

Tahoe Mountain News publisher frantic to find missing mom

By Stephen Baxter, Santa Cruz Sentinel

SANTA CRUZ – After three weeks of searches on the sides of Highway 101 and surrounding roads in five counties, Taylor Flynn has not given up hope of finding his mother.

Flynn, the 49-year-old publisher of the *Tahoe Mountain News* in South Lake Tahoe, was one of the last people to see 70-year-old Deanna Brooks before her disappearance Aug. 24. He wrote a column in his paper this week that described parts of two searches he has made – along with crisscrossing searches made by his older brother and younger sister. They flew from their homes in Georgia and New York, respectively.

Brooks, who lives on Berkeley Way in Santa Cruz, had planned a trip on Aug. 24 to see her mother, Nan, for her 90th birthday in San Diego.

She usually took Highway 101, but she failed to arrive in San Diego. She was reported missing Aug. 26.

Flynn described Brooks as a “loving, with-it grandmother of eight who had been planning this trip for weeks.” She is 70 but seems younger and does not have dementia, Flynn said.

“My mind’s always been that she fell asleep and drove off the side of the road,” he said Thursday.

Now, he and other family members don’t know what to think.

In his column “We’re still looking for you, mom,” Flynn described how his heart dropped on Sept. 7 when he learned that a body had been found near highways 101 and 156 outside Aromas.

He called it “one of the worst nights of my life,” in part because it was close to his mother’s intended route. Flynn and his wife watched a video from a television news website “in horror.”

Deputies did not release the name, age or gender of the victim that day, but Flynn said he reached a San Benito County deputy about midnight requesting information.

“I could hear myself rattle off mom’s statistics in a monotone (voice). Then, Sgt. Burbank replied ever so clearly, ‘I cannot tell you anything about the investigation, except that it is definitely not your mother.’”

Read the whole story