a bottom of the line model FE to see if that was true as there were no apparent spec differences between

the two models except for a small weight difference of 168 pounds which shouldn’t create the 6-9 mpg mileage differential the EPA test procedures says there is between the two models.

Other than weight, the only other apparent difference is wheel and tire size.



Specifications
Price $23,785
Engine 1.6L direct injected inline four cylinder 104 hp @ 5,700 rpm
109 lb.-ft. of torque @ 4,000 rpm
Electric Power system
Electric motor 43 hp
125 lb.-ft. of torque
Battery
Capacity 1.56 kWh
Maximum output 42 kW
Combined output 139 hp
195 lb.-ft. of torque
Transmission
Six-speed dual clutch automatic manual
Configuration
Transverse front engine/front wheel drive
Dimensions

Wheelbase 106.3 inches
Length 171.5 inches
Width 71.1 inches
Height 60.8 inches
Track (f/r) 61.6/62.2 inches
Ground clearance 6.3 inches
Fuel capacity 11.9 gallons
Luggage capacity, rear seats up/down 19.4,54.5 cubic feet
Cabin volume 97.1 cubic feet
Steering lock to lock 2.85 turns
Turning circle 34.8 feet
Weight 3,106
GVWR 4,079
Payload 973 pounds
Tires 205/60X16

Performance

0-60 mph 7.93 seconds
50-70 mph 4.32 seconds
50-70mph uphill 7.47 seconds
Top speed Well into triple digits
Fuel economy EPA rated 52/49/50 mpg city/highway combined. Expect 48-50 mpg in rural, suburban driving and 56 mpg on the highway at legal speeds.

But the drive train and other specs are essentially identical. So, what does the real world tell us about these minimal differences between these otherwise identical cars. In two words, a lot.

Kia Niro FE has identical looks and dimensions when compared to the Touring. It is a great looking ride as well and is

sized like a small compact with a length of 172 inches on a long 106-inch wheelbase. It is wide at 71 inches and stands somewhat short 61 inches. Cabin volume is a large 97 cubic feet with nearly 20 cubes in the cargo bay.

Under the hood is the same 1.6L transverse mounted DOHC, 15 valve, direct injected four banger cranking out 104 hp at 5,700 rpm and 109 pounds of twist at 4,000 rpm combined with a 43 hp electric motor that also produces 125 pounds of twist. Because of maximum battery output and rpm differences the total output is 139 hp and 195 pounds of twist. The electric motor is sandwiched between the gas engine and the six-speed dual clutch tranny.

In the FE tested here there is a big improvement in performance over the Touring model with 0-60 mph arriving in just 7.93 seconds. Passing times were also much improved with 50-70 mph times on the level and up a steep grade in 4.32 and 7.47 seconds, respectively. Those times reflect more than a 1 second improvement in all performance parameters except for the level pass which recorded an improvement of over eight-tenths of a second. Those are significant differences. And this performance improvement could easily be felt on your backside as this FE was quite lively and fun with good pulling power and midrange even when pure electric. When making passes at altitude on Highway 50, this little Kia was surprisingly quick. Touring performance numbers were 9.22/5.14/9.65 seconds, respectively.

Along with this performance improvement comes a fuel economy improvement in about the numbers reflected in the EPA testing which shows numbers of 52/49/50 mpg city/highway/combined as opposed to the touring numbers of 46/40/43 mpg. In actual testing the FE at a constant 70 mph returned 56.2 mpg in a two-way run. In a 219-mile trip to Carson City via Highway 50 the FE averaged 51.1 mpg with the return trip to Placerville averaged 61.3 mpg. Overall fuel economy was about 49 mpg. These numbers are a 6 mpg over the Touring model. I have no

explanation.

Fully independent suspension remains the bill of fare with wheel and tire size being the only difference as the FE get 16-inch alloys shod with taller 205/60 series rubber instead of higher performance 225/45 tires on the Touring model. All other mechanicals stay the same, including the quick 2.85 turns lock to lock steering. But here’s the thing, the FE still handles great and with the less sporty tires it is a bit more playful, easily rotating in the turns and powering it out of tight corners. When pushing the FE to its limits, it telegraphs what it’s going to do well in advance so counter measures can be taken. It’s kind of fun, no it is fun and playful, too and I am talking about a 50-mpg hybrid.

When pure electric the Niro is eerily silent and it runs pure electric to well over 60 mph. And even with the gas engine running it is quiet and long trips would be quite acceptable. It absorbs bumps well. There is not much not to like. Tire, wind and road noise levels are excellent.

Safety of course is second to none. Sure, this is an entry level model without lane keep assist and blind spot warning, but it has all the acronyms such as ABS, VSM, ESC and a backup camera. Remember safety starts and ends with the driver, good judgment and driving ahead to anticipate problems along with a good scan rate.

Inside are durable cloth seats that are extremely comfortable. While there is no power, they are easily adjustable and they are good for an easy six hours without much fatigue. Good support in all the right places. Rear seating has copious room and provides reasonable comfort. The cargo area can hold 55 cubes behind the front seat making it dangerous when going to Home Depot.

Instrumentation is complete sans a tach. It doesn’t do what the Ioniq does when going into sport mode and display a tach.

But the trip computer is easy to use and has all the info, especially giving you your most recent trip info, mpg, etc. The center stack is also well done. And while it does have a touch screen, it also has buttons and knobs for all functions. There are plenty of storage cubbies.

If I were to buy a hybrid, the Niro FE would be my ride. Performance is top of the class, fuel economy is near the best, the drive is excellent and the price seals the deal at $22,890 plus $895 for the boat ride from Hwaseong, South Korea, making the Monroney total $23,785. It is the best hybrid deal out there.

Larry Weitzman has been into cars since he was 5 years old. At 8 he could recite from memory the hp of every car made in the U.S. He has put in thousands of laps on racetracks all over the Western United States.

Burning Man announces 'I, Robot' theme for 2018

By Jenny Kane, Reno Gazette-Journal

Sci-fi freakazoids, this is your year to flourish.

Burning Man announced its 2018 theme this week, "I, Robot," a theme inspired by the 1950 collection of short stories published by author Isaac Asimov. The stories tell the fictional history of robots.

The theme was chosen by Burning Man founder Larry Harvey and Stuart Mangrum.

Read the whole story