

Letter: SUP lawsuit is not the right answer

To the community,

I was saddened to read in the *LTN* that the family of Carlos Diamond Francies plans to sue the Stand Up PaddleBoard Company because their son drowned in Lake Tahoe while trying to rescue his sister and friend who fell out of their kayak.

I did not read that any of them were wearing water safety vests, which is the smart thing to do while recreating in Lake Tahoe. I am particularly surprised at this, because Carlos (age, 30 years old) was a law enforcement officer, who likely had been trained in personal safety. They were all adults, who must understand there are risks with any water activity, skiing, hiking, bike riding, boating, kayaking, SUP, and more. People are expected to be aware of their surroundings and be proactive in their engagement of same. Folks are responsible to check weather, conditions and all hazards that are not in the control of vendors.

I think it is wrong for this family to place blame on the SUP vendor. They rented them equipment that was in working order; the responsibility of the customer to know their ability(s) and take precautions while engaging in any sport is incumbent on them. Lake Tahoe is a special place for recreation, which is a wilderness environment.

Renting skis does not come with a guarantee you won't get hurt; likewise with renting a bike, or camping equipment, etc. Small business companies work hard at making safe equipment available to visitors and residents who elect to enjoy Lake Tahoe's recreational opportunities – and should not, and can not survive the costs of lawsuits that seek to create new laws, and/or place blame.

This accident was indeed a tragedy, and I cannot begin to understand the grief of the family. However, I think it would be far more productive and honor Carlos' memory, to provide an educational legacy for visitors who engage in outdoor activities in Lake Tahoe – and to do so, without causing the well-run, well-regarded, family-run Stand-Up PaddleBoard Company undue harm. This was an accident, that should not result in further harm.

Judi Allen, South Lake Tahoe

Basic tip for driving in snow country

By Tracy Franklin

Winter is upon us as we begin to see our first accumulative snowfall and cold, icy conditions. Every year families travel to South Lake Tahoe for Thanksgiving and Christmas, leading to congested roadways and an increase in pedestrian traffic.

Many of these travelers are foreign to winter weather and do not have much experience driving in icy conditions. The South Lake Tahoe Police Department reminds motorists to be alert and courteous so that everyone can arrive at their destination and enjoy the holiday season with their friends and loved ones.

To help everyone stay safe this holiday season, South Lake Tahoe Police Department recommends the following tips:

- Make sure your tires are properly inflated and the tread is in good condition.
- Check your brakes, lights and windshield wipers to make

sure they are functioning properly.

- Warm up your vehicle and make sure your windshield is clear of ice and snow before driving.
- Be alert. Constantly scan the road for hazards and give yourself enough room to react safely.
- Remember, stopping distances can double in rain and triple in snow.
- Minimize distractions, such as turning off or silencing your cell phone.
- Do not use cruise control during wet or snowy road conditions. Cruise control can cause skidding and loss of tire traction in winter conditions.
- Buckle your seat belt! Wearing a seat belt is the best defense to prevent injury and death in a crash. This includes buckling children into properly installed child safety or booster seats.
- Carry an emergency kit in your trunk for safety, comfort and possible repairs. Ensure properly fitted tire chains in case of severe winter weather.

Tracy Franklin is the spokeswoman for the city of South Lake Tahoe.

SLT cemetery truck catches on fire



A cemetery truck was damaged by fire on Thanksgiving Eve. Photo/Provided

A fire at Happy Homestead Cemetery was contained to an old truck.

While the cause is under investigation, South Lake Tahoe fire officials told *Lake Tahoe News* it could be organics in the back of the truck or an electrical issue.

The fire started Nov. 23 and will quickly put out.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Easy care gardening trends for the holidays

By Melinda Myers

Dress up the holidays or give gifts that continue giving throughout the year with these low maintenance gardening trends. Just add a little fun, classic beauty or style to make it even more memorable now and throughout the year.

Terrariums. These mini greenhouses continue to grow in popularity and are perfect for new or timid gardeners. Just plant a few small tropical plants, moisten the soil, close the lid and you have a self-contained growing chamber. Show off your green thumb with a modern, classic or vintage style vessel.

Use the gazebo tabletop terrarium, classic bell jar or other mini garden as a centerpiece for the dining table or buffet. Or create a miniature garden in glass to give as a hostess gift. When the party is over, it's a great memento of a fun holiday gathering.

Succulents. Growing succulents is another low maintenance garden trend that is perfect for busy gardeners during the hectic holiday season. Just place them in a sunny window and water whenever the soil is dry. It's truly as easy as that.

The small scale cacti and succulents provide a multitude of opportunities for incorporating them into your holiday celebrations. You won't need much space to enjoy the subtle colors and dramatic form of these drought tolerant plants. Just select containers that complement, but don't overpower their charm.

Consider buying a few extras for guests to take home and enjoy for years to come.

But first, use them to dress up the table by making them into place cards for your guests. Simply add a name to the decorative pot. Or display them all together in a copper plant tray, terra cotta saucer or other shallow container to use as a centerpiece throughout the evening. When the party is over, each guest can pick their own plant to take home.

Air plants. Unique and amazing air plants are all the rage and could certainly be described as the definitive easy care plant. Many are native to rain forests where they grow in the canopy of trees, gathering water and nutrients that pass by. No soil is needed for these versatile plants. Just hang them in a bright location and soak in tepid non-softened water once every week or two.

Display them in an open terrarium, shell, or another decorative container. They make great centerpieces or stunning displays.

Pothos, philodendron and ivy. These plants have long been low maintenance favorites of the indoor garden. This year, consider dressing them up for the holidays with sparkling garland, artificial flowers, berries and greens.

Or display them in unique containers, baskets or hangers. Go retro and macramé a colorful hanger for your favorite hanging basket. Or place the pot in an earthy woven basket, sleek plastic pot or classic round copper wire globe hanging basket. Add some fairy lights for a bit more sparkle on long winter nights.

Make this holiday season warm and memorable with the help of these low maintenance garden trends and plants. You, your family and friends will enjoy their beauty, charm and easy care nature throughout the new year ahead.

Melinda Myers has more than 30 years of horticulture experience and has written more than 20 gardening books, including "Small Space Gardening". Myers is a columnist and

contributing editor for Birds & Blooms magazine and was commissioned by Gardener's Supply Company for her expertise to write this article.

Meyers nonprofit cultivates community synergy

By Kathryn Reed

While everybody might not know your name, you still feel comfortable among strangers.

This is Meyers.

It's a community unto itself. It has that sense of place; where you belong to something bigger, but not something so big that you get lost.

Going to South Lake Tahoe is going to town. When people talk about doing so it's almost like a burden. People who live in Meyers are prideful. They feel a little more connected to the outdoors. They are mountain people.

"We are unincorporated, so we have limited local governance. We are not doing any government stuff, but we are filling a civic pride void," David Reichel told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Reichel is the vice president of the Meyers Community Foundation. Community is what this nonprofit is all about it.

While the concept of the foundation came about in 2011, it was in 2014 that the group of locals secured its nonprofit, 501(c)3 status. A seven-member all-volunteer board runs the foundation. Other members are Rene Brejc, Kim Wyatt, Brian

Levy, Tara Offenbacher, Christian Waskiewicz and Tim Cain.

For the group's sake, the boundaries of Meyer's are loosely defined since other parts of unincorporated El Dorado County – like Christmas Valley and Tahoe Paradise – flow into this enclave.

Brejc, Wyatt and Josh Welch started what was the Meyers Business Group in 2011. It morphed into the community foundation. They along with others that year started what has become an annual tradition – the tree lighting at Divided Sky, with Santa arriving via CalStar helicopter and the Lake Valley fire engine all decorated in holiday lights.

The foundation now puts on this event, which this year will be Dec. 2 at 5pm. There is no cost – not even for the popcorn and hot cocoa.

Donations, though, are accepted.

The foundation's fall event is the gear swap.

"This made sense and fit Meyers. A lot of people have outdoor toys," Reichel said of the swap.

This is a money-maker for the foundation.

Another fund-raising event was launched this year – the OMG Fun Run in May. It was part serious running up Old Meyers Grade and part fun with people in costumes.

And while the events are all in Meyers and the money is staying there, people from everywhere are encouraged to participate.

The foundation wants to have a pot of money so it can help spur improvements throughout Meyers. People are encouraged to submit grant proposals year round. This year money was provided to help stock fish at Baron Lake at Tahoe Paradise Park and support a rock climbing project.

For more information about the Meyers Community Foundation or to donate to the cause, go **online**.

Editorial: Calif. roads worsen as legislators make excuses

Publisher's note: *This editorial is from the Nov. 21, 2016, Sacramento Bee.*

Once again, California lawmakers are proving themselves unable to carry out that most basic function – filling potholes.

A special session called by Gov. Jerry Brown to focus on raising billions to fund road maintenance will end a week from Wednesday with a whimper. There are plenty of excuses.

Democrats, who control the Legislature, haven't had the two-thirds majority needed to approve new gasoline taxes. So they can blame Republicans.

Republicans insist the California Department of Transportation is bloated and must become more efficient, and they seek relaxation of labor and environmental regulations. So they can blame Democrats.

Read the whole story

How to master online shopping

By David Hochman, AARP

You can shop for virtually anything on the Internet, but whether you're browsing for glow-in-the-dark garden gnomes or a 65-inch ultra-HD television, check out the newest price-cutting tricks and tools.

Michelle Madhok, CEO of the fashion news and deals site SheFinds, recommends services such as PricePinx.com to get notified the instant an item you're craving is marked down. She also suggests following your favorite retailers on Facebook and Twitter for early access to sales and markdowns. Another trick: buying discounted gift cards at Gift Card Granny and CardCash. In September, Granny was selling a \$300 Talbot's credit for \$198. "It's silly not to check," Madhok says.

Don't just Google it. Use comparison engines that are tailored to your shopping whims—for instance, ShopStyle for fashion and home products, and Shopping.com and Bizrate for commodity items such as TVs.

Read the whole story

Why these Californians voted red

By Paige St. John, Los Angeles Times

On a cattle ranch three bridges past a giant lone poplar tree on this isolated northeastern edge of California, Jeffrey

Hemphill for once feels part of something larger.

He and his Lassen County neighbors cast 73 percent of their ballots, the strongest vote in the state, to elect Donald Trump for president.

They voted against the rest of California on almost every other ballot issue too, rejecting increased gun regulation, a plastic bag ban, tax hikes, prison parole and the recreational use of marijuana, all seen locally as urban impositions on the rural soul.

Lassen County had the strongest vote in the state to elect Donald Trump for president. It was one of about a dozen other counties in the state that remained solidly red.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- Tickets for El Dorado Winery Association's passport event are on sale **online**. The dates are April 22-23 and April 29-30.
- Sierra-at-Tahoe is opening Nov. 26. Sugar Bowl is opening Nov. 25.
- Sage Francis along with Good Samaritans will be at Whiskey Dicks in South Lake Tahoe on Dec. 27. Doors open at 9pm. Cost is \$20.
- Lake of the Sky Outfitters in South Lake Tahoe on Nov. 30 at 7pm is showing the documentary "Sherpa." The film is

about the avalanche in 2014 that claimed the lives of 16 Sherpas on Mt. Everest, and the tension between the guides and Sherpas that followed. It is free, but seating is limited. Call 530.541.1027.

• The deadline to apply for the Truckee North Lake Tahoe Leadership Program is Dec. 1. For more info, go **online**.

Less frenzied Black Friday as millennials stay in

By Rachel Abrams, New York Times

If you're in the retail business in the United States, you probably really care about these two things: millennials and Black Friday.

But more and more, these two big drivers of the industry don't mix inside stores – a dynamic that is reshaping one of the country's biggest shopping days.

Young people of all kinds, a coveted group for retailers because of their free-spending ways, are increasingly turning to their computers and phones to do their holiday shopping, spreading out more widely the days they open their wallets. Crowds on Friday, the unofficial kickoff of the holiday shopping season, will tilt older than a few years ago, and also, it appears, more cautious with their money.

Read the whole story