Roethlisberger's Tahoe case before Nevada Supreme Court

By Cy Ryan, Las Vegas Sun

CARSON CITY – A civil suit against Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback Ben Roethlisberger by a casino employee who accuses him of sexually assaulting her is now before the Nevada Supreme Court.

It's a pre-trial battle between Roethlisberger and Andrea McNulty on where the case should be tried.

A district judge has ruled the trial should be held in Reno in Washoe County, but Roethlisberger and his lawyers have appealed to switch the case to Douglas County where the alleged assault took place.

McNulty filed her civil suit in July 2009 accusing Roethlisberger of assault, sexual assault and battery, false imprisonment, false pretenses, fraud and intentional infliction of emotional distress.

The quarterback filed a response denying wrongdoing and lists counterclaims against McNulty of civil extortion, abuse of process and defamation. No criminal charges have been filed in the case.

Roethlisberger and his lawyers want the suit transferred to Minden, the county seat of Douglas County, where the alleged attack took place at the Lake Tahoe casino where McNulty was employed.

The civil suit names eight current and former employees of Harrah's Lake Tahoe accusing them of failing to take action in the July 2008 alleged assault and trying to cover it up.

Read the whole story

Truckee woman claims banks robbed her in foreclosure process

By Andrew Martin, New York Times

TRUCKEE – When Mimi Ash arrived at her mountain chalet here for a weekend ski trip, she discovered that someone had broken into the home and changed the locks.

When she finally got into the house, it was empty. All of her possessions were gone: furniture, her son's ski medals, winter clothes and family photos. Also missing was a wooden box, its top inscribed with the words "Together Forever," that contained the ashes of her late husband, Robert.

The culprit, Ms. Ash soon learned, was not a burglar but her bank. According to a federal lawsuit filed in October by Ms. Ash, Bank of America had wrongfully foreclosed on her house and thrown out her belongings, without alerting Ms. Ash beforehand.

In an era when millions of homes have received foreclosure notices nationwide, lawsuits detailing bank break-ins like the one at Ms. Ash's house keep surfacing. And in the wake of the scandal involving shoddy, sometimes illegal paperwork that has buffeted the nation's biggest banks in recent months, critics say these situations reinforce their claims that the foreclosure process is fundamentally flawed.

Read the whole story

Education’s case of senioritis

By Jonathan Alter, Newsweek

Bill Gates is raising his arm, bent at the elbow, in the direction of the ceiling. The point he’s making is so important that he wants me and the pair of Gates Foundation staffers sitting in the hotel conference room in Louisville, Ky., to recognize the space between this thought and every lower-ranking argument. “If there’s one thing that can be done for the country, one thing,” Gates says, his normally modulated voice rising, “improving education rises so far above everything else!” He doesn’t say what the “else” is—deficit reduction? containing Iran? free trade?—but they’re way down toward the floor compared with the arm above that multibillion-dollar head. With the U.S. tumbling since 1995 from second in the world to 16th in college-graduation rates and to 24th place in math (for 15-year-olds), it was hard to argue the point. Our economic destiny is at stake.

Gates had just finished giving a speech to the Council of Chief State School Officers in which he tried to explain how administrators could hope to raise student achievement in the face of tight budgets. The Microsoft founder went through what he sees as false solutions—furloughs, sharing textbooks—before focusing on the true “cost drivers”: seniority-based pay and benefits for teachers rising faster than state revenues.

Seniority is the two-headed monster of education—it’s expensive and harmful. Like master’s degrees for teachers and smaller class sizes, seniority pay, Gates says, has “little correlation to student achievement.” After exhaustive study,

the Gates Foundation and other experts have learned that the only in-school factor that fully correlates is quality teaching, which seniority hardly guarantees. It’s a moral issue. Who can defend a system where top teachers are laid off in a budget crunch for no other reason than that they’re young?

Read the whole story

Lawsuit filed in 2009 plane crash in Truckee

By Mike Danko, Aviation Law Monitor

We’ve filed suit against Los Gatos real estate broker Karen Trolan, her husband Steve Trolan, and their company, Trolan Enterprises, as a result of the September 2009 plane crash that left the Trolans’ passenger, 14 year-old Marilyn Mitchell, seriously injured.

The Trolans were headed from Truckee Tahoe airport to San Jose. They needed very littlKaren Trolane fuel for the short flight. But fuel was a few pennies per gallon cheaper in Truckee than in San Jose. The Trolans decided to fill the tanks of their single-engine Cessna 206 to the tops.

Read the whole story

Storms good for Tahoe tourism

By Ed Fletcher, Sacramento Bee

Bing Crosby should come to Lake Tahoe. With a fresh heap of snow blanketing the landscape, the classic “White Christmas” crooner couldn’t have dreamed it any better.

Nor could the area’s tourist industry.

An abundance of snow and a temporary pause in the inclement weather are promising for ski resorts.

“This is the second year in a row the West Coast has been blessed by the snow gods,” said Ralf Garrison, a ski resort industry consultant.

West Coast ski lodging reservations are up 3 percent through Nov. 30 compared with the same period last year, Garrison said. Additionally, the pace of reservations is quickening, up 7.5 percent in the month of November over last year.

While the improvement may be “nothing to brag about,” the trend is moving in the right direction, Garrison said. The great ski conditions can only help, as skiers share their experiences though word of mouth and social networking.

Dawn Fishler, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Reno, said the recorded snowfall for Tahoe City in November totaled 70.5 inches, just 3.5 inches shy of the record set in 1994. That compares with 8.5 inches for November 2009. So far this month, the area has received 30.5 inches, compared with 47.5 inches for the entire month of December 2009.

Read the whole story

EPA pledges to review chromium in water

By Michael Hawthorne, Chicago Tribune

The nation’s top environmental regulator on Tuesday promised to complete a scientific review of hexavalent chromium by summer and consider ordering cities to start testing for the toxic metal in tap water.

During a meeting with senators from Illinois and six other states, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa Jackson said new research may lead to an overhaul of federal regulations limiting chromium, a metal that occurs naturally in the environment but also is discharged into water and air by steel mills and other industries.

A study released this week by the Environmental Working Group, a nonprofit research and advocacy organization, found hexavalent chromium, also known as chromium-6, in tap water from 31 cities. The amount in Lake Michigan water pumped to 7 million people in Chicago and its suburbs was 0.18 parts per billion, three times higher than a safety limit proposed last year by California officials.

The EPA now limits and requires water testing only for total chromium, a standard that includes another form of the metal, chromium-3, an essential nutrient. Critics say federal rules, last updated in 1992, need to be strengthened to reflect the latest science that links chromium-6 to stomach cancer.

Read the whole story

Tahoe property part of mortgage fraud scheme

By George Warren, News 10

SACRAMENTO – An elaborate scheme promising help for struggling homeowners targeted dozens of Sacramento-area Russian families, a News10 investigation has revealed.

A search of property records in Sacramento, Placer, El Dorado and Yolo Counties shows roughly 50 Russian families and individuals deeded their homes in 2008 and 2009 to an organization called "Shon-Te-East-A Walks with Spirit" in an attempt to reduce or eliminate their mortgage payments.

Many of the homes are now in various stages of foreclosure or have already been lost.

"When you are in trouble you look for help," said Orangevale homeowner Anatolii Tkachenko, who was struggling with a $430,000 mortgage at more than 9 percent interest. He said the lender was unwilling to modify the loan.

Read the whole story

Census figures paint new

picture of U.S.

The 2010 Census enumeration began last January in a remote corner of Alaska and in the months that followed, America stepped up and achieved a successful census. As mandated by the Constitution, the census counts every resident in the United States every 10 years to determine the number of seats each state receives in the U.S. House of Representatives. Beginning this month, the nation will see the first results from the 2010 Census as a new portrait of America begins to take shape.

2010 Census results:



308,745,538: Official resident population of the United States on April 1, 2010.

9.7: Percentage increase of the nation’s population from 2000 to 2010.

37,253,956: Population of California, the most populous state in the country on April 1, 2010. The least populous was Wyoming (563,626).

35.1: Percentage growth of Nevada’s population from 2000 to 2010, the highest in the nation.

710,767: Average number of people each member of the U.S. House represents, as apportioned by the 2010 Census.

8: Number of states that gained congressional seats in 2010. They are Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Nevada, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, and Washington.

4: Number of congressional seats Texas gained, more than any other state.

10: Number of states that lost congressional seats in 2010. They are Illinois, Iowa, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania.

32: Number of states that did not gain or lose a congressional seat in 2010.

Lovell appointed to statewide board

By Kathryn Reed

Former South Lake Tahoe City Councilwoman Kathay Lovell has been appointed to a four-year term on the state Board of Occupational Therapy.

“Being on the recipient end of occupational therapy I might have something different to offer than those in the industry,” Lovell told *Lake Tahoe News*.



Kathay Lovell

The seven-member board is required to meet twice a year, though in 2011 there are four scheduled meetings – two in Los Angeles, one in Sacramento, and one in San Francisco.

Lovell has begun her homework by going through past meeting

minutes. She will be sworn in either Jan. 1 or Jan. 2.

“It’s an opportunity for me to learn something new. They wanted someone with extensive board experience. It was quite an honor to be asked and an ordeal to go through the process,” Lovell said.

When the governor’s office first contacted her in September it was for a possible appointment to the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board. However, based on her husband working for El Dorado County, she had to pass up that opportunity.

Lovell wanted to be part of a board she had an interest in. This isn’t about money. She can be reimbursed up to $100 for travel expenses; otherwise there is no money involved.

Before being given the job the state reviewed her credit, she had two interviews, submitted a resume, filled out “a really extensive, I mean extensive history,” and finished with a follow up phone call for more background information.

Navy pilots lose flying status for dip in Lake Tahoe

By Jeanette Steele, San Diego Union-Tribune

Two Navy instructor pilots have been stripped of flying status and two student pilots will have to repeat training because of a September incident in which they dipped two $33 million aircraft into Lake Tahoe while trying to take photos for the squadron’s Facebook page, a Navy official said Wednesday.

The Sept. 13 incident became public because a bystander caught the event on video and posted it on YouTube.

The video shows the two MH-60R Seahawk helicopters trying to hover low over the lake. In the video, one apparently loses control for a few seconds, dips its landing gear in the water, then pulls up. Both aircraft actually went into the water, though the footage only captured one, Navy officials have said.

Both helicopters were damaged and had to be flown to a Lake Tahoe airport for repairs, which cost $505,000.

Read the whole story