# Find out about natural products to fill a medicine cabinet

Between beauty products and a vast array of over the counter drugs available, it can be a challenge to know how to chose what is good for you, not to mention potential side effects.

Give Your Medicine Cabinet a Makeover will introduce people to alternatives to synthetic and artificially processed drugs and beauty products.

The class is free. It will be taught by Rachel Jones, a licensed massage therapist, nutrition and wellness coach, and yoga instructor.

It is Feb. 25 from 10am-noon at the Lake Tahoe Wellness Center, 695 Wolf St., Kings Beach.

Space is limited. RSVP to Rachel Flower at (415) 827. 2623 or email rachel@senssoma.com.

---

# FBI not talking; SLT officer on leave without knowing why

**By Kathryn Reed**

It’s been more than three months since South Lake Tahoe police Officer Johnny Poland was stripped of his badge and gun. He

still doesn’t know why.

“There has been no reportable movement,” Police Chief Brian Uhler told *Lake Tahoe News*.

That means whatever is going on with the federal investigation is not being made public because later in the conversation Uhler said, “We are kept apprised as there are developments.”



Johnny Poland

Gina Swankie with the FBI office in Sacramento said, “I have nothing to offer you.” It’s normal for the FBI not to comment on any investigation until it is complete.

Poland told *Lake Tahoe News* no one has asked him a single question regarding the investigation in the entire time he has been on paid administrative leave.

“Officially they haven’t told me I’m under federal investigation,” Poland said. “They never said I was under investigation. They said it was a pending IA (internal affairs) investigation. I haven’t gotten an IA.”

For now, taxpayers in the city of South Lake Tahoe are paying for Poland to stay home, raise his kids, take them to school — do all those things a stay at home dad doesn’t usually get paid to do. His benefits have been fully funded as well since he was put on leave in mid-November.

“He is under federal criminal investigation. It would be inappropriate for him to continue to serve in a day-to-day capacity,” City Manager Tony O’Rourke told *Lake Tahoe News* in

November. “It doesn’t reflect any guilt. It reflects the process that needs to run its course so we can determine if there were any serious violations of the law.”

But it is still not public information what this peace officer is accused of.

The police department classifies this case as “conduct unbecoming”. This list gives a glimpse of the SLTPD investigations from 2009 until Poland was put on leave.

The city explains “internally” as any city employee may have complained about a police officer, not necessarily an officer against another police officer. “Externally” means any member of the public submitted a complaint about a police officer.

It’s also not known how much longer the investigation will go on.

The last time Poland had a run-in with superiors – not the feds – he was out of work for nearly three years. He had been fired in 2007, then won the wrongful termination case in 2009. The trouble began in November 2006 when Poland was accused of mishandling a lockdown situation at South Tahoe High School.

With Poland’s absence and the city’s desire to protect residents and visitors, it means the police department is spending beyond what is in the budget. Overtime is necessary at times to keep cops on the road.

Uhler said to keep paying Poland and have officers on the street, it might mean less is spent on equipment or other purchases.

If Poland is found guilty of whatever charges the investigation centers on, he would not have to pay back the money he collected in the time he is out. But by the same token, if no charges are brought against him or he is found not guilty, his reputation and the potential of him being

trusted by the public and his colleagues has been diminished just by the secretive investigation – possibly to the point of him not being able to return to work or being able to find work with another law enforcement agency.

Quitting would benefit the city. It would mean having Poland off the payroll. But it would not make the investigation go away. To date, the city has not tried to negotiate with Poland to get him to move on – no matter what happens with the federal investigation.

---

# Tahoe woman survives avalanche, 3 others die

**By Mike Dunham, Anchorage Daily News**

Elyse Saugstad of Squaw Valley was taking a break with several fellow skiers Sunday in the Washington state backcountry when the shouting began. “Elyse! Avalanche!”

The 33-year-old turned to see tons of snow boiling toward her.

“I pulled the trigger,” she said, inflating two air bags attached to her backpack. The device is meant to keep skiers and adventurers from disappearing beneath waves of snow in an avalanche.

It likely saved her life, said Saugstad, who was hurled half a mile down the slope.

“(It was) like being in a washing machine,” she said.

Saugstad came to a stop buried in densely packed snow. Only her face and hands were free.

“The snow was like cement,” said Saugstad, who worried a second avalanche might follow. Only later did she learn that the body of one her companions was buried a few away.

In all, the avalanche had swallowed three other skiers. Saugstad, a professional downhill skier who grew up in Girdwood, was the only one of the four wearing the air bag backpack – and the only one to emerge alive.

On Monday, the Dimond High graduate and prize-winning freestyle skier told the Daily News that she was in a group of eight experienced skiers who opted to descend through a backcountry section near the boundary of the Stevens Pass ski area northeast of Seattle. Another group of five followed them.

“We weren’t being idiots,” she said. “We understood the dangers and followed all the safety protocols. We went one at a time, moving section to section, ping-ponging our way down the hill.

“Several of us had stopped in a safety zone among some old growth trees,” she said.

Hundred-year-old trees are usually a good indicator that the area is avalanche-free.

“Unfortunately, the freak accident happened,” she said. “One of the skiers (above me) set off the avalanche.”

Saugstad managed to pull the lever to deploy the air bags as the snow hit. The ABS TwinBag backpack, made by a German company and available in Europe for the past 15 years, has two bags on either side connected to canisters of compressed nitrogen. In an emergency, the gas fills the pillow-shaped

bags, which act somewhat like water wings.

“The idea is that it’s keeping you up on the top of the avalanche,” Saugstad said.

She didn’t feel the bags inflate as the avalanche caught her, she said. “I wasn’t even sure they were deployed.”

She estimated that it was a Class 3 avalanche, which the Avalanche Center website says can destroy a small building and snap trees. Saugstad called it “huge.”

She came to a stop an estimated 2,000 feet or more from where she was first caught in the slide. Her face and her hands, wrapped in pink mittens, poked above the packed snow. The air bags formed a “cocoon” around her head and neck. Her feet were about five feet below the surface and she was unable to move.

“It’s very frightening,” she said. “I was trying to remain calm, but after a while I thought: ‘Hmm. Maybe I should scream for help.'”

Ten minutes after being swept away in the snow, the first rescuer reached her. At that point Saugstad wasn’t worried, except for the fear that a secondary avalanche – or even a third – might follow.

As the rescue continued, she realized how close she was to death. Literally.

“One victim was buried three feet to my left,” she said. “Another was 30 feet above me.”

The *Seattle Times* identified the dead skiers as Stevens Pass marketing director Chris Rudolph, Jim Jack, head judge for the Freeskiing World Tour, and John Brenan, a Leavenworth contractor.

# NHP officer hurt in traffic collision

A Nevada Highway Patrol officer was injured in a vehicle accident in Douglas County on Feb. 18.

Trooper Dan Lopez sustained minor injuries when the driver of another vehicle allegedly ran the red light at the intersection of highways 88 and 395 on Saturday at 5:19am.



An NHP trooper sustained minor injuries in the Feb. 18 accident. Photo/Provided

The right front of the errant driver's vehicle struck the left front portion of the patrol vehicle. The crash was investigated by Douglas County Sheriff's Department.

The driver of the vehicle, whose name has not been released, was arrested at the scene on charges of driving under the influence.

Lopez was treated and released from Carson Valley Medical Center.

*– Lake Tahoe News staff report*

---

# Darell G. Bricker – 1929-2012

Darell G. Bricker passed away at his home in Gardnerville on Feb. 15, 2012, in the loving arms of his wife after a long and courageous battle. He was 82.

Darell, a resident of Gardnerville since 1997, was born June 29, 1929, in Seymour, Mo., to Harvey and Mayme Bricker. He married Mary "Liz" Arnold on Sept. 30, 1950, in Carson City. They had two children: Ronald Gene and Debra Kathleen.

A celebration of life for Darell will be at 11am March 10 at the Carson Valley United Methodist Church, 1375 Centerville Lane, Gardnerville.



Darell G. Bricker

Darell joined the U.S. Navy in 1948 and served on board the USS Volador SS-490 for most of the four years he was in the military during the Korean War. After returning home, he soon went to work for the Federal Aviation Agency in air traffic, with duties stateside and ending with 15 years in Alaska. During his first few years with the FAA he also studied in pursuit of a degree in electronic engineering.

After retiring from FAA, he followed many paths. In Corvallis, Ore., Darell was known as Farmer DB. He loved tomatoes and grew as many as he could on his half acre of land. Next, in Manteca, he loved converting vehicles to run on propane. Then in Gardnerville, he took up sewing machine repair and very reluctantly stopped due to his ill health. He thoroughly enjoyed everything he set his mind to do.

Known by many names during his lifetime, Darell was a proud Son, Brother, Husband, Dad, Grandpa, Great Grandpa, Uncle and Friend. To know Darell was to love him. He had many friends near and far. He will be sorely missed by one and all.

Darell was preceded in death by son Ronald; parents Harvey and Mayme; and brothers Harold, Charles and Donald.

He is survived by his wife of 61 years Mary “Liz” of Gardnerville; daughter Debra (Tony) Howard of South Lake Tahoe; daughter-in-law Pam Bricker of Stateline; granddaughter Alicia (Gary) Miller of Santa Cruz; grandsons Bret Howard of San Francisco and Scott Bricker of South Lake Tahoe; great-granddaughters Corynn and Ashley Bricker of South Lake Tahoe and great-grandson Merrick Miller of Santa Cruz; sister Frances (George) Lowe of Sonora; sister-in-law Marty (Lloyd) Mitchell of Lodi.

Arrangements are in the care of Capital City Cremation. Memorial contributions can be made to the charity of your choice or the American Heart Association, Carson Valley United Methodist Church (where Darell was a member) or the Dialysis Clinic Inc. in Carson City or Gardnerville.

# Sheriff’s department takes over animal services in Washoe County

The Washoe County Sheriff’s Office is seeing a smooth transition as it assumes management of the county’s Regional Animal Services.

Sheriff Michael Haley says he is confident residents will benefit from increased collaboration and coordination of duties between Animal Control officers and law enforcement.

The Board of Commissioners approved moving Regional Animal Services to the sheriff’s office as an opportunity to align Washoe County with an emerging national trend to merge Animal Services with public safety agencies.

The sheriff’s office appointed former Washoe County Court Security Supervisor Barry Brode as regional animal services manager, replacing the previous manager who retired in December.

---

# North Shore adds events to annual 10-day SnowFest

North Lake Tahoe celebrates its long winter season with SnowFest, a 10-day carnival March 2-11 at a variety of venues.

New events for the 31st annual gathering have been added,

including the Snow Fiesta in Kings Beach with its mariachi bands, authentic Mexican food served a la carte and piñatas; the Snow “What” Building Contest, where contestants build their most creative snow display; the Truckee River Winery Ice Carving Extravaganza with ice sculptures and games; as well as the adults-only Paws & Claws Pub Crawl starting in Incline Village and ending at the historic Crystal Bay casino corridor.

The annual favorites are back, along with expanded special events, including the Opening Night Ceremonies, Laser Show, Torchlight Parade and Fireworks at Squaw Valley (March 2), which has partnered with World Champion medalist and former alpine ski racer Daron Rahlves. Rahlves and his Olympic buddies will officially kick off SnowFest with the Rahlves’ Banzai Tour at the Opening Night Ceremonies. The tour, scheduled for March 3-4, is a race that combines mountain freeride action with ski and boarder-cross strategy in a mad-dash race with stops at regional ski resorts with the winner taking home a significant cash prize.

Also scheduled for 2012 is the Mamasake Extreme Food Challenge for those with a strong stomach; 22nd annual Gar Woods Polar Bear Swim in Tahoe’s frigid waters; SnowFest Parades in Tahoe City and Kings Beach; Sunnyside Luau on the West Shore; the Great Ski Race, a 30-kilometer cross country race from Tahoe City to Truckee; Tahoe City’s Wacky Winter Human Bowling with snow saucers and inflatable pins and “Dog Pull”; the Dummy Downhill at Diamond Peak in Incline Village; the highly creative and 24th annual Snow Sculpture Contest at Tahoe City’s River Ranch Lodge; Special Olympics Polar Plunge at the Hyatt Regency Lake Tahoe; and the 4th annual Ta-Hoe Nalu Arctic Standup Paddleboard Race in Kings Beach.

For more information about SnowFest and a complete list of events, go online.

# Learn about the Tahoe Rim Trail

What is the Tahoe Rim Trail?

A free trail talk on Feb. 22 from 11:45am-1pm will explain what this trail around Lake Tahoe is. Meet other trail enthusiasts and learn about trail building, hiking and youth programs, as well as educational opportunities.

Register online for the free event.

Explore Tahoe is at 4114 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe, near Embassy Suites.

# Seminar in essential oils

Rachel Jones, a licensed massage therapist, is giving a talk on the clinical approach to essential oil application on Feb. 24.

The 11:30am-2:30pm event is at Lake Tahoe Wellness Center, 695 Wolf St, Kings Beach.

The free event is geared toward alternative health practitioners, massage therapists, yoga teachers, spa technicians or anyone who simply wishes to expand their skills

and knowledge in the use of essential oils.

Space is limited. RSVP to Rachel Flower at (415) 827.2623 or rachel@senssoma.com.

---

# School reformer urges California to change teacher tenure rules

**By Howard Blume, Los Angeles Times**

Former District of Columbia schools Chancellor Michelle A. Rhee urged a Los Angeles audience of educators and parents to pressure state leaders to change teacher tenure and seniority rules.

Her appearance Wednesday night before an enthusiastic crowd of about 600 marked the third of four appearances statewide for Rhee, who is attempting to build a base of influence in California.

Rhee's 1-year-old organization, StudentsFirst, has worked in other states with governors and powerful legislators but not in California, even though her organization is based in Sacramento.

In her remarks and a question-and-answer session, Rhee took on "last in, first out" rules that govern teacher layoffs. She characterized this approach as "incredibly detrimental to students and schools," because gifted, less-experienced teachers are put out of work while less effective teachers

with more seniority get to keep their jobs.

“California is one of the few states left that mandates in state law that layoffs happen this way,” Rhee said. “What we’re going to have to do is get politically active.”

She added a glancing reference to Gov. Jerry Brown and state Democratic leaders: “It’s clear we’re not going to get invited in,” she said. “Are you guys ready for this?”

**Read the whole story**