Explosion at S. Tahoe apartment lands man in jail on drug charges

By Kathryn Reed

A South Lake Tahoe man blew out the windows of his apartment when he was allegedly trying to extract THC from marijuana using butane.

Arrested the night of March 7 was Samuel Frangella, 22, on charges of drug manufacturing, possession of drug paraphernalia, arson and felony child endangerment. The latter charge is because the couple next door has small children and the law says in a manufacturing case it's not just the room, but the whole building that is considered the drug lab.

Jeff Catchings, commander of South Lake El Dorado Narcotics Enforcement Team, said Frangella is lucky not to have been burned. With the window of his unit at 1223 Bonanza Ave. being blown out, casting shards of glass at least 100 feet, it kept the flame from staying inside. The interior of the residence was not damaged much either, Catchings said.

Catchings said this is the equivalent of having a meth lab in the middle of town.

"Based on the amount of butane in room, he had enough in there to blow himself up," Catchings said.

The officer also said the suspect photographed himself extracting the THC.

The end result of such extractions is called honey oil because that's what it looks like. It can be used in food or smoked.

Catchings also said his job and SLEDNET as a whole will remain

intact through the end of this fiscal year with the use of drug forfeiture money. There was the threat the drug enforcement unit would have to disband starting this calendar year. It remains to be seen if SLEDNET will operate past June 30.

Vonn secures World Cup overall title; Mancuso 8th in GS contest

By USSA

ARE, Sweden – Olympic gold medalist Lindsey Vonn of Vail produced an inspired wire-to-wire giant slalom victory Friday to mathematically secure an American record fourth Audi FIS Alpine World Cup overall title. With five races remaining in the season, Vonn's insurmountable lead of 554 points boosts her point total to 1,808, the most in U.S. history. It also notched her 11th World Cup victory of the winter to tie her own single-season record she set in 2009.

She passes Phil Mahre in the record books as the only American to win four overall titles.

Vonn also usurps Croatian Janica Kostelic, Swiss Vreni Schneider and Austrian Petra Kronberger, who all won three overall cups during their careers.

Only Austria's Annemarie Moser-Proell has more overall World

Cup titles than Vonn with six.

It was the 15th World Cup title of her career and her third of the season (downhill, super combined already locked).

Julia Mancuso of Squaw Valley was eighth and Resi Stiegler of Jackson Hole 13th for three Americans in the top 15.

Porcupines a rare find in Sierra

By Alex Breitler, Stockton Record

It is one of the most recognizable creatures wandering our woods.

But in more than 50 years exploring the Sierra Nevada, Steve Stocking has spotted the squat, prickly porcupine perhaps three times.

“One was, maybe, 10 or 15 years ago. But I haven’t seen any recently,” said Stocking, an outdoor enthusiast who lives in San Andreas and volunteers at Calaveras Big Trees State Park.

The slow-moving rodent – once despised for snacking on valuable timber – is a rare find in the Sierra Nevada these days, according to an unscientific survey by a Twain Harte-based environmental group.

The group asked thousands of people to report porcupine sightings last year, across millions of acres of public and private land from Lake Tahoe to the southern Sierra.

Only 14 living porcupines were spotted waddling across roads

or clinging to trees.

Read the whole story

Avalanche beacon practice in Tahoe City

Tahoe Backcountry Women is a recently organized group of regional women who love to backcountry ski. The next gathering will be March 14 from 6:30-8:30pm at Alpenglow Sports in Tahoe City.

This event will be centered on informal avalanche beacon practice. Women of all ages and abilities are welcome to do some practice searches.

Bring a beacon, headlamp, and warm clothes.

For more information, call Alpenglow Sports at (530) 583.6917 or email whitney@alpenglowsports.com.

SAT workshop

This workshop will help to prepare students for the SAT/PSAT. With completion of the SAT Prep class, students will understand the format, pacing and content of the test and how to maximize test scores; study, practice and improve reading,

math, and grammar skills; learn and utilize proven test taking strategies.

When: April 15, 22 and 29 from 1 to 5pm.

Where: Lake Tahoe Community College, Room G5, South Lake Tahoe

Cost: $225

To register and for more information, go online.

K's Kitchen: Not your run of the mill taco

By Kathryn Reed

It wasn't until I started typing the recipe that I figured out why I had so many limes when Pam and Darla went home. I forgot to cut them into wedges and put them on the plate. Oops.



Luckily, that was on of those cooking oops that don't really matter. But I could see how an extra squeeze of lime would have been great on these tacos.

Another thing I learned in writing this is there is a lot of confusion about poblano and pasilla peppers on the Internet. I kept reading U.S. grocers confuse the two; when the truth is they are different chiles or peppers.

I'm completely confused and hope a reader can clarify the difference between a poblano and pasilla, as well as a chile

and pepper.

Neither Grocery Outlet nor Safeway in South Lake Tahoe had poblano. Safeway had a pasilla. I knew it looked like a poblano, but the produce gal clearly didn't know the difference.

Darla thought the dish was too spicy and kept swigging her beer to cool off her mouth. The rest of us were fine. My barometer is how Sue does with a dish – and she was fine. This meant Pam and I could have used a hair more kick. There are enough opportunities based on the ingredients to adjust the heat index.

The recipe comes from the November 2011 *Cooking Light* magazine.

Besides being so flavorful, it's easy to make. This was good, because after a day of skiing at Sierra, the last thing I wanted to do was come home and work up a sweat in the kitchen.

Mushroom, Corn, and Poblano Tacos

2 T olive oil, divided

1 (8 ounce) package mushrooms, sliced

1 C onion, chopped

1 tsp dried oregano

1 tsp garlic, minced

¾ tsp chili powder

¾ tsp ground cumin

1 poblano chile, chopped (abut ½ C)

1½ C frozen whole-kernel corn

1 (14.5 ounce) can no-salt added black beans, rinsed and

drained

¼ C salsa verde

1 T fresh lime juice

1 tsp hot sauce

½ tsp salt

8 (6-inch) corn tortillas

¾ C (3 ounces) crumbles queso fresco

¼ C chopped fresh cilantro

¼ C light sour cream

8 lime wedges

Heat a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add 1 tablespoon oil to pan; swirl to coat. Add mushrooms to pan; cook 4 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add remaining 1 tablespoon oil to mushrooms. Stir in onion and next 5 ingredients (through poblano); cook 4 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add corn and beans to pan; cook 4 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove pan from heat; stir in salsa and next 3 ingredients.

Heat tortillas according to package directions. Divide vegetable mixture evenly among tortillas. Top each tortilla with 1½ tablespoons cheese, 1½ teaspoons cilantro, and 1½ teaspoons sour cream. Serve with lime wedges.

Connecting to people starts with listening

By Mandy Kendall

I have to admit (in a very un-British way) to being very excited. We had the first meeting of the South Lake Tahoe Health Connective this week and, well, I thought it was great.

A group of like-minded natural health practitioners, passionate about their work, meeting to connect with each other and figure out ways to better serve their patients and the whole community. Personally, I don't think it gets any better than that.

So, making connections has been forefront in my mind this week and I decided to focus this week's piece on the aspect of life that we all deal with every day – connecting with people.



Mandy
Kendall

Some of the time it happens without us even being aware of it. We interact with family, friends and co-workers automatically. We know them, they know us and it's what we've done all our lives. Then there are occasions, like meeting someone for the first time, when we are very conscious of the act of connecting. Do we like them? Do they like us? What will they think of me? What do I think of them? Apparently, when we meet someone for the first time, we decide, fundamentally, whether we like them or not in about 3 seconds. Not much time to make

a good impression, is it?

So what do we do to make a good impression? Well, to be brutally honest, in general, human nature tends to lean us all toward the "what's in it for me?'" school of thought as we go through life. (I think it must be a survival thing.) We are not necessarily being selfish. It just seems to be the way people work.

So, how do we change that bias when making connections? How do we make sure we are making the best connections possible with the people who are right for us?

Here are my thoughts, and *Qwik-e* tips, on how to help make those connections special:

Listen – Just let someone talk and when they've stopped talking ask them something about themselves. See how long you can get them to talk without them being able to ask you anything about you. You might find out things about them you'd never known before.

Be interested – Once you've listened to what they have to say, let them know you've heard and understood them. Affirming what someone has just told you is a great way to let them know you care. If they return the interest, and ask you about yourself before you've had a chance to tell them, then you know you have a genuine connection on both sides. If they only talk about themselves, well at least you know how this relationship is likely to pan out.

Start slowly – Think of it as a bit like dating. No one really wants to reveal too much about themselves too quickly. (There's that survival thing again.) You start with small talk and move on to more intimate things as the relationship grows. After all, you would normally have a few dates before you get engaged. Ask someone what interests them, what makes them tick (this doesn't need to be with someone you've just met either, it's amazing what you can find out about the people you think

you know just by asking).

Make them feel special – Just taking the time to listen will make someone feel pretty special, but if you want to go the extra mile just tell them how much you've enjoyed talking with them, even if they haven't asked you a single question.

Be present – In today's fast-paced world it is easy to end up trying to do two or more things at once. But we all know how frustrating and, let's be honest, downright disrespectful it is if someone is half-listening to us while they are trying to do something else as well. If someone is important to you, then they deserve your full attention. If it's not possible to give them that at that moment, then be honest and say, "I'm sorry, I really want to hear what you've got to say but I have to (fill in the blank) right now. Can you give me 5 minutes and then you'll have my full attention?" Who could get upset at that?

Until we connect next time.

Mandy Kendall operates Health Connective in South Lake Tahoe. If you have any questions, feel free to drop me an email at healthconnective@gmail.com, visit us on Facebook, or keep an eye out on Lake Tahoe News for regular Qwik-e tips on how to make healthy changes one Quick and Easy step at a time.

Dream Spirit Baroque Band headlines on St. Paddy's Day

Dream Spirit Baroque Band will present a concert of Celtic

music in celebration of St. Patrick’s Day on March 17 from 7:30-9:30pm at the Toccata Center for the Performing Arts.

The band features a mix of instruments – violin, cello, guitar and mandolin.

The audience may sing-along to “Danny Boy” and “Whiskey in the Jar” or try the open mic with an Irish song.

Bring a dessert to share. Cover charge is $15.

The center is at 760 Mays Blvd., No. 10, Incline Village.

Opinion: S. Tahoe won’t survive without community’s support

By Claire Fortier

One of the critical issues continuously expressed by our citizens has been the condition of our town. “Rundown”, “second rate” and “blighted” are words often used in the same sentence as city of South Lake Tahoe. We love where we live, but we hate how we keep it.

That message was loud and clear in the city’s 2011 Citizen Survey we recently received. More than 70 percent of respondents said the appearance of our town was poor. More than 80 percent considered our roads the same way, poor or worse.



Claire Fortier

City Council has pledged to change this problem. On March 6, 2012, the City Council discussed a bond issuance that would allow us to start rebuilding our roads and cleaning up our town. The problem is how to pay for it.

A year ago, when City Council first considered a bond for capital improvement projects, specifically roads, the city's financial situation was bleak, but not dire. In that year, the city made some drastic and painful changes to live within its means. We reduced city staff, renegotiated employee benefits and took the city down to bare bones. We did so to ensure that the city was economically sustainable, not just this year but for years to come.

In the meantime, our sources of income in the last year took just as big of a beating as the businesses and residents of this town. That's because our key sources of revenue are directly linked to the success of our town and its citizens. We collect more transient occupancy tax when the town is hopping. We gain more real estate taxes when house are selling. And we collect more sales tax when people spend their money on the hill.

But now we are at a crossroads. The city has made about all the cuts it can without completely destroying service to its citizens. We cannot afford to borrow money to redo our roads or improve our recreational opportunities without the buy-in from the community.

In order to pay for the reinvestment bonds, the city proposed

four sources of revenue:

· Paid parking around our beaches.

· An increase in TOT on our hotels starting in 2014.

· A more equitable business tax.

· An amusement tax on recreational activities and rentals.

The income from those sources, while not enormous, would allow the city to pay for the bond that will generate $5 million a year toward our roads and infrastructure.

Community reaction on several of these topics has been divisive. The parking issue was met with a huge outcry. After a dismal winter, increasing the TOT on our financially strapped hotels simply doesn’t make sense. We are still hoping to achieve a more equitable business tax, which will be decided by voters in June.

But the bottom line is this. We cannot reinvest in the community without your help. In the end, it comes down to what does this town really wants and what are we willing to pay for to get what we want.

Claire Fortier is mayor of South Lake Tahoe.

$286 mil. – a record for lobbyists in California in

2011

By Patrick McGreevy, Los Angeles Times

SACRAMENTO — State Assemblyman Warren Furutani looked out over a sea of red — protesting oil industry workers wearing scarlet T-shirts — and saw trouble for his plan to raise $2.5 billion for universities with a tax on crude.

The Central Valley workers had packed a legislative hearing to oppose the idea. Their shirts said “Save Our Jobs” and oil companies had spent close to $5,000 to bus them to the Capitol from Bakersfield.

The bill died, one of many victories for an industry that paid $12 million to an army of lobbyists last year to do its bidding.

Businesses, unions and other interests set a record in 2011 for money spent lobbying the state: $286.6 million, a 6.8% increase from the year before, according to recent filings. That surprised even veteran Capitol watchers, who refer to the lobbying corps as the “Third House” because its power rivals that of the two houses of the Legislature.

Amid the state’s lingering economic slump and Sacramento’s persistent budget crisis, a record 2,768 entities hired lobbyists last year, many of them to fight for a slice of the shrinking public pie. Corporations sought an edge with a Democratic governor after seven years when a business-friendly Republican was in charge.

Read the whole story