Freestyle skier Burke dies from injuries

By ESPN Action Sports

SALT LAKE CITY – Canadian freestyle skier Sarah Burke died Thursday, nine days after crashing at the bottom of the superpipe during a training run in Utah.

Burke, who lived near Whistler in British Columbia, was 29. She was injured Jan. 11 while training at a personal sponsor event at the Park City Mountain resort.

RoxyCanada's Sarah Burke, a pioneer in women's freeskiing, died Thursday from crash-related injuries.

Tests revealed Burke sustained "irreversible damage to her brain due to lack of oxygen and blood after cardiac arrest," according to a statement released by Burke's publicist.

A four-time Winter X Games champion, Burke crashed on the same halfpipe where snowboarder Kevin Pearce suffered a traumatic brain injury during a training accident on Dec. 31, 2009.

Read the whole story

El Dorado County farmers looking out for fish in nearby streams

By Carlos Alcalá, Sacramento Bee

El Dorado County is adopting Fish Friendly Farming.

The concept has nothing to do with trout farms or other aquaculture.

It’s about growing farm crops and raising cattle in ways that keep surrounding streams and rivers clean.

El Dorado County farmers, the local resource conservation districts and a Napa-based nonprofit have banded together to establish a program in the foothills that – until now – had mostly been used near the wine-growing areas of Napa, Sonoma and Mendocino.

“We saw what they were doing down there,” said Mark Egbert, manager of the El Dorado County and Georgetown Divide Resource Management Districts.

It looked, he said, like a “perfect fit” for El Dorado County.

Read the whole story

Lack of snow alters boarder-skier cross competitions in Tahoe

The USASA boardercross/skiercross competition scheduled for Sierra-at-Tahoe for Jan. 22 has been canceled even though snow is in the forecast.

There are three more BX/SX events scheduled for season, with the best two results counting for nationals. On Jan. 27 is a combo slalom/GS at Heavenly, followed by slopestyle at Sierra

on Jan. 28 and boardercross/skiercross at Kirkwood Jan. 29.

For more information, go online or email ca@usasa.org.

Skier dies at Heavenly after hitting sign

By Kathryn Reed

A 34-year-old man from England died at Heavenly Mountain Resort on Tuesday after running into a sign.

“He was probably skiing faster than he should have and tried to avoid a skier and left the run and the hit marker,” El Dorado County sheriff’s Lt. Les Lovell told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Christopher Michael Perring was pronounced dead at the scene at 3:40pm Jan. 17.

While the incident occurred on the Nevada side of the ski resort near the Tamarack run, the landing zone for the Calstar helicopter is on the California side so it became an El Dorado County Sheriff’s Department case.

A spokesperson for Heavenly was not immediately available.

“Skiing unfortunately is sometimes an inherently dangerous sport,” Lovell said. “Unfortunately, there is not enough snow on the mountain to spread everyone out.”

Although an autopsy is pending, Lovell said blunt force trauma is the likely cause of death.

This is the second outdoor accident involving a resident from the United Kingdom in less than a week. Michael Machell, 23,

fell to his death while ice climbing at Cascade Falls. It is not believed the two men knew each other.

High school sports realignment won’t change postseason

By Chris Gabel, Reno Gazette-Journal

Discussions of fairly radical changes to postseason tournament formats were brief and, in the end, an NIAA subcommittee elected to recommend the status quo going forward.

With next year’s realignment dramatically altering the landscape, reassessing the structure of region and state tournaments and meets had to happen. The committee, which gathered at the NIAA offices in Reno on Wednesday, discussed awarding first-round byes in region tournaments to league champions.

“It would be a reward for winning your league,” said Ron McNutt, Northern 4A commissioner.

But the committee chose to remain consistent, and recommended future tournaments continue to be structured in multiples of four teams.

“The committee did its homework,” said Donnie Nelson, NIAA assistant director. “They listened to athletic directors and administrators but also to coaches. And these recommendations reflect those comments.”

Read the whole story

Cal student dies in climbing accident at Cascade Falls

By Steven Bell, Westmorland Gazette

A former mountain rescue volunteer plunged 150 feet to his death Saturday at one of the world’s most popular climbing destinations in Lake Tahoe.

Outdoor loving Michael Machell, 23, fell at Cascade Falls after slipping while preparing for an ice-climbing trip with friends.

Greg Almos, El Dorado County deputy sheriff, said: “The way it was described to us, he was at the top preparing to set some anchors and slipped on ice.”

A spokesman for El Dorado County Search and Rescue said although there had not been significant snowfall in the region, there had been a lot of ice in rural areas like Cascade Falls.

Machell was an experienced climber who had helped save lives in the Lake District of England, completing 170 rescues with the Langdale and Ambleside Mountain Rescue Team (LAMRT).

He graduated from the University of Cumbria last year with a

first class honors degree in outdoor professional practice and was in the U.S. to study for a year at UC Berkeley.

LAMRT team leader and friend Nick Owen said Machell "absolutely lived for the mountains".

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

• Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce members raised more than $2,000 for Christmas Cheer at the Jan. 12 mixer at Riva Grill.

• Shannon Beets has been promoted to executive vice president and provost of Sierra Nevada College. Beets had been VP of Institutional Effectiveness.

• South Tahoe Public Utility District is having a board workshop about water rates on Jan. 24 from noon-2pm at the district office, 1275 Meadow Crest Drive, South Lake Tahoe.

• Lake Tahoe is listed by the *New York Times* as one of the top 45 places to visit in 2012.

• Placer County Board of Supervisors chose Jennifer Montgomery to serve as chair and Jim Holmes to be vice chair for this year.

Artist wins round 1 against S. Tahoe for taking his possessions

By Kathryn Reed

If a picture is worth a thousand words, what are an artist's tools worth?

South Lake Tahoe officials may soon have to answer that question.

Artist Peter Darvas won his appeal before the South Lake Tahoe City Council this week – meaning he won't have to pay the $3,437.50 abatement fine. But now he wants the city to pay for the items officers took from his backyard and subsequently destroyed without his knowing this was going to happen.



Peter Darvas

After the Jan. 17 meeting, Darvas told *Lake Tahoe News* he never saw a list from the city of the items it wanted cleaned up. And he did not receive a certified letter until the abatement was over.

"They looted the entire place," Darvas said.

Darvas contends the 6-foot cedar fence surrounding his property in the 3100 block of Pioneer Trail is not visible from the street. The city says otherwise.

Because of a complaint, which has not been made public, and the problem originating in 2009, the city decided it was time to take action.

Community Service Officer Bob Albertazzi told the council he sent registered letters and posted a letter at Darvas' residence to no avail. City code allowed him to hire a contractor to remove the materials from Darvas' property even though they were behind a fence. Albertazzi told the council some of what was hauled off was up to his discretion. For instance, a cabinet was left, but the materials spilling out were removed.

Darvas contends much of the mess in the yard was for his artwork as well as for the shows he puts on in the South Shore – things like cement for sculpting and canopies for festivals.

He admits things were a mess and some of the items needed to be hauled off. He told *Lake Tahoe News* the appliances the city disposed of were on a trailer ready for the dump.

The council in its 3-1 vote siding with Darvas on Tuesday had concerns that he never received any of the notifications about the abatement proceedings as well as the paperwork was for one parcel number when he owns two adjoining lots. The second lot is where the items were located. Mayor Claire Fortier was the dissenting vote and Councilman Hal Cole recused himself because he lives within 300 feet of Darvas' property.

Darvas has hired an attorney and told *Lake Tahoe News* he intends to pursue a civil complaint against the city for compensation for the goods that were confiscated. He would not put an exact dollar amount on what was taken, but said it is well into six figures.

In situations like this the city cleans up a lot and destroys all goods taken so it's not a matter of being able to give anything back to Darvas.

Scientists to study climate change and the Truckee River

By Jeff Delong, Reno Gazette-Journal

Scientists are beginning new research into how a warming climate could affect water supplies and flooding along the Truckee River, the waterway that serves as one of the region's central natural features and the source of most of its water.

The $1.7 million study by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation is part of a larger effort examining eight rivers across the West, with California's Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers among them.

The goal is to get an early idea of what costly changes might be associated with climate change when it comes to the vital issue of water supplies and flooding along major river basins in the western United States, officials said.

"The goal is to look into the future so we can be prepared for it," said Mary Johannis, deputy planning officer for the Bureau of Reclamation in Sacramento.

Authorized by Congress in 2009 under the Secure Water Act, the study would build on information collected through a risk assessment released last year that examined potential impacts from climate change.

Read the whole story

Families envision memorial wall for fallen soldiers

By Frank X. Mullen Jr., Reno Gazette-Journal

Families of military members killed in the war on terror have proposed a wall memorial in Carson City to honor all Nevadans who have fallen in battle since the Civil War.

“The freedom we have today, they have given us,” said Roger Varela of Fernley, founder of Gold Star Families of Nevada Nationals Inc. “We don’t want them to ever be forgotten.”

Varela’s son, Army Pfc. Alejandro Varela, 19, died in Iraq on May 17, 2007. Varela said the idea for a memorial in Nevada’s capital came from Sgt. Brad Williams of the South Lake Tahoe Police Department.

Williams’ son, Army Pfc. Phillip Brandon Williams, 21, was killed by a sniper in Iraq while protecting other soldiers who were dismantling a roadside bomb. The Gardnerville man died Oct. 9, 2006.

“Roger and I were at the dedication of a memorial in Hawthorne six months ago and we wondered why there isn’t one in the capital,” Williams said. “It just took off from there.”

Both men stressed that the memorial is subject to the state’s approval process and isn’t a sure thing. They said plans are progressing, and several contributors have said they will donate some of the $500,000 needed to build the wall.

Read the whole story