

The science behind snow

By NOAA

How are snowflakes formed?

A snowflake begins to form when an extremely cold water droplet freezes onto a pollen or dust particle in the sky. This creates an ice crystal. As the ice crystal falls to the ground, water vapor freezes onto the primary crystal, building new crystals – the six arms of the snowflake.

That's the short answer.

Read the whole story

Radon to be subject of presentation in Stateline

Tahoe Regional Planning Agency is hosting a radon educational event on Jan. 23 at 6pm at its Stateline office.

Free test kits will be available for Nevada residents at the presentation. Test kits can also be purchased at low-cost for out-of-state residents.

For those who cannot attend a presentation, free radon test kits are also available at Cooperative Extension offices and partner offices statewide through Feb. 28.

January is National Radon Action Month.

Radon is a naturally occurring, radioactive gas that is

colorless, odorless and tasteless. It comes from the ground and can accumulate in homes, raising the risk of lung cancer. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates 21,000 Americans die each year from radon-caused lung cancer, killing more people than secondhand smoke, drunk driving, falls in the home, drowning or house fires.

In Nevada, one in four homes tested show radon concentrations at or above the EPA action level. In Stateline, the potential is higher, as 70 percent of the homes tested had an elevated radon level.

According to experts, living in a home with radon concentrations at the action level poses as much risk of developing lung cancer as smoking about half a pack of cigarettes a day.

Comments sought on Martis Valley Trail

Comments are being taken until Feb. 20 on the for the Martis Valley Trail right-of-way.

A meeting Feb. 1 from 5-7pm at the Truckee Tahoe Airport about the plans..

The report addresses environmental impacts and recommends mitigation measures in regard to t

This is a proposed 10-foot-wide paved, 2-foot-wide unpaved multiple-use trail.

Crab feed to benefit SLT Catholic Church

St. Theresa's annual crab feed is Feb. 11 from 6-9pm.

Cost is \$45 in advance, \$50 at the door.

Doors open at 6pm, the dessert auction starts at 7:45pm. The event is at Grace Hall in South Lake Tahoe.

This is a fundraiser for the religious education programs and parish building maintenance.

For more info, call Danette Winslow at 530.544.4788 or the church office at 530.544.3533.

Mysterious pot-related illness popping up

Publisher's note: *From Lance Orr, Barton Health medical director of the Emergency Department, "We have seen patients that match the flu-like illness described in this article. Medically speaking, this is referred to as 'cannabinoid hyperemesis syndrome.' Symptoms include abdominal pain, nausea, and vomiting and are related to heavy or long term marijuana use. If the patient continues to use marijuana,*

symptoms are likely to persist and we have seen patients with this condition return to the Emergency Department. Fortunately, symptoms typically resolve if the patient abstains from marijuana. Though this medical advice is not always taken by patients, the Emergency Department staff and physicians have seen firsthand how heavy marijuana use can cause and prolong this syndrome."

By Mary Papenfuss, Huffington Post

A mysterious marijuana-related illness is popping up with increasing frequency in hospital emergency rooms, particularly in states where cannabis is now legal.

The symptoms are severe abdominal pain and violent vomiting – and most doctors are initially stumped when they encounter patients with the problem.

The illness is cannabinoid hyperemesis syndrome, which is linked to heavy, long-term use of marijuana, according to experts. For some reason, the nausea and vomiting of CHS can be relieved with hot showers or baths, which can serve as an important hint for physicians trying to diagnose a patient.

Read the whole story

Tahoe-Truckee digs out before next big dump



Lake Tahoe has a couple days to recover before the next storms arrive. Photo/Denise Haerr

By Peter Hecht, Sacramento Bee

Brian Santos felt conflicting currents of emotion Saturday after historic winter storms dumped a bounty of snow on the northern Sierra Nevada – a region dependent on winter tourism and also vulnerable to the heartache such storms can bring.

At the Truckee Donner Lodge, where Santos was working as day manager, the heat was back on. The massive frosty mound that had covered the parking lot was cleared. The place was filled with guests as Interstate 80 jammed with skiers flocking to mountain resorts for the three-day Martin Luther King Day weekend.

Yet Santos had just emerged from a few hellish days. His family was snowed in from Tuesday until Friday in their nearby Pla Vada Woodlands home. They went without electricity for

four days, and trees throughout the neighborhood had toppled under the snowfall.

Now the Tahoe region is bracing for – and cautiously celebrating – more snow to come. A second significant storm system, called an “atmospheric river,” is expected to hit late Tuesday. It stands to blanket the upper Sierra and Truckee-Lake Tahoe resorts under another 2 feet of snow while also creating new perils for residents and motorists.

Read the whole story

4 U.S. women in top 16 downhill race

By USSA

ALTENMARKT-ZAUCHENSEE, Austria – Jackie Wiles (Aurora, Ore.) skied to her first career Audi FIS Ski World Cup podium, finishing third, in Sunday’s much anticipated downhill.

After three days of weather delays, the women ran an early morning downhill training run Sunday, and then headed back to the start for the real deal. In Sunday’s race, four Americans stacked into the top 16 with Wiles leading the way in third. Laurene Ross (Bend, Ore.) was 12th, Lindsey Vonn (Vail) 13th and Breezy Johnson (Victor, Idaho) was 16th. Stacey Cook (Mammoth Lakes) was 29th, Alice McKennis (New Castle, Colo.) was 34th and Leanne Smith (North Conway, N.H.) was 38th.

The track at Altenmarkt proved faster for the later starters as Austria’s Christine Scheyer took her first career World Cup

win coming from the 25th start position. Tina Weirather of Liechtenstein was second from the 17th start position. Wiles, whose previous career-best World Cup downhill result was 15th at Cortina d'Ampezzo in 2014, came from the 26th start position. For Wiles though, Sunday's podium came at just the right time ahead of three weeks of speed events leading into the World Championships next month in Switzerland.

"To come down in third is a dream come true," said Wiles, who took some time off over the holidays to recharge. "I've had a tough start to the season and seen so many expectations falling flat, so I really needed this and it couldn't have come at a better time.

"This is definitely going to help my confidence moving forward. Hopefully I'll have some good skiing coming," she added.

Following two injuries and 322 days since her last race, Vonn was stoked not only to be back racing, but for her teammate Wiles, who is sponsored by the Lindsay Vonn Foundation.

"I'm really happy for Jackie," said Vonn. "I felt like I was skiing pretty well, just not quite on the limit yet. For me, it's not really a matter of the results, I'm just happy to be racing again. Of course I have higher expectations for myself, but considering the condition and the fact that we had a training run and a race in the same day, I think it was pretty good."

Switzerland's Lara Gut finished fourth to cut into Mikaela Shiffrin's overall World Cup lead. Shiffrin, who did not race Sunday, holds the lead with 1,008 points. Gut is second with 693, and Slovenia's Ilka Stuhec, who was fifth Sunday, is third overall with 584 points. Stuhec continues to lead the overall World Cup downhill standings with 345 points.

Power being restored in American River canyon

Strawberry Lodge along Highway 50 has power after being without it for five days.

It came back on about 9:30pm Jan. 14.

Despite the cold, many people stayed at the resort through the darkness. Three woodstoves helped take off the chill. Extra blankets were provided. The annex, the rooms on the other side of the highway, had hot water via the propane.

“We had plenty of propane to cook,” James Clisby with the lodge told *Lake Tahoe News*. He said one of the tricky things was providing coffee. “We put a tray over the grill and heated it up over that.”

PG&E is still reporting pockets of the American River canyon being without power.

Sierra-at-Tahoe has been hit at times.

“We we’re previously affected, but the problem has been resolved. We currently have full power and thank PG&E for their hard work on getting the power restored,” Steve Hemphill, the ski resort’s spokesman, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

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Elected officials forced off CTC board

By Terra Breeden

The California Tahoe Conservancy's special meeting on Jan. 13 was primarily to discuss the conflict of interest that has arisen within its regime. The conflict has specifically targeted board members Tom Davis of South Lake Tahoe and Sue Novasel of El Dorado County, who had been on the CTC board as elected officials.

Davis resigned at the end of Friday's meeting. He told *Lake Tahoe News* it was important for the board to know why.

Who will take his place remains to be seen. The city on Tuesday has its annual reorganization meeting when it comes to who is seated on which board-committee-commission. There is talk of having former Councilman Hal Cole, who is no fan of the agency's – especially Executive Director Patrick Wright, be the appointed representative.

El Dorado County Board of Supervisors on Jan. 10 temporarily appointed Senior Deputy County Counsel Paula Frantz to the CTC board.

"The county Board of Supervisors remains of the opinion that the claimed incompatibility of offices issue is without merit and that Supervisor Novasel, as the elected representative for District V, has demonstrated the highest ethical and professional standards while serving on the CTC board," CAO Don Ashton told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The CTC meeting agenda had two discussion items:

- The applicability of the doctrine of incompatible offices to the Conservancy board and potential legislative options to remedy the issue.
- Status of projects and partnerships with South Lake Tahoe.

The lone action item pertained to the Greenway Bike Trail.

It was noted the two discussion items and this special meeting came about after ***Lake Tahoe News*** in December brought the potential conflict to the public's attention.

That story points out the conflict issue only came to light after the city and Wright began to have disagreements. At the same time Davis was calling for the board to evaluate Wright who had not had a performance review in three years. (That review is slated to occur in June.)

California Deputy Attorney General Marian Moe opened the CTC

board meeting with a statement saying the dilemma was complex and that it addressed an array of issues from contracting as an official to economic disclosure problems.

Moe explained that CTC members Davis and Novasel stirred up conflicts of interest by being on the board and by being elected officials at the same time. The Conservancy was created in 1985.

The doctrine states, "Members might have potential conflicts of interest related to voting on matters within jurisdiction of both the Conservancy and El Dorado County."

Moe expressed that although there has been a lot of tension within the board, the CTC is looking for a solution.

"We want elected officials to continue to serve in the Conservancy," Moe told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The problem stems from a law that requires CTC board members to automatically vacate their position if a conflict of interest arises.

"When we set up the commission to create the Conservancy, we had no idea that the conflict of interest would become the issue it is today," board Chairman Larry Sevinson said. "I have to apologize because unfortunately, we let it fall through the cracks."

Some board members expressed their disappointment in the system.

Davis at the end stated he couldn't continue as a member of the board until the issue had been clarified. Davis said he wanted to be transparent with the public and then resigned from the board.

"It's been an honor working with this board, every one of you is a class act," Davis said. "But after this discussion, I officially reassign from the board. This is a non-voting item.

I'm going to go get lunch."

Davis took his belongings and left the room after speaking.

Novasel, who was sitting in the audience, said following the September meeting she was asked to resign from the board. At that time she refused to.

"I think this board is incredibly valuable to our community and it was under the threat of losing my office that I am no longer on the board. I'm sitting in the audience instead," Novasel said.

The CTC is now looking to the Legislature to update the law to avoid the conflict of having elected officials on the CTC board. Board members said they want the new legislation to reflect the conversation that took place during the meeting. A draft of the proposed legislation had already been sent to the governor's office.

"We are very much interested in seeking a legislative remedy to work toward the greater good for our community," board member Todd Ferrara said. "There is nothing to gain in the long term from any of this confusion."

When it came to the Greenway, the CTC staff wanted the board to approve a memorandum of understanding regarding how the maintenance for the bike trail would be funded. El Dorado County's rep on the board – an attorney – said she wasn't about to vote for an MOU that the board had not even seen.

It was also pointed out that the board that oversees Measures S-R has not voted to fund the maintenance, yet the CTC staff said this is in part where the money to maintain the trail would come from.

While the city and Lake Tahoe Community College support the trail and land swaps to make it a reality, neither entity has money for maintenance.

The CTC board voted down the agenda item because of its presumptive nature, and lack of detail and facts.

Kathryn Reed contributed to this story.