

Bill would ensure gays get just due in history books

By Diana Lambert, Sacramento Bee

For decades, California educators have wrestled with how to teach history in the public schools.

Given the diversity of race, ethnicity and religion in California's classrooms, whose story do you tell? Who are the leading characters? And how are they portrayed?

Existing state law requires social studies lessons to incorporate the storylines of American Indians, African Americans, Mexican Americans, Asian Americans and European Americans. In the 1970s, textbooks were amended to highlight the contributions of women. In recent years, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu and Sikh representatives have lobbied for their place.

Now, state lawmakers are considering a bill that would add another thread to that complex tale: requiring public schools to incorporate the achievements of gays and lesbians into the history and social studies curriculum.

The bill, dubbed the Fair Education Act, also would add bisexual and transgender people, Pacific Islanders and people with disabilities to the list of groups whose stories must be highlighted. The legislation would prohibit school districts from adopting materials that reflect negatively on a person's religion or sexual orientation.

The bill was authored by state Sen. Mark Leno, a San Francisco Democrat and one of the first openly gay men to serve in the Legislature. He argues the legislation simply adds gays, lesbians and transgender people to the list of minority and gender groups already represented in public school lessons.

“It is apparent that we are censoring the history lessons of our students by denying them the facts of the struggle for equal civil rights for the LGBT community,” Leno said.

Read the whole story

Barton 1 of 2 hospitals offering hydro preps for colonoscopies

By Kathryn Reed

Air vs. water. Super bad tasting liquid vs. tablets in water. Spending the night in the bathroom vs. sleeping.

Those are some of the differences between the traditional prep for a colonoscopy and using hydrotherapy.

Hydrotherapy has been around for a number of years, but used mostly in the wellness community as a cleansing mechanism for the intestinal system.



Susan Frailey
and Dan Norman
of Barton
Health explain

how the
hydrotherapy
machine works.
Photos/Kathryn
Reed

Barton Memorial Hospital this spring became the second hospital in the country to offer this procedure. The other is in Connecticut. And there are four freestanding endoscopy centers that use is.

“It’s a standard colonoscopy with a better prep,” explained Susan Frailey, registered nurse at Barton.

While the procedure is new to Barton, Frailey has performed more than 2,000 of them – mostly through a business she used to have in Meyers. Her clients were going to her for digestive health.

One day Barton anticipates the wellness components of hydrotherapy to be part of a larger program it envisions developing.

For now, Dan Norman is the only doctor at Barton using this method. Of the three docs who do colonoscopies Norman is the main guy, having performed more than 40,000 endoscopic procedures in the last 30 years. The two others do a few colonoscopies each month.

Besides having the testimony of Frailey, a study presented to the annual American College of Gastroenterology in 2006 convinced Norman offering an alternative to the Golytely and Fleets Phosphasoda preparations made sense. The latter has recently been pulled from use because of patient deaths.

Anyone who has ingested Golytely knows the taste and subsequent flushing of the colon makes for a long, horrible night that entails being near a bathroom.

Randy Watson, one of the first people to have the hydro prep at Barton, is a believer in it. His first colonoscopy was with the drinks and air prep.

“With the hydrotherapy I really didn’t feel too much. You get a feeling of fullness,” the Zephyr Cove resident told *Lake Tahoe News*. “It was nothing like you would imagine. It was a very sterile, clean situation.”



The hydrotherapy machine.

And no smell involved.

A little at-home prep is required, but nothing like the horrible gallons of mix of Golytely. People may eat a light breakfast the day before, drink three packets of the Miralax to loosen the stool, and sleep through the night.

What the hydro part entails is arriving at the hospital about two hours before the colonoscopy. The water cleansing is about 45 minutes – the rest is paperwork, admitting and sitting around.

A tube is inserted into the rectum, warm controlled water is put in, and the colon is massaged to release the contents. The flushing is done three to four times to make sure the colon is clean.

A clear panel on the machine that is attached to a wall allows Frailey to know if another flushing is needed.

Then the regular colonoscopy is done, where the interior of the small and large bowels are examined for polyps.

Norman, in his limited use of the hydrotherapy, said it's producing as clean of a colon as the air prep. He foresees doing a blind study at Barton to measure one procedure against the other so more clinical documentation can be added for the medical community to get educated about the procedure.

Norman said it's the lack of knowledge about this option that is keeping people from doing it. It costs the patient about \$100, whereas the Golytely is a little more than \$60. Neither is covered by insurance even though one is needed before a colonoscopy can be performed.

Norman is hoping the hydrotherapy method will get more people thinking about colonoscopies – a procedure that should be done starting at age 50 and then every 10 years for the average person.

This preventative procedure is the main test for colon cancer. Each year about 100,000 people in the United States are diagnosed with colon cancer and another 40,000 with rectal cancer.

Dugard's full story remains sealed in court transcripts

By Sam Stanton, Sacramento Bee

Jaycee Lee Dugard plans to offer the "full story" of her 18 years as a prisoner of Phillip and Nancy Garrido in a book that goes on sale July 12.

But prosecutors in the Garrido case are moving to block release of grand jury transcripts that describe her ordeal, at least until after the couple are sentenced next month.

Dugard's 256-page book, "A Stolen Life" published by Simon & Schuster, is being touted as telling "the full story of her ordeal" and will include an unabridged audiobook read by Dugard herself.

The book "has been written by the 31-year-old Dugard herself and will cover the period from the time of her abduction in 1991 up until the present," an announcement from the publisher and her spokeswoman said Monday. "In her stark, compelling narrative, she opens up about what she experienced, including how she feels now since she was found."

Dugard was abducted in 1991 when she was an 11-year-old walking to a school bus stop in Meyers, near South Lake Tahoe. She vanished until August 2009, when she was found being held by the Garridos. By then, she had given birth to two daughters as a result of Phillip Garrido's assaults upon her.

Read the whole story

Nepotism in state agency proving problematic

By Jim Sanders, Sacramento Bee

The state agency that decides whether teachers are fit for California classrooms has a record of hiring workers with family ties.

Last year, the employee roster included two sets of siblings,

one father-daughter pair, and three instances in which the child of an existing employee was hired temporarily as a student assistant.

A recent audit found 40 percent of employees surveyed said that hiring and promotion at the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing are compromised by family relationships or favoritism – with 19 percent saying it occurs often.

The issue, one of many facing the commission at a legislative hearing this week, involves something that state agencies are not required to track: How often do they hire friends or relatives of employees?

Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg, in a letter to the commission, said the survey found hiring concerns that “strongly suggest the need for a shift to a more professional culture in the organization.”

Commission employees provided state auditors with the names of 24 past or present colleagues who they contend are related to each other – a number agency leaders say represents only a small percentage of the 160-member staff.

Yet 43 percent of respondents at the commission said they fear retaliation if they file a grievance or formal complaint.

Read the whole story

Tourism agencies keep eye on gas pumps' impact on travel

By Bill O'Driscoll, Reno Gazette-Journal

As if Joe Kelley needed another challenge.



The interim CEO of the Reno-Sparks Convention & Visitors Authority already has made additional staff and budget cuts since he took over at the recession-weary agency in February.

Now soaring gasoline prices are muscling for his attention to the Reno-Tahoe region's crucial summer tourism season.

"We're very concerned, but certain things are beyond our control," Kelley said of gas prices that have blown past the \$4-a-gallon mark. "It's just another battle to fight."

The last time prices were this high was May-June 2008. Then, some resorts, including John Ascuaga's Nugget, countered with gas cards and other promotions to lure Californians, the region's key drive-up market, who might have hesitated to cross the Sierra.

So far this year, the industry is holding back – but watching nevertheless as recession continues to thin travelers' wallets.

"We recognize gas prices could affect summer travel. We're looking to see what we can do to overcome that," said Nugget spokeswoman Missy Hinton.

At Lake Tahoe, "We're not necessarily entertaining doing anything," said Carol Chaplin, executive director of the Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority.

"The last time this happened, we might have fared all right based on our destination value. There are a lot of things to do," she said. "And our (proximity) makes us look attractive to, say, a trip to Hawaii. The last thing we give up as Americans is driving our cars."

Read the whole story

State gaming win increases; Stateline down 29.8%

By Cy Ryan, Las Vegas Sun

CARSON CITY – After three declining months, casinos on the Las Vegas Strip in March posted a 12.8 percent increase in gaming win fueled by strong showings in baccarat and other table games.

The state Gaming Control Board reported today the Strip casinos reported \$527.2 million in win. The Boulder Strip was the only other region of Clark County to register an increase.

Strip casinos were the only area in the state to post a double-digit increase in gaming win, which is computed before business expenses and taxes.

Since November, the win at Strip casinos had declined compared to the same month of the previous year. But Strip casinos saw a 55.1 percent increase in baccarat win, a 23.9 percent gain on blackjack and a 62.4 percent increase in roulette win.

The win from slot machines increased 0.9 percent, while the sports book win fell 38.8 percent with losses in football betting.

Read the whole story

Teachers take their cause to lawmakers in Sacramento

Publisher's note: *Teachers from Lake Tahoe Unified School District are in Sacramento this week. The union pays for subs in the classroom.*

By Jon Ortiz and David Siders, Sacramento Bee

The state's largest teachers union revved up its faithful Monday to lean on state lawmakers to extend current tax rates – and eventually increase them.

The daylong rally by the California Teachers Association kicked off a week of budget lobbying, press events and teach-ins by the union. Their plans and those of anti-war protesters this week prompted stepped-up Capitol security over concerns that some activists might stage Wisconsin-style sit-ins at the Capitol or commit other acts of civil disobedience.

Although law enforcement officials said the crowds were generally peaceful, they arrested about 65 protesters after warning them to leave the Capitol rotunda after the building closed at 6 p.m. They were charged with misdemeanor trespassing.

"We're not just here to lobby. We're here to raise some hell," Betty Olson-Jones, president of the Oakland Education Association, said as the arrests began.

About 1,000 teachers, parents, school support workers and religious leaders began in the morning, urging lawmakers to immediately pass a tax extension to avoid deeper cuts to education budgets around the state. After that, they want a tax hike put before voters.

Read the whole story

Weather not changing Caltrans' Echo Summit closure plans

Snow on Monday caused about a five-hour delay in Caltrans being able start work on Echo Summit.

The one-way controls started about 9:30am on Highway 50 on the main stretch of asphalt that links the South Shore with the Bay Area and Sacramento.

Deanna Shoopman, spokeswoman with Caltrans, told *Lake Tahoe News* on May 9 the contractor is set to close the summit completely for at least 10 straight days beginning May 11. Though the start time is not set in stone, it will be in the morning.



A closure sign on Highway 89 near the Y in South Tahoe. Photo/Kathryn Reed

The summit is being closed to replace the deteriorating rock wall.

Motorists are being rerouted via Highway 88, by Kirkwood and Jackson.

More information about the project can be found online.

– Kathryn Reed

Power out in South Tahoe for 3-plus hours

South Lake Tahoe residents probably woke to flashing alarm clocks Monday morning.

This is because the power was out from 12:08 to 3:29am.

It affected about 24,000 customers.

Liberty Energy officials said the problem started with NV Energy's Buckeye substation in Carson City. The Buckeye Substation delivers power to two Liberty Energy substations – one at Meyers and the other at Round Hill. Therefore, South Lake Tahoe, Woodfords and Markleeville customers were out of power until NV Energy was able to restore delivery of power to through their Buckeye substation.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

California considers shortening school year

By Kevin Yamamura, Sacramento Bee

Children in frigid areas have “snow day” school closures. Could students across sunny California face “budget days” in bad fiscal times?

Gov. Jerry Brown and school officials warn that shutting down school one month early – 20 instructional days – is a real possibility for the next school year without an extension of higher taxes. Some see Hawaii, which slashed 17 days in 2009-10, as an example that drastic measures are possible.

But there remain significant hurdles to imposing a monthlong closure in California, particularly getting approval from teachers unions and lawmakers. Republicans suggest that Democrats are raising the possibility as a scare tactic.

In the past two years, most California school districts have reduced their schedules below the 180-day calendar that was standard here in the previous decade and remains the norm nationwide.

No legislative proposal exists, but Orange County Superintendent of Schools William Habermehl said his 27 districts are talking about the option, whether it means a shorter school year or four-day weeks.

Read the whole story