CHP collecting turkeys to help South Shore residents

Officers from the California Highway Patrol's Meyers' office will be collecting turkeys on Nov. 19 in front of the Safeway Store at 1020 Johnson Blvd. from 10am-4pm.

As the turkeys are donated, they will be "stuffed" in a patrol vehicle. The donated turkeys will then be given to the South Lake Tahoe Women's Center and the Sierra Community Church Hot Meal Program.

"There's a definite need in our community to provide the services that these organizations provide. We're excited to raise awareness for them and help them provide for the members of our community that truly need it. We're hoping that everyone can come out and support them by donating a turkey," CHP Officer Jeff Gartner said in a press release.

Sierra foothills celebrate mandarin harvest

By Jeff Pelline, Sacramento Bee

When it comes to finding farm-fresh citrus, most people think of Florida or California's San Joaquin Valley. But the Sierra foothills are home to the crème de la crème of citrus: the mountain mandarin.

The mandarin is a true citrus experience. It has a sweet and tangy scent, is seedless, convenient to eat and healthy. No utensils are needed as you peel back the rind to reveal a

fruit that Mother Nature has split into even segments. None of the juice squirts all over you, either.

Mountain mandarins (a variety known as Owari Satsuma) are one of the "super" foods – very high in vitamin C. They also contain significant amounts of synephrine, a natural product that can help relieve cold symptoms.

"Mountain mandarins are a unique crop that combines delicious flavor with easy peeling," says Josh Huntsinger, Placer County's agricultural commissioner. "Their higher-elevation growing conditions contribute to a level of flavor and sweetness that can't be matched by Valley-grown fruit."

The dozens of orchards in Placer County – first planted in the 1880s by Welsh settlers – are spread throughout rural Auburn, Newcastle, Penryn, Loomis and Lincoln. More than 30 growers in the county form the Mountain Mandarin Growers' Association. During harvest season, you can visit their orchards, buy a bag of freshly picked mandarins and meet the farmers.

Read the whole story

Sex offender in custody; attorney fighting for release

By Kathryn Reed

Joseph Scanio was taken into custody today after a court hearing in U.S. District Court in Sacramento.

Judge Morrison C. England Jr. ruled at the status conference that the South Lake Tahoe man is "a danger to the public."

However, Scanio's attorney, Assistant Federal Defender Timothy Zindel, told *Lake Tahoe News*, "This 63-year-old man is unfairly labeled as some sort of predator. I don't think I've worked harder on anything than this."



Joseph Scanio

Zindel is working on an objection to the Nov. 17 ruling.

A decision about Scanio's future is expected Dec. 1. He faces three to nine months in prison if found guilty of the probation violations.

Zindel said the problem is the probation department is not presenting all of the facts, including Scanio passing a polygraph and that the FBI in a forensics test of the computers seized from the Scanio residence turned up zero pornographic material.

Zindel makes the point that sex offenders come in different categories. He is adamant Scanio is not a threat to society.

"Psychologists' reports confirm he is not a pedophile," Zindel said.

Scanio keeps having run-ins with the law that all stem from his guilty plea in October 2006 to possession of child pornography. He was released from prison in February 2010.

Scanio, who lives with his wife and young daughter in South Lake Tahoe, is a registered sex offender on federal probation. Right now he is in Sacramento County Jail until the judge makes a final ruling.

He was arrested this past May 26 on a federal warrant for violating terms of his supervised released. The U.S. Attorneys Office has filed nine counts against Scanio.

Zindel labels them as technical complaints.

Some of the current charges also deal with having been convicted Aug. 4 in El Dorado County Superior Court on local charges of being in an area where registered sex offenders are not allowed.

South Lake Tahoe has a local ordinance that prohibits any sex offender from being at the recreation center/ice rink even if his/her child is there. Even though Scanio had been going to watch his daughter skate since his release, it was not until earlier this year that law enforcement went after him.

Zindel said because the judge did not allow testimony in that case it could be appealed.

Current charges also deal with the use of a computer without permission from his probation officer, not presenting truthful monthly reports to the probation officer, associating with a felon without permission, and contact with children under 18 without approval.

The latter, according to Zindel, was a party for the skating coach where adults and children were present. The association with the felons was writing to inmates about non-sexual, non-pornographic subjects under the assumption the prison was reading the letters and without the knowledge it was illegal to send them, Zindel said.

Lucky Baldwin's legacy extends throughout the state

By Brenda Gazzar, San Gabriel Valley

ARCADIA – More than a century after his death, a descendant of Arcadia founder Elias J. "Lucky" Baldwin hopes to commission and donate a larger-than-life bronze statue of the colorful businessman to the city for public display.

Baldwin's great, great, great granddaughter Margaux Viera of Pasadena wants to donate a statue of the prominent investor and racetrack founder to the city as a tribute to his life and significance to Arcadia history.

The City Council, which is scheduled to consider the issue tonight, must agree to provide a location for the proposed statue, purchase a pedestal and provide any electrical, lighting and landscaping deemed appropriate.

"I think it's long overdue," Viera, 34, said. "He was the founder of that area – the land extended farther than Arcadia. He really made Arcadia what it is today. He's the first mayor (of the city) as well … A lot of the young generation might know his name but they might not know of everything he's done for that immediate area and for all of California."

Mayor Gary Kovacic, who was recently approached by Viera about the matter, said he thought the proposed statue and its proposed location at the rose garden adjacent to Arcadia Community Center were wonderful ideas.

Baldwin "played obviously a significant role in our (city's) creation and development; he was a historical figure," Kovacic said. "I think it's important to recognize and honor our history."

The city currently has a statue of a World War I soldier at Arcadia County Park and a statue of the family of Hugo Reid, one of the area's earliest settlers deeded the land by the Spanish government, at the Arcadia Historical Museum. A Lucky Baldwin statue, he said, would serve to complement the Reid statue as far as significant historic figures in town, Kovacic said.

Read the whole story

California transitioning kindergarten age requirement

By Diana Lambert, Sacramento Bee

Preet Sandhu wasn't surprised to learn last week that her daughter Kirat wasn't eligible for kindergarten. Elk Grove Unified staff had done a good job of getting the word out.

Sandhu's daughter turns 5 on Nov. 5, 2012 – and a new law requires that kids be age 5 by Nov. 1 to enroll in kindergarten next school year. Currently, California children could enroll in kindergarten if they turned 5 by Dec. 2.

The new law changing the age requirement for kindergartners is being phased in over three years. In the fall of 2013, children must be age 5 by Oct. 1. In the fall of 2014, students must turn 5 by Sept. 1.

So what happens to these kids with later birthdays?

The law that changed the age requirement also called for a new grade level – transitional kindergarten, or TK.

Read the whole story

Congress: Tomato paste on school pizzas counts as a veggie

By Mary Clare Jalonick, Huffington Post

WASHINGTON – Congress wants to keep pizza and French fries on school lunch lines, fighting back against an Obama administration proposal to make school lunches healthier.

The final version of a spending bill released late Monday would unravel school lunch standards the Agriculture Department proposed earlier this year, which included limiting the use of potatoes on the lunch line and delaying limits on sodium and delaying a requirement to boost whole grains.

The bill also would allow tomato paste on pizzas to be counted as a vegetable, as it is now. USDA had wanted to prevent that.

Food companies that produce frozen pizzas for schools, the salt industry and potato growers requested the changes, and some conservatives in Congress say the federal government shouldn't be telling children what to eat.

Republicans on the House Appropriations Committee said the changes would "prevent overly burdensome and costly regulations and to provide greater flexibility for local school districts to improve the nutritional quality of meals."

School districts had said some of the USDA requirements went too far and cost too much when budgets are extremely tight.

Schools have long taken broad instructions from the government on what they can serve in federally subsidized meals that are served free or at reduced price to low-income children. But some schools have balked at government attempts to tell them exactly what foods they can't serve.

Reacting to that criticism, House Republicans had urged USDA to completely rewrite the standards in their version of the bill passed in June. The Senate last month voted to block the potato limits in their version. Neither version included the language on tomato paste, sodium or whole grains, which was added by House-Senate negotiators on the bill.

Read the whole story

Beer & Food Festival

It's being billed as a Beer & Food Festival – the combination of six Lagunita's Brewing Company specialty beers paired with food from Dragonfly.

The Dec. 1 event is from 6 to 9pm at the Truckee restaurant. Attendees can stop in anytime during the evening and roam the food and beer stations. Cost is $32.

Beer & Food Fest participants will have a chance to meet the people from the brewery and taste two of Lagunita's limited specialty beers.

To make reservation or for more info, call (530) 587.0557.

Dragonfly is located upstairs at 10118 Donner Pass Road.

Lake Tahoe forecast – brrrrrrrrrrr

Snowflakes. That's what the National Weather Service in Reno's graphic shows for the Lake Tahoe area for tonight through Sunday.

High winds will be associated with the storm that will start to move in this afternoon. A high wind advisory has been issued for Lake Tahoe from 2pm Thursday through 4am Friday. By Friday morning, waves could be as high as 5 feet.



Ice earlier this month near the edge of Lake Tahoe. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Temperatures will drop 15-20 degrees below normal for the weekend. The overnight low Friday in South Tahoe is expected to be 13 degrees. It won't warm up much Saturday, with the high expected to be 27 degrees.

Not a ton of snow is associated with the cold front blowing in from Alaska – just a few inches each day – but the white stuff is expected to hit the Carson Valley-Reno areas.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Angora area prescribed burn to be reactivated

U.S. Forest Service fuels management crews are scheduled to resume prescribed fire operations in the Angora area today.

Fuels reduction crews are expected to conduct operations on a total of approximately 40 acres near Mule Deer Circle. Operations may continue through the week.

Residents and visitors can expect to see smoke from this prescribed fire project area. Smoke may be visible on Lake Tahoe Boulevard.

The Forest Service strives to minimize the impacts of smoke on local communities. Smoke-sensitive residents should consider staying indoors and keeping doors, windows and outside vents closed.

To directly receive prescribed fire updates, send an email to pa_ltbmu@fs.fed.us. Forest Service staff will post road signs around areas affected by prescribed fire, and update the local fire information line at (530) 543.2600, ext. 6.

Synthetic drugs becoming prevalent in South Lake Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

Epidemic is the word South Lake Tahoe police Officer Rebecca Inman used to describe bath salts and Spice.

These are not substances to be used in the bathtub or kitchen. Instead, they are manufactured drugs that are legal to possess or use in California and Nevada. On Jan. 1 they will be illegal to sell in California.



Inman gave a report to the South Lake Tahoe City Council on Nov. 15 about these drugs that she said are being widely used by students at South Tahoe High School.

Spice is a brand name for a synthetic cannabinoid. Cannabinoids have similar effects of THC, the main compound in marijuana.

With the makers of these drugs continuously changing the chemical components, it's hard for lawmakers to write laws fast enough to keep up with what's on the market. What makes it legal to sell is the packaging says "not for human consumption". They both go by several different names.

What Inman stressed is users and parents don't understand how addictive these drugs are and the damage they can do.

"They are consuming something where they don't know what the full experience will be," Inman said. The length of the high is unpredictable.

It's what is sprayed on to the "herbs" inside the Spice

package that is so addictive.

“We got a call the other day where a brother bit a hole in his brother’s ear. He was high on Spice,” Inman said.

Bath salts, though, are even worse, according to Inman. Cathinone chemicals attack the central nervous system in similar ways to methamphetamines and cocaine.

Inman said youths like to snort the salts. But it comes in capsules and pill form, too. Injection is another option.

Spice and bath salts can be found at gas stations, convenience stores, head shops and the Internet.

“We have documented cases of crimes in our city where the suspects have been under the influence of Spice. Our juvenile population has found it easier to buy and use Spice and bath salts than alcohol and marijuana,” Inman said in her PowerPoint.

Rich Barna, executive director for Tahoe Turning Point, said a test has been developed to see if someone is using Spice or bath salts. Cost is the problem – $120 per test for Spice, $30 for bath salts. (Tahoe Turning Point is a private, nonprofit agency that provides group care and residential treatment for boys ages 12-18.)

Barna said he’s made it a personal mission to get these drugs out of town. Barna said Germany has banned the import of the drugs, while the state of Georgia is considering doing the same.

“With bath salts it’s almost an instant physical deterioration. It’s worse than meth,” Barna said. “It will bruise and burn the veins it’s injected into.”

The council, with Claire Fortier at a TRPA meeting, agreed to have City Attorney Patrick Enright look at what the city could do to ban Spice and bath salts from being sold, possessed and

used in the city limits. A letter will be written to Gov. Jerry Brown asking him to make possession a state crime. The League of California Cities will also be asked to weigh in on the issue.