Snowboarder missing in backcountry near Castle Peak

By KCRA-TV

Rescue crews are searching for a 25-year-old snowboarder who was riding in the backcountry Monday afternoon when he vanished.

The man might have gotten disoriented in the snowstorm, officials said.

Search teams are looking for the snowboarder in the Castle Peak area, across Interstate 80 from Boreal Mountain Resort, according to the Nevada County Sheriff’s Department.

Read the whole story

Lawmakers want Californians to keep saying ‘no’

By Jeremy B. White, Sacramento Bee

Extinguish your filtered cigarettes, ditch the plastic bags to carry your groceries, toss your micro-beaded facial scrub and cancel those plans to catch an orca show at SeaWorld.

Each of those things would be prohibited under a package of bills circulating in Sacramento. Seeking to address such issues as pollution, animal cruelty and tobacco use, lawmakers have advanced measures to ban or limit the availability of various consumer products and activities.

The items facing potential prohibition join a growing list of products legislators have banned in recent years, like lead ammunition, foie gras, eggs from tightly caged chickens and edible shark fins. Those bills drew protests from specific groups saying they were being unfairly penalized – hunters decrying the loss of lead bullets, Chinese Americans who eat shark fin soup mourning the loss of a cherished tradition.

Read the whole story

Ready Mix defends substance of concrete mix

By Kathryn Reed

Mike Wallace, who runs Sierra Tahoe Ready Mix, said paperwork may have been faulty, but the quality of concrete from his business has never been anything but the best.

Wallace's South Lake Tahoe business and home were searched last week by law enforcement officials who are questioning whether fraud related to government contracts has been committed.

Until March 28 no one from the city had contacted Wallace about any potential indiscretions, Wallace said.

"If they would have just called me, I would have told them what I told Robert Leach," Wallace said. Leach is the El Dorado County assistant district attorney who is handling the case. He was not available for comment.

"What I did wasn't right, but it wasn't to a degree that I thought I was hurting anyone, screwing anyone or making a

profit off anyone," Wallace told *Lake Tahoe News*.

He added that he changed the date of a mix because the customer, a firm hired by South Lake Tahoe, needed the paperwork immediately or else they said they would go elsewhere. Wallace said he changed the date to say it was the current year. However, Wallace said the concrete mix that was delivered was that year's formula.

Wallace said a delivery ticket is sent with each batch. Through a computerized mechanism the concrete is mixed. Each job does not requires the same consistency. The ticket has the weight, water content and other details of every load.

At this time Wallace has not been charged with any crime.

South Lake Tahoe officials say it is now up the DA's office.

CalFire hiring crews earlier than usual

By Claire Doan, KCRA-TV

AUBURN -– Despite the wet weather March ushered in, California is still in the midst of a drought.

For CalFire that means bringing on more firefighting resources earlier in the year to make sure teams are ready for a potentially challenging season ahead.

"Already we're seeing a huge increase in the number of wildfires, even on weeks where we're getting a little bit of

rain. Right behind that rain are warm temperatures, which dry things back out. That's when we start to see the fires pick back up," said CalFire spokesperson Daniel Berlant.

Read the whole story

Inmate commits suicide in South Lake Tahoe jail

A South Lake Tahoe man hanged himself at the El Dorado County Jail on March 30.

Correctional officers found John Harold Bordycott, 47, on Sunday at 2:26pm unconscious with a bed sheet around his neck. He could not be revived and was pronounced dead at Barton Memorial Hospital.

Bordycott had been booked into the South Lake Tahoe facility on March 27 on domestic violence charges.

The last hanging at the jail was in 2002 when James Csucsai, 36, killed himself. He with girlfriend Lisa Platz was accused of killing her 9-year-old daughter, Rebecca Aramburo, in 2001 at Campground by the Lake.

"They try to minimize what they can attach a bed sheet to, but in any cell they can find a way," sheriff's Lt. Pete Van Arnum told *Lake Tahoe News*. "When they hang themselves they don't need their feet off the ground."

— Lake Tahoe News staff report

Exercising may be answer to healthier eyes

By Gretchen Reynolds, New York Times

Age-related vision loss is common and devastating. But new research suggests that physical activity might protect our eyes as we age.

There have been suggestions that exercise might reduce the risk of macular degeneration, which occurs when neurons in the central part of the retina deteriorate. The disease robs millions of older Americans of clear vision. A 2009 study of more than 40,000 middle-aged distance runners, for instance, found that those covering the most miles had the least likelihood of developing the disease. But the study did not compare runners to non-runners, limiting its usefulness. It also did not try to explain how exercise might affect the incidence of an eye disease.

So, more recently, researchers at Emory University in Atlanta and the Atlanta Veterans Administration Medical Center in Decatur, Ga., took up that question for a study published last month in the Journal of Neuroscience. Their interest was motivated in part by animal research at the V.A. medical center. That work had determined that exercise increases the levels of substances known as growth factors in the animals' bloodstream and brains. These growth factors, especially one called brain-derived neurotrophic factor, or B.D.N.F., are known to contribute to the health and well-being of neurons and consequently, it is thought, to improvements in brain health and cognition after regular exercise.

Read the whole story

Glass may be the answer to plastic bottles

By Dana Sullivan Kilroy, Los Angeles Times

There’s a reason wine and spirits are stored in glass: purity of taste. Plastic (and, to a lesser degree, metal) can impart various “flavors” into the liquids it comes into contact with. But that’s just one reason that glass is an increasingly popular alternative to plastic and aluminum or stainless steel sport-style bottles.

Another is peace of mind. About five years ago, scientists and the Food and Drug Administration started issuing warnings about bisphenol A, commonly called BPA, a chemical used in plastics and in the linings of some metal vessels.

Then, in 2010, the FDA recommended that parents avoid using bottles and cups containing BPA when feeding infants. That warning was enough to prompt many plastic-bottle manufacturers to start making BPA-free bottles. And it motivated many consumers to look for alternatives for their older children and themselves.

Read the whole story

TRTA offering summer youth camps

Three- and five-day backcountry camps are being offered this summer for ages 12-17.

They are put on by the Tahoe Rim Trail Association, Tahoe Institute for Natural Science, and American Red Cross.

These programs teach: wilderness first aid, leadership skills, navigation (map/compass), leave no trace wilderness ethics, local ecology and geology, wilderness tracking, and backcountry cooking and nutrition. Participants will backpack approximately 3 to 7 miles per day while participating in activities which will teach the above skills.

Gear, food and transportation will be provided for all participants. All programs are instructed by experienced and well-trained staff from the TRTA, TINS and American Red Cross.

Online registration may be completed on the TRTA website. For more information, call 775.298.4493 or email programs@tahoerimtrail.org.

U.S. could save millions by changing font type

By Salvador Rodriguez, Los Angeles Times

A 14-year-old student has published a study detailing how the

U.S. federal and state governments could collectively save about $234 million a year by simply switching the type of font that is used on printed documents.

In his study, Suvir Mirchandani, who lives in the Pittsburgh area, said he found that Garamond is the most efficient font for printing, among the fonts recommend for use by the General Services Administration. This is because Garamond uses thinner strokes for its letters, meaning less ink is used on each character.

If the U.S. government stopped using Times New Roman and Century Gothic and switched to Garamond, it could reduce its annual cost of ink from $467 million per year by more than 29 percent. That means it would save about $136 million per year.

Read the whole story

Boat decontamination fee at Tahoe going up

It’s going to cost more to get your boat decontaminated at Lake Tahoe this year. The inspections are to keep aquatic invasive species out of the water.

Last week the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Governing Board increased the fee by $10. The decontamination fee will increase from $25 to $35. This fee is for boats that don’t arrive at the inspection station clean, drained and dry. All other fees will remain the same.

Inspection station hours may change, the Homewood station is closing, and marinas will receive 15 percent less funding. The

Meyers, Spooner and Alpine Meadows inspection stations hours will be decided in April.