

Burning Man an economic blip for Fernley

By Kyle Roerink, Las Vegas Sun

The city of Fernley is among the last signs of civilization on the road to the Burning Man festival.

The majority of the 60,000 beatniks, bohemians, freethinkers and adventurers attending this year's Burning Man traveled through the town to arrive at the event, which started Tuesday.

The town's Wal-Mart Supercenter and Lowe's Home Improvement are beacons to the bands of travelers who come to Northern Nevada for the weeklong fete, where radical artwork and nonconformist behavior are on display.

Many "burners" tout the experience as a crash course in "self-reliance." After they pay for the \$380 ticket, they build a makeshift community and use nonmonetary means to barter goods.

But before they partake in the noncapitalist festivities, many of them stop to shop in Fernley.

Read the story

State provides disabled access to Vikingsholm



Vikingsholm is now accessible to people with disabilities. Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

EMERALD BAY STATE PARK – While Lora Knight’s guests were always allowed to drive to her estate, that has not always been the case for California State Parks visitors.

This is the second year people with disabilities are allowed to drive to Vikingsholm at Emerald Bay State Park. Otherwise it’s a one-mile trek down that feels much longer going up.

Volunteers escort people to a parking area not far from the castle. Two guest cars are allowed per day. Everyone is in their own vehicle to avoid insurance issues.

The normal \$10 parking fee is charged. The stay is for about two hours, which is long enough to tour the historic house.

Helen Smith, who summered at the estate when she was a child, is still involved with Vikingsholm. A section of the museum, which is separate from the house, is dedicated to her. Smith used to be a regular docent. Last week she was there for a fundraiser.



The main room as it was when Mrs. Knight owned the estate.

Fundraising is an ongoing endeavor for the nonprofit associated with Vikingsholm because the state does not provide enough money for all the repairs. Smith formed the Vikingsholm Project in 1999 to raise money for the estate where she spent 14 years as a child in the summer. This year the circular stone driveway was replaced. Next year planting wildflowers in the sod roof is the main project.

The state acquired the land – which now totals 282 acres – in 1953. It included the castle-like building and Fannette Island, where Mrs. Knight's tea house sits in ruins.

In 1928, Mrs. Knight bought 250 acres at Emerald Bay for \$250,000. That fall the foundation was laid for Vikingsholm, while it was finished in less than six months the following year. It was designed after Scandinavian castles.

Most of the materials came from the greater Lake Tahoe area. One condition of Mrs. Knight's was that the trees at the bay not be harvested. The only things imported were the lead windows from Sweden.

Many of the furnishings in the home are original to Mrs. Knight. What she could not buy outright from Europe she had re-created by laborers in the States.



The kitchen at Vikingsholm.

And while it only cost \$125,000 to build the structure, the furnishings amounted to much more. The cashmere rug was \$40,000. The Steinway piano is from 1929. The unusual thing about it is that it has six legs.

Fifteen servants were employed to cater to the summer guests. The top floor is where people stayed, while the bottom floor was for entertaining, including eating.

Today, visitors are able to see most of the rooms on the two main floors, but are not allowed to the third level where Mrs. Knight would sleep. All she had to do was turn her head to see Emerald Bay.

Notes:

- Reservations for the ADA escort must be made 24 hours in advance by calling 530.525.9529.
 - A disability placard is required.
 - Dates are limited for when the service is provided. It is offered seasonally when the castle is open.
 - Parking is \$10; the tour is an additional \$10 per adult.
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Editorial: Calif. needs to manage its groundwater

Publisher's note: *This editorial is from the Aug. 21, 2014, San Jose Mercury News.*

Fifty years ago, the rapidly subsiding groundwater throughout the West brought urgent calls for action. Arizona responded. So did Colorado, Oregon, Texas – yes, Texas – and others. But not California. It is the only western state that does not have a groundwater management program.

Now California is paying a heavy price for failing to limit pumping of groundwater, which supplies 60 percent of the state's water, as it does diverting water from rivers. Corporate agriculture landowners still resist it, but more and more farmers are acknowledging that the rate of pumping has become alarming.

California needs to require local water agencies to establish and enforce groundwater management plans so that water taken out doesn't exceed what is naturally replenished. Sen. Fran Pavley's SB1168 and Assemblyman Roger Dickinson's parallel AB 1739 would do this, giving agencies until 2020 to adopt plans and empowering the state to step in if they don't. The legislation should become law. It may be more important to the state than Gov. Jerry Brown's \$7 billion water bond.

Read the whole story

Lizards' tail regeneration may help humans

By Jacqueline Howard, Huffington Post

When a lizard loses its tail, it grows back. But how?

Scientists have taken a big step closer to answering that question by pinpointing the genes responsible for tail regeneration. And the finding may yield important clues about how to regenerate limbs in humans.

For the study, the researchers took a close look at roughly 23,000 genes found in samples of sliced-up tails of green anole lizards. They found that at least 326 genes in specific spots along each tail were “turned on” during regeneration – suggesting that lizard DNA has a genetic “recipe” for regeneration.

“We were completely surprised,” study co-author Dr. Kenro Kusumi, a professor of life sciences at Arizona State University, told The Huffington Post in an email. “We were expecting all of the regeneration to be focused at the tip of the growing tail. Instead, the cells are dividing in distinct pockets including muscle, cartilage, spinal cord, and skin all throughout the tail.”

Read the whole story

TAP taking to the lake to

raise money

Tahoe Arts Project is having a fundraiser on the Safari Rose on Sept. 18 from 6-8pm.

The boat sails from Round Hill Pines.

The event includes a cruise to Emerald Bay. The \$65 tickets include wine and appetizers. For tickets, call 530.542.3632.

TAP is a nonprofit that brings performing arts to South Shore students and the community at large.

Rim Fire salvage logging plan unveiled

By Diana Marcum, Los Angeles Times

The U.S. Forest Service on Wednesday unveiled a salvage logging operation for more than 15,000 acres of trees burned in last summer's Rim Fire.

The plan – which calls for removing an additional 17,706 acres of trees along non-public roads – means the Forest Service will be selling more board feet of timber as a result of the Rim fire than the combined total sold last year in all of California's national forests.

Because the value of burned trees for logging deteriorates quickly, the plan was formed under emergency rules allowing salvage to begin immediately after approval, without going through an administrative appeal process.

Read the whole story

Placer County embraces Laura's Law

Laura's Law has been adopted by the Placer County Board of Supervisors. It takes effect in January.

This gives county mentally health officials, as well as courts, family members and probation officers the right to mandate mental health treatment in certain circumstances.

The estimated \$400,000 annual expense to Placer County will be paid for by state and federal dollars.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Crews contain Kingsbury Grade wildland fire



Smoke from the Kingsbury
Grade fire could be seen for
long ways. Photo/USFS

Updated Aug. 27 5:44pm

Less than 2 acres of National Forest burned in a remote area on the Carson side of Kingsbury Grade on Wednesday afternoon.

As of 4:20pm firefighters had stopped it from spreading farther and were laying a hose around it, according to the U.S. Forest Service. The initial reports were that 6 acres burned, but that has since been revised.

While helicopters and airplanes had been making air drops on the terrain, all but one helicopter remains on this fire. The U.S. Forest Service, Tahoe Douglas fire and East Fork fire are on the scene.

While there has been no lightning today, it could be called what's called a "sleeper" from Monday's storm.

"It is possible it could be because of lightning. That side of the hill took a lot of strikes," Eric Guevin, spokesman for Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Kingsbury Grade was closed as of 2:30pm Aug. 27.

One member of a Bureau of Indian Affairs hotshot crew was taken to Barton Memorial Hospital as a precaution after the vehicle he was in was in a traffic accident near Harrah's Lake Tahoe at about 3:35pm.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Is fantasy football online gaming?

By Eddie Pells, AP

Some of the newest incarnations of fantasy football look a lot more like gambling than intricate, outsmart-your-opponent strategy games.

Since 2011, the billion-dollar fantasy market has been infused with dozens of daily and weekly games. Those games allow players to win huge prizes quickly, sometimes in one week, sometimes in just one night. With players betting thousands or even tens of thousands a night, legal experts believe it's time to review the section of the 2006 federal law that was written specifically to protect fantasy sports from being banned the way online poker was.

"There's importance in clarifying the law," says Marc Edelman, a professor at Fordham Law School who studies the law as it applies to fantasy sports. "As long as there's uncertainty about the legality of these games, some potential businesses that might enter the marketplace stay out."

Seasonal leagues are largely the domain of billion-dollar companies such as CBS and ESPN, with close ties to the NFL. For now, they have remained on the sidelines of the short-term business, leaving it largely in the hands of companies such as FanDuel, which is expecting to triple its base to 500,000 fans this season.

"We have the most popular fantasy football game going," said Kevin Ota of ESPN, which boasts an estimated 14 million fantasy players. "It's been incredibly successful, and we're focused on improving our game every year. We always keep our eye on opportunities to serve sports fans better."

ESPN officials say they have no immediate plans for weekly cash games.

Traditional leagues at ESPN and elsewhere received their legal clearance from the 2006 Unlawful Internet Gambling Enforcement Act, which was designed mainly to stop Internet poker. It included an important “carve out” for fantasy football. Meanwhile, most state laws define fantasy football as skill-based propositions, which keeps them legal.

Peter Schoenke, chairman of the Fantasy Sports Trade Association, says daily and weekly games that adhere to the group’s rules also are protected by the 2006 law, and that the NFL and Major League Baseball “have fully embraced fantasy sports in all forms, both free and pay.”

“If a game operator doesn’t follow the UIEGA, the FSTA doesn’t consider the contest to be a true ‘fantasy sports’ contest,” Schoenke said.

Las Vegas-based attorney Tony Cabot, who has practiced gambling law for three decades, said it’s easy to argue that season-long games are skill based “because you exercise a great deal of skill in operating a team.”

“You have to figure out who to draft, play, trade and all those things to have a successful season,” Cabot said. “And because you’re doing all that, you’re betting on an outcome you can control.”

The day-game world can be much different and the skill level needed to “run” a team that exists for only one week is far lower than that for a season-long enterprise.

And a growing number of fantasy sites have games that “look very much like prop bets or parlay cards,” Cabot says, with some games as simple as paying an “entry” fee, and then choosing who, between two players, will finish a certain day with more receiving yards.

“It depends on how you run your game,” Cabot said. “If you said, ‘We’re going to do fantasy, quick pick, random drafts,’ I say, ‘How can that be skill based?’ But if it’s a daily game where you’re doing a draft, have the ability to change players halfway through the game and make all these decisions, then it’s much closer to a traditional model.”

In 2007, Cabot co-authored a legal paper titled “Fantasy Sports: One Form of Mainstream Wagering in the United States.” It offers a point-by-point deconstruction of the federal law that essentially legalized a growing industry that, to some, looks very much like gambling. One of Cabot’s key points is that the NFL, seeing the revenue and viewership possibilities of fantasy football, hired a well-paid lobbyist who helped smooth the way for an imperfect bill to become law.

Cabot’s conclusion is that the process “ultimately has done a great disservice to reasoned policymaking and, potentially, to the long-term future of the fantasy sports industry itself.”

He counts the growing day-game business as one area especially susceptible to confusion. Edelman agrees.

“One can argue whether the fantasy sports carve out applies to the short-duration game, given that, at the time the (federal law) was passed, there was no such thing as daily fantasy sports,” Edelman said.

Day games didn’t get much traction until 2011 – five years after the law was passed.

The games are pretty much unregulated, and they are exploding. They allow anyone over 18 to gamble on sports outcomes online, while traditional sports gambling is available online only in Nevada and, in some forms, in Delaware. The laws in the states take precedence over the federal law and they vary, most of them basing the legality of a game on how much of it is predicated on skill vs. chance. Last year, a federal court in Illinois dismissed a lawsuit alleging day games were games of

chance.

A few of the bigger media players – most notably USA Today and Sports Illustrated – have gotten into the day-game business, seeing ample opportunity in an industry that drew an \$11 million investment from Comcast Ventures, which plunked the money into FanDuel last year.

Meanwhile, the NFL, which did not respond to questions emailed by the Associated Press, keeps watching the numbers swell, while walking the line between using fantasy football to grow its game and maintaining its long-held, hard-line stance against anything perceived as gambling.

“Part of the problem with entrepreneurial endeavors on the Internet is that some people push the envelope and some cross the line,” Cabot said. “Until there’s some sort of enforcement action on some level, I think you’ll see them keep pushing that line out further and further.”

‘Last Weekend’ could have been much better

By David Rooney, Hollywood Reporter

Imagine that Cate Blanchett’s “Blue Jasmine” character had been evicted from her bubble of complacent privilege not by calamity and public humiliation but by the veil of melancholy that descends with fraying family bonds and the encroaching awareness that the sun is setting on life’s most joyous

moments. That more or less describes the character played with dry humor and complexity by Patricia Clarkson in “Last Weekend”.

Restrained and elegant to a fault, this first feature from co-directors Tom Dolby and Tom Williams is too muted in its catharsis and too overcrowded with superfluous characters to be fully satisfying, but the delicate central performance keeps it watchable.

Dolby’s screenplay wears its influences quite transparently, from Woody Allen through Chekhov. And with its fetishistic attention to sumptuous living – gastronomical pleasures, floral table arrangements, a dream house out of *Architectural Digest*, bursting with collectibles – “Last Weekend” could almost be the indie equivalent of Nancy Meyers lifestyle porn.

Clarkson plays Celia Green, the well-heeled wife of San Francisco fitness magnate Malcolm (Chris Mulkey). Looking to recapture her family’s carefree past, she painstakingly curates an idyllic Labor Day weekend for her adult sons, Theo (Zachary Booth) and Roger (Joseph Cross), to remember the gorgeous Lake Tahoe house where they grew up spending their summers. Rather than actually engage with their lives or give serious attention to their partners, however, Celia is more worried about finding the perfect sunflowers for the dinner table or whether she’s bought enough salmon. It’s a credit to Clarkson’s nuanced exploration of character that she can make this vaguely daffy, head-in-the-clouds aesthete sympathetic.

Read the whole story