

Nev. hearings on school choice likely to resonate nationwide

By Neal Morton, Las Vegas Review-Journal

If there's anything supporters and critics of school choice can agree on, it's the likelihood that a pair of state Supreme Court hearings today will have an impact on public education beyond Nevada's borders.

That's where the agreement seems to end, with parents, politicians and education policy experts widely divided on the constitutionality of Senate Bill 302.

The legislation, which Gov. Brian Sandoval signed into law last year, created what many consider the most expansive school choice program in the U.S. It allows parents who pull their children out of public school to sign up for an education savings account and tap about \$5,100 in state per-pupil funding to help pay for private school tuition or home-school, tutoring and other educational services.

Read the whole story

SLT police looking for suspect in assaults

Police are looking for a man who may have twice tried to assault women this week in South Lake Tahoe.



South Lake
Tahoe police
are looking
for this man.

A guest at Lakeland Village on July 25 told officers a man grabbed her from behind and dragged her into a storage closet. She was able to escape, although the suspect fled with her purse.

On July 26 a man fitting the same description approached a resident on Ski Run Boulevard. The woman told police the suspect was aggressive in his behavior and language, and didn't leave until she told him her family was inside.

The suspect is described as a Hispanic man between 18- and 30-years-old, about 5-feet-5-inches, small to medium build, with dark hair. In Wednesday's incident the suspect was riding a BMX bike.

Anyone who may have information is asked to call 530.542.6100 or Lake Tahoe Secret Witness at 530.541.6800.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Barbecue on wood deck ignites

early morning fire

A charcoal barbecue is likely what started a fire near Carnelian Bay this week, according to North Tahoe Fire Protection District officials.

The house in the Cedar Flat area caught fire about 4:10am on July 28.

Smoke woke up the residents, who then called 911 after seeing flames on the deck. No one was hurt.

The fire spread from the deck to the exterior wall.

Firefighters recommend not using a charcoal grill on a wood deck.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Forecasters backing away from La Niña predictions

By Kurtis Alexander, San Francisco Chronicle

The “Godzilla” El Niño is gone. But its sibling climate pattern, La Niña, which typically emerges in the aftermath with a cooling effect on the globe and potentially drier weather in California, has yet to show.

Federal forecasters said Thursday that La Niña is still likely to develop, though its probability and potential strength are both down. Those calculations may ease some fears about another dry winter for California, but they mostly leave

climate experts with little agreement on whether the state's drought picture will improve.

The downgrade comes not only because of slower-than-expected ocean cooling, but a failure of west-moving trade winds to pick up. The winds help bring more cold water to the surface of the tropics and are necessary for sustaining a potential La Niña

Read the whole story

Wedding business a big deal in Tahoe

By Ally Gravina, Moonshine Ink

As the economy improves, weddings are quickly becoming more significant in Tahoe's economy than in the past.

Placer, Nevada, and Washoe counties were host to 11,935 weddings in 2015, according to the Wedding Report, which has been making a splash in the business community since the report was published in 2016. Together they generated over \$380 million in sales for the year, with Washoe County alone making up almost \$289 million, the report says. This is almost 20 percent higher than sales in 2009, and mirrors trends nationwide.

In 2015 there were 2.17 million weddings in the United States generating \$58 billion in sales, according to the report, an increase from \$46 billion in 2009.

The booming industry stimulates revenue in two ways: it employs vendors who provide many things a couple may need, including photographers, planners, venue owners, caterers, baked goods, and officiators; and it attracts traveling wedding guests, who spend money on hotels, restaurants, shops, and recreational activities.

Read the whole story

Massive tree thinning project near Incline

Thinning of trees for fuels reduction and forest health started last week on approximately 355 acres of National Forest System lands above Incline Village.

Mechanical cut-to-length tree removal will take place on U.S. Forest Service urban lots and in areas adjacent to communities over the next several months. Some areas will be closed for public safety.

The thinning involves using a harvester to cut the tree down, remove the limbs and cut the tree into sections in the cutting area.

The area on the east side of Mt. Rose Highway south of Tahoe Meadows will be closed to pedestrians from 7am-6pm daily for the next several months. Hazards may be present even when operations have ceased for the day and the closure is not in effect.

The forest thinning is part of the Incline Hazardous Fuels Reduction and Healthy Forest Restoration Project, which will

treat nearly 4,000 acres on North Shore to reduce the risk of severe wildfire, improve forest health, and provide defensible space to neighboring communities.

Mystery light in sky is Chinese rocket

By Associated Press

A Chinese rocket re-entered the atmosphere near California late Wednesday night around the same time many people shared video on social media of a mysterious bright object streaking across the night sky.

U.S. Strategic Command spokeswoman Julie Ziegenhorn wouldn't say if the rocket ever posed danger to people on the ground. She says the command often sees re-entries.

Ziegenhorn tells the Associated Press the Chinese CZ-7 rocket re-entered the atmosphere around 11:36pm Central time. That's about the same time social media lit up with reports from Nevada, Utah and California of a small fireball streaking across the sky.

Ziegenhorn referred all other questions about the rocket to Chinese authorities

Officials from Nellis Air Force Base in southern Nevada had earlier told KTNV-TV the light was a meteor breaking up.

Calif. household mosquito could amplify Zika virus spread

By Sammy Caiola, Sacramento Bee

A mosquito that's common in California has become the latest identified carrier of the Zika virus, potentially multiplying the population of vectors capable of spreading the disease.

Until last week, researchers believed the virus could only be spread by two types of aedes mosquito much rarer in California and the U.S. But new research by a UC Davis ecologist and a top Brazilian science institution pins the southern variety of the culex mosquito – known as the southern house mosquito – as a potential vector of the disease, which can only be transmitted when a mosquito bites an infected person and then bites someone else.

Walter Leal, a chemical ecologist at UC Davis and a collaborator on the research, helped make the finding while testing mosquitoes in the northeastern Brazilian city of Recife. Zika, an often symptomless illness, has been blamed for a neurological defect called microcephaly in hundreds of babies around the world and has reached epidemic levels in Brazil.

Read the whole story

Nev. has one of highest proportions of female lawmakers

By Michelle Rindels, AP

Nevada is among the states with the greatest proportion of female lawmakers, although women are still underrepresented in the Legislature and in many of the highest elected offices.

Women accounted for one-third of the 63 members in the Legislature last session. That ties the state for fifth place in terms of female representation, according to an analysis by the Associated Press of data collected by the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Colorado leads the pack with 42 percent female legislators, while Vermont, Arizona and Washington come next and Minnesota ties with Nevada's 33 percent. Utah and a handful of Southern states have 15 percent or less female representation, and Wyoming is at the bottom with 13 percent.

Women in Nevada politics point to a variety of reasons the state has a relatively high proportion of female lawmakers. Republican state Sen. Patricia Farley said legislative leaders who recruited her to run in 2014 agreed to work with her schedule as a single mom of two school-age girls, keeping her evenings mostly clear and ensuring meetings ended in time for her to pick up her children from school in the afternoon.

"Running for office isn't necessarily set up for a mom, and much less a single mom," said Farley, who represents a Las Vegas-area district. "There was a lot of effort to help support me running for office."

But she said diversifying the Legislature and bringing more

women and mothers into the process is a worthy goal.

"It makes a difference in the tone and tenor of legislation," she said. "When we bring our gifts forward, maybe we reduce unintended consequences."

Erin Bilbray, who founded the Emerge Nevada organization that trains women to run for office, said the relatively high number of women in the Legislature may have to do with working conditions that women might accept more readily than men. Lawmakers meet in regular session for four months every two years, and are paid less than \$9,000 in salary, plus a per diem allowance, for that service.

"There's a correlation between how little we pay our legislators and how many women are in the Legislature," Bilbray said.

In local government, women hold some prominent posts. Carolyn Goodman is mayor of Las Vegas, while Hillary Schieve is mayor of Reno.

But a gender gap persists in other offices. Three of the four Nevadans in the U.S. House of Representatives are men, and the state's only had three women representatives in its history.

The first was seven-term Republican Rep. Barbara Vucanovich, who took office in 1983, while the other two were seven-term Democratic Rep. Shelley Berkley and current 1st Congressional District Rep. Dina Titus, a Democrat.

Nevada is one of 23 states that has never elected a woman as governor. It's also one of 22 states that has never had a female senator, although Democratic Senate candidate Catherine Cortez Masto could change that.

Bilbray said external and internal obstacles perpetuate the gender gap.

"You have to ask a woman, on average, eight times before they

run for office,” said Bilbray, who ran in Nevada’s 3rd Congressional District in 2014 but lost to Rep. Joe Heck. “They tend to think they’re not qualified.”

Schieve said she tries to plant the idea of public service early, telling young girls she meets that they look like a future mayor.

“I look at it as part of my position to do that,” she said. “To show, ‘Look, if I can do it, anyone can do it.’”

Farley said women still feel they have to compete with men, working 14 hours a day and never taking time off, to be taken seriously in their careers. She said women need to stand up for their family obligations to change the culture in politics.

“What women need to do is say this job of raising my kids is just as important, if not more important,” she said. “More and more people need to believe they can ask for it and get it.”

Placer selling excess water to feds

Placer County Water Agency is doing so well with water supplies that it has surplus for sale.

The board of directors is selling up to 20,000 acre-feet to the Bureau of Reclamation. The cost is \$300 per acre-foot.

Transfers are rather routine in non-drought years.

PCWA officials said the transfer will allow it to increase its hydroelectric output for the rest of the summer.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*