Officers investigating possible homicide in South Lake Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe police officers are investigating the death of a 52-year-old man as a possible homicide.



Officers said they were called by the dead man's roommate to their residence in the 3700 block of Forest Avenue at 3:15 Monday morning because the victim was not breathing and had sustained a head trauma.

Names are not being released of either man. The 55-year-old surviving roommate is being questioned, but had not been arrested as of noon July 25..

"At this point and time we are covering all of our bases," Police Chief Brian Uhler told *Lake Tahoe News*. With the roommate being the reporting party and the last person to see the victim alive, officers have a lot of questions for him.

An exact cause of death has not been determined by the medical examiner.

Uhler would not say if a weapon had been recovered. A search warrant was expected to be secured today so officers could further search the residence.

Uhler only characterized the men's relationship as roommates. The house on Forest is one-bedroom, and 416 square feet. Another person lives on site, but not in the same building.

U.S. students lack basic geography knowledge

By Valerie Strauss, Washington Post

Newly released geography scores from the 2010 National Assessment of Educational Progress show that fewer than one-third of the nation's fourth, eighth and 12th graders were proficient in the subject.

On the following seemingly easy question, only 33 percent of eighth-grade students who took the test got the correct answer:

Which of the following is an accurate statement about the American Southwest?

a) Alternating areas of dense shrubbery and sand dunes often make travel difficult.

b) Arid conditions make access to water an important public issue.

c) Generally fair weather means that most people rely on solar energy in their homes and businesses.

d) Easy access to Mexico has led to a strong manufacturing sector.

The correct answer is B.

And 33 percent of eighth graders indicated they had no understanding of the relationship between tectonic plates and earthquakes.

NAEP, administered to nationally representative samples of

students by the National Center for Education Statistics of the U.S. Department of Education, is sometimes referred to as the nation's report card because it is the only K-12 assessment system given across the country. The 2010 assessment in geography was given to 7,000 fourth graders, 9,500 eighth graders and 10,000 twelfth graders.

Recently released scores on NAEP tests in civics and U.S. history, together with the geography results, generally show disappointing performance in the social sciences, particularly in the 12th grade.

Read the whole story

Flying 5K and Kids Fun Run

Calstar's 6th annual Flying 5K and Kids Fun Run is Aug. 27 at 8:30am.

The 5K course starts on the runway, crosses a stream and goes off road onto trails.

Click on the flyer for more information.

Library book sale

There will be a book sale at the South Lake Tahoe library on Rufus Allen Boulevard on July 30.

Doors open to Friends of the Library at 9am and to the general

public at 10am. The sale ends at 3pm.

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe

Cujo is an older Chihuahua-rat terrier mix. He thinks he weighs 100 pounds, which sometimes can get him into trouble. But he is very affectionate, he likes children and other dogs and didn't chase the cats that he met at the shelter.



Cujo is neutered, microchipped, and vaccinated. He is at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many other dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes.

Call (530) 573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet.

For spay-neuter assistance for South Tahoe residents, go online.

– Karen Kuentz

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Lake Tahoe Community College is conducting a survey to see what people want in community education.

• Ed Gurowitz, a management and organizational consultant from Incline Village, has been hired as the TRPA's interim chief operating officer. He will be responsible for implementing the strategic plan adopted last year.

• Local author Kim Gayner will be signing and discussing her book "Reality 101: A Must Have Guide to Life & Life Skills Survival Manual" at Ski Run Marina in South Lake Tahoe on July 27 at 6pm. This is part of the Midweek at the Marina events each Wednesday. The event is free.

• A biomass facility will not be built at Kings Beach. TRPA Executive Director Joanne Marchetta talks about it in her report to the board for the July 27 meeting.

• Cleveland Cavaliers General Manager Chris Grant – a 1990 South Tahoe High grad – will be giving a talk to area youth July 28 at 9:30am in the theater at Lake Tahoe Community College.

Opinion: Expensive gas will drive alternative energy

exploration

By Robert F. Brands

Long lines at the gas pump weren’t the only product of the twin energy crises of the 1970s. A legislative push toward energy conservation and innovation were also born as a result.

And that’s why I believe the skyrocketing price of oil will do the same in 2011.

History has proven that innovation in the energy industry has almost always been driven by high consumer prices. When we had cheap and abundant oil – and low gas prices – during the 1980s, energy exploration and innovation slowed to a halt. We didn’t need it, and we didn’t see an end in sight to the steady stream of oil from the Middle East. So, investors held back funds for new technologies, oil companies stood pat and conservation became a four-letter word.

According to the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory for the U.S. Department of Energy, more than $172 billion of government money was spent on new energy technology between 1961 and 2008, with the bulk of it being used during the 1970s. In the 1980s, the spending accounted for only 1 percent of all federal investment.

I believe oil companies, besieged by Congress over taking huge tax breaks amid record profit reports, could earn some much needed political points by taking history’s cue and putting some of that money back into energy innovations.

When you look at the broad spectrum of what the oil companies are making and compare it to the rate of innovation in alternative energy, it’s like comparing Mount Kilimanjaro to a grape. Now, most consumers aren’t aware of that truth, because oil companies and ad agencies are very good at making it look like alternative energy is humming along when it’s not. While

consumers may not connect those dots, they are very aware of the headlines that show record oil company profits combined with massive tax breaks – especially during a time when federal deficits are threatening them, their children and their children's children. Today's energy innovation is a fraction of the total and what should be spend. What's more, the same old song and dance the oil companies offer with regard to touring how much of a percentage their research and development expenditures are as compared to revenue is a joke, and absolutely no guarantee of success.

I want oil companies to spark innovation not only because of the positive press it will net, but also because it's the right thing to do.

The truth is that many scientists are beginning to calculate an end to the fossil fuel era, because one day, we will run out. Innovation in this area has been driven by high prices and it has been driven by shortages. When we begin to run out, we'll experience both, and it will be too late to innovate. We need to do it now, when our resources to commit to it are abundant.

Robert F. Brands is a veteran of companies like GTE, Kohler and Rexam, is president and founder of InnovationCoach.com.

Youth art contest part of environmental summit

The Tahoe Fund is hosting a Youth Art Contest in conjunction with the 15th annual Lake Tahoe Summit on Aug. 16 at Homewood Mountain Resort. The theme of the art contest for youth 18 and under is What I love most about life at Lake Tahoe.

Prizes will be awarded to the winning entrants in three categories: painting-drawing, photography and poetry.

Entries are being accepted through Aug. 10 at:

* South Lake Tahoe Public Library, 1000 Rufus Allen Blvd. (530) 573.3185

* Incline Village Public Library, 845 Alder Ave. (775) 832.4130

* Tahoe City Public Library, 740 North Lake Blvd. (530) 583.3382

* Arts for the Schools, 10046 Church St., Truckee (530) 582.8278

Artwork will be displayed at the Lake Tahoe Summit, where winners of the contest will be announced. All artwork should be labeled with the youth's name, address, age and contact information.

Fire departments adopt universal code for better communication

Nine fire agencies from four Nevada counties and one California county have agreed to adopt and implement a standardized apparatus and station identification system.

Fire agencies from Douglas, Carson, Lyon, and Storey counties in Nevada, and Alpine County in California, will be implementing the system starting Oct. 1. Chiefs from the

participating agencies realized the value of having one system for the numbering of fire stations and apparatus, even though they are all dispatched from separate dispatch centers.

Currently each agency has its own numbering system, creating conflicts with duplicated apparatus and personnel numbering on incidents where regional support and cooperation is essential. Carson City Fire Chief Stacey Giomi developed the system, which provides each agency with a master number as the primary agency identifier. Other numbers identify the apparatus and personnel.

The group also agreed on common apparatus terminology, whereby apparatus of the same type will be referred to with the same name for that type. Currently, the regional agencies have three terms to identify an ambulance. Under the new system, an ambulance is now known as a "rescue" in all participating jurisdictions.

Fire Chief Tod Carlini from the East Fork Fire and Paramedic Districts in Douglas County said in a statement, "While this may seem like a simple step to take, it breaks with what we have been doing for at least the past 30-plus years I have been in the fire service. With the current state of our economy, moving in a direction which attempts to maximize our efforts and funding on a regional basis makes sense."

The agencies participating include:

Douglas County:

East Fork Fire and Paramedic Districts

Tahoe-Douglas Fire Protection District

Carson City

Carson City Fire Department

Lyon County

Central Lyon County Fire Protection District

Mason Valley Fire Protection District

North Lyon County Fire Protection District

Smith Valley Fire Protection District

Storey County

Storey County Fire Department

Alpine County

Eastern Alpine County Fire Department.

‘Twelfth Night’ delights audience on shore of Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

INCLINE VILLAGE – Twins have a penchant for playing trickery on unsuspecting soles.

In “Twelfth Night” the confusion is not the intentional making of Sebastian and Viola. They don’t even know the other is alive. And to confuse things, Viola is passing herself off as a man.

Such are the mischievous musings of William Shakespeare in one of his more renowned comedic plays.

In its 39th season, the Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival is bringing “Twelfth Night” to the stage at Sand Harbor Tuesday-Sunday through Aug. 21.



Olivia, left, does not realize Cesario is really Viola in men's clothing. Photos/Kathryn Reed

After a year without Shakespeare, the Barb is back at this outdoor stage on the shore of Lake Tahoe.

This is probably the best outdoor theater in the basin. The rocky ridge above is majestic, though no mountain bikers can be seen on the Flume Trail from this vantage point. Plenty of people are still on the beach when the doors open and before the 7:30pm performance begins.

It’s a particularly warm night for Tahoe, though many are prepared with blankets on the back of chairs.

This production was particularly good because of the strong projection of voices by the entire cast. Shakespeare can be difficult enough at times to follow that when actors’ voices are meek or muffled, the audience can be left wishing for Cliffs Notes. This definitely was not the case two nights ago.

The cast is delightful, the story captivating and the setting exquisite.

Laura Welsh Berg is engaging in her role as Viola/Cesario, as is Carie Kawa as Olivia.

While love is an overriding theme is so many of Shakespeare's plays, there always has to be a twist. "Twelfth Night" does not disappoint in this realm.

Some of the humor is adult in nature, but would likely go over the head of the younger ones in attendance.

The only disappointment Saturday night was the attendance. In years past there was not a speck of sand to be found to put a chair on. Not so now. But those who filled the seats were appreciative of the superb acting.



"Twelfth Night" runs through Aug. 21.

No longer do people have to bring their chairs. Beach chairs are set up – something that has been going on for a few years to maximize the space.

Gone this year are the added fees on tickets. The price ranges from $15 to $85. The most expensive – the ones closest to the stage – have more comfortable chairs and come with wait service for dinner.

Many people bring coolers full of food and libations, though an array of food choices is available.

One woman from Pasadena, at the festival for the first time, bought the cookbook "Shakespeare's Kitchen" to take home.

On Mondays the stage is not dark, but instead the theater has

various offerings from the Sierra Nevada Ballet tonight to Chautauqua to musical groups.

More information about Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival is online.