

Tahoe doc honored at Minden Airshow



Kyle Swanson is honored for his military service at the Minden Airshow. Photo/Molly Hucklebridge Coolidge

Local doctor Kyle Swanson was recognized this month for his military service and medical accomplishments.

During Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, Swanson served in the Army and performed surgeries on soldiers and Afghan civilians injured during the conflict. He is now an orthopedic surgeon with Barton's Tahoe Orthopedics & Sports Medicine in Carson City and South Lake Tahoe.

During the Minden Airshow he was selected as a Hometown Hero. His reward? A ride in an F-16 Fighting Falcon.

He was given four hours of training, which included special

breathing techniques and emergency preparedness.

The flight took off from Minden-Tahoe Airport and lasted 60 minutes with pilot Lt. Col. Kevin Walsh. Walsh said it was a “maximum flight” with “maximum turns.” In one instance, the pair completed 9.3 rotations.

Hometown Heroes are selected from around the world with usually one hero and one flight chosen per an airshow.

Placer County working on Truckee River access

Placer County is seeking public input on its draft Truckee River Corridor Access Plan.

This will outline recreation and public lands access improvements along the Truckee River between North Lake Tahoe and Truckee.

Preliminary proposed is alignment for a continuous trail along state Highway 89 between Truckee and the entrance to Squaw Valley, which would complete a large part of the planned Resort Triangle Trail network connecting Truckee with major resorts in Placer County and eventually Lake Tahoe itself.

A community meeting is set for Oct. 18 from 4-6pm at the U.S. Forest Service Truckee Ranger District conference room, 10811 Stockrest Springs Road in Truckee.

The final plan is scheduled for completion in late 2018, with consideration by the Placer County Board of Supervisors to follow.

Fires devastate California cannabis economy

By David Downs, San Francisco Chronicle

California's \$21 billion cannabis economy is reeling from likely more than a billion dollars in crop losses related to a series of deadly wildfires that swept through the cultivation heartlands of Mendocino, Sonoma, Napa and Solano counties this week.

Up to one-third of the annual outdoor cannabis crop in those regions could be destroyed or significantly damaged as 22 wildfires continue to burn in California. The fires have torched more than 170,000 acres and thousands of homes, farms and businesses, and taken the lives of at least 31 people. Hundreds remain missing.

The entire supply chain has been damaged as well, because the fires swept through not only cannabis gardens but the properties of seed breeders and those who make and sell cuttings, as well as cannabis oil extraction facilities, manufacturers and distributors.

Read the whole story

Moth continues wave of destruction in Tahoe

The white satin moth outbreak in Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park continues to be a problem.

A survey by the Nevada Division of Forestry revealed 226 acres of infestation, ranging from minimal to heavy defoliation. Minimal defoliation was mapped on 52 acres, with moderate areas mapped on 107 acres, and heavy areas mapped on 67 acres.

The good news is the freezing weather in the higher elevations is triggering the insects' transition to their over-wintering stage which results in lower trap numbers.

In late August, the second hatch of larvae occurred and sampling found high caterpillar numbers feeding in upper North Canyon, Marlette Lake, and west of Hobart Lake. Bark and leaf samples found 10-15 caterpillars per leaf, which officials say is extremely high.

The high numbers are impacting fall colors.

Scientists say moth numbers are likely to increase next year, causing more defoliation, tree stress, and tree mortality.

State officials are researching the possibility of conducting a biological insecticide spray project next year in the park. This is a non-native invasive insect.

Weary Californians try to find all that's lost as fires rage



The wind forecast is not good for firefighting.

By Associated Press

They are trying to find lost loved ones, to sift through the ashes of their homes, to count, identify and mourn the dozens of dead – all while the wildfires rage on.

Communities in Northern California prepared for another day under siege Friday, despite being driven to exhaustion by evacuations, destruction and danger in the deadliest week of wildfires the state has ever seen.

“It wears you out,” said winemaker Kristin Belair, who was driving back from Lake Tahoe to her as-yet-unburned home in Napa. “Anybody who’s been in a natural disaster can tell you that it goes on and on. I think you just kind of do hour by hour almost.”

Read the whole story

2 events on South Shore all about dogs

Animal Coalition of Tahoe is putting on two fundraisers this fall.

The first is Beer with your Best Friend – plus bingo and barbecue – at South Lake Brewing Company.

This will be Oct. 18 from 6-9pm. Brothers Bar and Grill will be cooking. Attendees will receive \$2 off the first pint if a dog is with them. One-hundred percent of bingo proceeds and 10 percent of beer and food sales will be donated to ACT to keep the spay-neuter program going.

On Nov. 4 there will be a pool party for dogs at Tahoe Beach Retreat in South Lake Tahoe. The Doggie Dive-In is scheduled from noon to 2pm on the same day as TBR's Blizzardfest party. The pool party will be one of the last events before it closes for the season.

Complaint filed against ZCES first-grade teacher

By Kathryn Reed

An alleged whack of a first-grader's knuckles that left a mark sparked an investigation into the behavior of a teacher at Zephyr Cove Elementary School.

"I'm not interested in speaking to you about this. The matter has been handled," teacher Brenda Capshaw told *Lake Tahoe News* before abruptly hanging up.

Amber Prevost, the mom of the 6-year-old, had plenty to say. She is still furious with how things were handled at the local level and district office.

It was the child's word against his teacher's because there were no witnesses.

A second incident occurred that same week in September, Prevost said. Her son asked to use the restroom and was denied to the point he almost wet his pants. This had her livid. A formal complaint was filed.

The district conducted an investigation. And while the conclusion was the knuckle incident did not take place, safety plans for the child are now in effect.

"They said there was no wrong-doing from the teacher. They dismissed it all," Prevost told *Lake Tahoe News*.

This isn't the only time a spotlight has been shined on Capshaw. Other parents and students have had run-ins with her through the years. More than one parent even wrote a letter to the board of education in response to the Prevost incident to express their experiences and concerns.

Principal Nancy Cauley and Superintendent Teri White said because it is a personnel issue they cannot talk about what may have happened, the outcome of the investigation, or any changes that were a result of this case.

What Prevost wanted as a solution was to move her son into the other first-grade class. She was told by Cauley that couldn't happen because other parents would want to do the same thing.

The child told his parents the pencil whack was because he didn't get into line immediately with the other kids. He was

at his desk playing with the pencil and Capshaw reportedly took it and hit him with it.

The youngster repeated this story multiple times to authorities.

“What I told him is he is standing up to a bully,” Prevost said.

The child was scared to go back to school and was crying about the thought of it. His parents kept him out for two weeks. Prevost said the superintendent sent a letter threatening to take action related to truancy laws.

This has been the second week he has returned to school. Things are better in spite of being in the same class.

To make him feel safe he is allowed to leave the classroom at any time without permission. He has an adult staff member who is his “safe” point of contact if he needs to talk to someone.

“He said ever since the teacher had to sign a paper she has been nice,” Prevost said, adding that the yelling in class has subsided as well.

So, while the district says nothing happened, it did implement some rudimentary safeguards.

Opinion: Nev. pension system paid \$71K to PR firm

By Victor Joecks, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Nevada's Public Employees Retirement System has just spent

your money to make sure you have a better opinion of the ...
Public Employees Retirement System.

Last November, the PERS board hired an out-of-state PR firm to review its communications efforts. One of the goals was to “develop compelling messages to proactively tell the PERS story and get ahead of opponents and the media.” That’d be like using the company credit card to come up with a plan to undermine the owner of your company. As much as the state’s pension system wants to pretend otherwise, government ultimately works for you, the taxpayer.

Taxpayers have poured billions and billions of dollars into PERS to support generous benefits that aren’t available to private-sector workers. And taxpayers are on the hook for billions of dollars worth of promised benefits that PERS won’t be able to pay.

Read the whole story

Car technology worsens driver distraction

By Joan Lowy, AP

The infotainment technology that automakers are cramming into the dashboard of new vehicles is making drivers take their eyes off the road and hands off the wheel for dangerously long periods of time, an AAA study says.

The study released last week is the latest by University of Utah Professor David Strayer, who has been examining the impact of infotainment systems on safety for AAA’s Foundation

for Traffic Safety since 2013. Past studies also identified problems, but Strayer said the “explosion of technology” has made things worse.

Automakers now include more options to allow drivers to use social media, email and text. The technology is also becoming more complicated to use. Cars used to have a few buttons and knobs. Some vehicles now have as many as 50 buttons on the steering wheel and dashboard that are multi-functional. There are touch screens, voice commands, writing pads, heads-up displays on windshields and mirrors and 3-D computer-generated images.

Read the whole story

Hwy. 50 near Echo Summit to honor fallen firefighter



Mikey
Hallenbeck

Part of Highway 50 will be officially dedicated as the Michael “Mikey” Hallenbeck Memorial Highway on Oct. 14 at 1pm.

The 21-year-old Hallenbeck died in August 2015 fighting the Sierra Fire near Sierra-at-Tahoe. He was a wildland

firefighter with the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit. He also worked at the ski resort.

Two highway signs represent the Memorial Highway; one is located on the eastbound side of Highway 50 near Mount Ralston Road and the other is located on the westbound side of Highway 50 near Echo Summit. Both were recently installed by Caltrans.

The westbound sign is where the ceremony will take place.