

Schools benefit from growing interest in lottery

By Ryan Menezes, Los Angeles Times

After years of decline, the California Lottery is booming. The jackpots are bigger, and that's drawing more players and excitement.

The turnaround is due to changes made to the lottery in 2010, when revenues were on the decline. The changes brought bigger prizes, but they also altered the formula for how much revenue schools receive. And the long-term effect of those changes is far from clear.

With lottery revenue booming, the money sent to schools has increased. In the 2011-12 fiscal year, the lottery wrote a check of \$1.3 billion to California public education, the 12th straight year that the lottery contributed more than \$1 billion. But the gap between the share of lottery revenue going back to prizes and the percentage sent to public education is widening, according to audited financial reports the lottery publishes on its website.

Read the whole story

Water, prison, budget issues face Calif. lawmakers

By Melanie Mason and Patrick McGreevy, Los Angeles Time

SACRAMENTO — Returning to the Capitol on Monday after a four-

month recess, state lawmakers are set to tackle water issues, prison overcrowding and a budget debate that will be shaped largely by the state's rosier economic outlook.

Other factors will also affect legislative decisions in 2014: election-year politics, internal leadership battles and a continuing federal corruption investigation into allegations that Sen. Ronald S. Calderon, D-Montebello, accepted bribes to exercise influence on bills.

Officials have predicted a \$2.2-billion surplus when the current fiscal year ends in June. The state's improved financial footing could set off new battles over whether to restore social services slashed during the recession or hold off on any significantly higher spending. Early budget proposals from legislative leaders have attempted to strike a balance. Gov. Jerry Brown will release his budget plan Friday.

Read the whole story

Nev. Supreme Court justices set to file for re-election

By Cy Ryan, Las Vegas Sun

CARSON CITY – Chief Justice Mark Gibbons and Justice Kristina Pickering both plan to file for re-election to the Nevada Supreme Court on Monday, the opening day for judicial candidates to submit their candidacies.

Gibbons is seeking a third six-year term and Pickering is asking for a second term on the state's highest court. Gibbons becomes chief justice of the seven-member court Monday, taking

over from Pickering.

The Nevada Constitution says only justices in the last two years of their term are eligible to be chief justice. Pickering served the first year and Gibbons will be chief justice for 2014.

Read the whole story

FDA questions unreported robot surgery injuries

By Robert Langreth, Broomberg

When Sheena Wilson, 45, underwent robotic surgery for a hysterectomy in May, she didn't know the Intuitive Surgical Inc. system used by her doctor was previously tied to a variety of injuries for the same procedure.

Her rectum was badly burned in the operation, said Wilson, a mother of two from Parlin, N.J. Now she is on long-term disability, fearful of losing her job and facing a third corrective surgery, she said in a telephone interview.

"If I had known there were other people who had injuries, I would never have done this surgery," said Wilson, who has filed suit against Intuitive and her doctor. "Whatever they have in place is not working."

The use of complex medical devices is exploding. Last year, Intuitive's da Vinci robotic surgery system alone helped doctors perform more than 350,000 surgeries in U.S. hospitals.

Doctors at Barton Memorial Hospital in South Lake Tahoe use

the da Vinci.

Patients like Wilson, whose lives depend on the proper use of increasingly complex high-tech medical equipment, often can't get a complete picture of potential problems.

While a U.S. database lists reports of deaths and injuries sent to the Food and Drug Administration, the agency has no authority to force doctors to contribute. And while hospitals are supposed to report, they often don't, critics say.

Indeed, a Bloomberg review of reports for operations with Intuitive's robotic system found dozens of injuries that went unreported for years. Meanwhile, details of other patient problems involving use of the company's product, cited in legal papers or in interviews with patients, were missing entirely.

Read the whole story

Calif. law banning dogs in bear hunting has impact

By Phillip Reese, Sacramento Bee

Hunters killed fewer bears in California in 2013 than during any other year in the last two decades, a trend that many agree is a direct consequence of a new law that bans hunters from using dogs to track bears.

California has a sometimes-complicated relationship with its roughly 33,000 bears. They are a beloved symbol of the state's rugged history; they are a nuisance to some residents who live where development meets the forest; they are a source of

excitement and sport to those who hunt. And they can be a cause for worry to state officials trying to minimize bear attacks on humans.

Supporters of the ban said it prohibited an unsportsmanlike, cruel practice. Opponents pointed to the long history of hounding and said it was a reasonable way to control the bear population and reduce attacks on people.

Read the whole story

Minimum wage hike could lift millions from poverty

By Morgan Whitaker, MSNBC

Raising the federal minimum wage to \$10.10 an hour could help to lift nearly 5 million Americans out of poverty, according to a study released last week.

University of Massachusetts-Amherst economist Arindrajit Dube found that proposals to raise the minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$10.10 would reduce the number of non-elderly living in poverty by about 4.6 million in the short term, and that nearly 7 million would be lifted from poverty over the long term.

The study further finds that the poverty rate – which rose by 3.4 percent during the Great Recession, and has not significantly dropped – could be cut in half if Congress passed a \$10.10 minimum wage law. He estimates that an average family in the bottom 10 percent

of earners in the United States would see an extra of \$1,700

of income a year.

Read the whole story

Raw sewage spills into Tahoe at Keys Marina



Sewage from the Fresh Ketch restaurant spills onto a walkway before winding up in Lake Tahoe. Photo/Andrew Lubrano

By Kathryn Reed

Sewage from an overflow tank at the Fresh Ketch restaurant flowed into Lake Tahoe for at least 24 hours this weekend.

People at the restaurant first saw the spill Friday night, but

Summit Plumbing of South Lake Tahoe said they didn't receive a call for service until 6:08pm May 3.

Employees with the El Dorado County Environmental Health Department went to the restaurant Saturday afternoon. Dry bleach was used on the surface areas where people frequent.

"There is not much you can do once it is in the water because algae starts taking up the nutrients. Bacteria has only a certain amount of time it can stay viable," Lauri Kemper with Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The cold temperature of the lake and sunlight would dissipate the bacteria quickly.

However, her agency will be out at the Tahoe Keys Marina on Monday to take samples for bacteria.

It is near impossible to know how much sewage made its way into Lake Tahoe, but several gallons, according to witnesses.

No one from the marina or restaurant was available for comment.

The expanded outdoor seating area behind the restaurant has tables and chairs that sit over the overflow tank for the restaurant. This is where the problem was.

"We walked up and there was a very large puddle and interesting odor. When we got up to it we saw toilet paper, etcetera coming from the old pump-out station," Andrew Lubrano told *Lake Tahoe News*.

This was on May 2. He went back out the next morning and saw the problem had not been fixed. He called the 800 number for Lahontan to report the spill.

Kemper said her agency would work with the county to see what it has found, as well as with South Tahoe Public Utility

District.

“With all the facilities connected, they may need a larger tank or to maintain the lines better. They could be dumping grease. STPUD has ordinances against dumping grease into their lines,” Kemper said.

This will be the second investigation Lahontan will have involving the Tahoe Keys Marina. The other is the fueling dock. Kemper said she was not at liberty to discuss that case further at this time.

Lights go out on traditional light bulbs

By Josh Levs, CNN

It lit up the world and showed us all our way. It served presidents, princes, and paupers with equal alacrity. It brought the writings of Yeats, Joyce, Rowling, and Trudeau to millions of bed-readers, and helped countless people around the world avoid stubbing their toes in the dark.

And now, it is no more.

Farewell, traditional light bulb. As the clock struck midnight New Year's Day, the light dimmed on your reign as the mechanical illuminator of human existence.

Rest in peace.

This was no sudden death. The diagnosis came in years ago, in 2007, when President George W. Bush signed a law to replace standard incandescents with more efficient bulbs.

Read the whole story

Kubby's pending medical marijuana patent sold

Steve Kubby of South Lake Tahoe is selling his medical marijuana patent that is pending for \$1 million and has been hired to be CEO of Cannabis Sativa Inc.

Cannabis Sativa (CBDS) has signed an agreement to purchase the patent pending for what is being called af super potent medicinal cannabis strain. The agreement gives CBDS an option to purchase KUSH Inc., the owner of the patent pending, for an additional \$1 million. Kubby owns KUSH.



CTA is considered a superior strain of

cannabis.

Photo/Provided

The strain, called CTA, has been under review by the U.S. Patent Office since April 30, 2010.

“We are very pleased to announce our acquisition of what we believe will be the world’s first patented cannabis plant,” Cannabis Sativa President David Tobias said in a press release. “(Kubby) played a key role in raising the money to put Prop. 215, California’s historic 1996 medical marijuana voter initiative, on the ballot. He is a pioneer and respected leader in the cannabis community and brings a wealth of experience and contacts to CBDS.”

The KUSH management team, which includes cannabis expert Ed Rosenthal, former New Mexico Gov. Gary Johnson and former Sen. Mike Gravel, D-Alaska, is expected to join CBDS.

“The economic opportunities from the emerging cannabis economy are staggering. For example, in the first three days of 2014, my cannabis stocks nearly tripled in value. My friends and I are all prospering beyond our wildest dreams, because of legal cannabis businesses and so can you,” Kubby told *Lake Tahoe News*.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Police identify man killed on New Year’s Day

The pedestrian killed on New Year’s Day has been identified as Randy Breeton, 49, of South Lake Tahoe.

Breeton was crossing Highway 50 near the Town and Country Center about 8pm when he was struck by a vehicle driven by Uriel Ortiz, 19, of South Lake Tahoe. Officers said Ortiz was not at fault.

Results of an autopsy are pending to determine if Breeton was intoxicated at the time of the accident.

“Over the past five years, the South Lake Tahoe Police Department had arrested Mr. Breeton for 38 separate occasions of public intoxication to the point he was unable to care for his own safety. Mr. Breeton possessed an open beer can with an inserted straw still inside his jacket at the scene of the collision,” police Lt. Brian Williams said in a press release.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*