

Organic pet food sales on the rise

By Cyndia Zwahlen, Los Angeles Times

Organic, raw and even gluten-free food choices aren't just for people anymore.

These options are showing up at local pet shops that are looking to distinguish themselves from big-box competitors. After a slowdown in sales of premium-priced food during the recession, independent pet shops said the sector was recovering.

At the Modern Dog, a boutique in a Venice bungalow, co-owner Lance Castro was looking to add two new brands of freeze-dried raw food and premium kibble to the seven he already sells.

"It's done wonders for our business," said Castro, who opened the Abbot Kinney Boulevard store with Guy Miracle five years ago.

The store's popular Sojos dehydrated dog food mix of sweet potatoes, turkey, apples and flax meal, among other ingredients, costs \$21.99 for a 2-pound bag, to which water is added to make 10 pounds of food.

Castro said he was looking at sites for a second location where he plans to have a refrigeration unit for fresh and frozen raw-food brands.

Nationwide, annual retail sales of organic and natural pet food are expected to grow three times as fast as pet food sales overall through 2015, according to an industry report to be released this week by the Packaged Facts market research company.

Read the whole story

Retired SLTFD captain dies snowmobiling

Retired South Lake Tahoe fire Capt. Steve Taylor died in a snowmobiling accident Feb. 8.

He was 58.

Taylor was riding with two friends on personal sleds in the Blue Lakes Road area off Highway 88 when the accident occurred.

The California Highway Patrol report says Taylor was riding at a high rate of speed on Blue Lakes Road when he was unable to negotiate a left curve. The snowmobile he was driving struck a tree.

CalStar responded, but was unable to revive Taylor.

The CHP and Alpine County sheriff's deputies are conducting the investigation. Sheriff's Lt. Ron Michitarian said in a press release, "Preliminary investigation indicates the accident may have been a result of an unknown medical episode and an autopsy and toxicological examination are pending."

Flags are flying at half-staff in South Lake Tahoe in Taylor's honor.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Nevada start for Tour de California

The 2011 Amgen Tour of California might need to change its name because it is starting in Nevada this year.



South Lake Tahoe had been touted as the start city, but it was announced today the multi-day event is starting in Stateline.

Cyclists will start the race May 15 at MontBleu casino. The Stateline property along with Harveys is providing 1,848 rooms for free to staff and teams.

This is the first time Lake Tahoe has been part of the largest cycling event in North America.

On Day 1 riders will leave the casino, go past Edgewood Tahoe Golf Course around Heavenly Village, past the starting line again and onto Highway 50 for the 72 miles around the lake.

After passing Tahoe City for a second time, there's a short ascent to Dollar Point before turning left up Highway 267 to finish at Northstar-at-Tahoe after riding 119 miles with an elevation gain of 5,500 feet.

Here is a video about Day 1.

Day 2 is one of the longest stages – 133 miles. It goes from Squaw Valley at the Olympic rings on Highway 89 and ends in Sacramento. In between, riders will go through Truckee, along Donner Lake and down to Nevada City and Grass Valley.

Tour of California covers 800 miles.

Stages include:

- Stage 1: May 15 – South Lake Tahoe to Northstar-at-Tahoe
 - Stage 2: May 16 – Squaw Valley to Sacramento
 - Stage 3: May 17 – Auburn to Modesto
 - Stage 4: May 18 – Livermore to San Jose
 - Stage 5: May 19 – Seaside to Paso Robles
 - Stage 6: May 20 – Solvang Individual Time Trial
 - Stage 7: May 21 – Claremont to Mt. Baldy
 - Stage 8: May 22 – Santa Clarita to Thousand Oaks.
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South Tahoe man can't outsmart police dog; he's in jail with bites

A 40-year-old South Lake Tahoe man was arrested Tuesday on charges of possession of a dangerous weapon, violating parole and resisting arrest.

Stephen Michael Wood was being sought in regards to a burglary at a residence in the 900 block of James Street.

Probation officers responded to the 800 block of James in South Lake Tahoe on Feb. 8 to talk to Wood about the theft. Officers said when Wood noticed them, he fled – which is a violation of his probation.

Wood was found hiding in the attic closet, and detained by

South Lake Tahoe police Officer Tony Broadfoot and canine officer Duke. Wood sustained several dog bites during his arrest. Wood was treated at Barton Memorial Hospital before being booked into the El Dorado County Jail.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

South Tahoe chamber mixer

South Tahoe Chamber of Commerce mixer is Feb. 10 from 5-7pm at Lake Tahoe Holidays in the Village Center.

All community members are invited to attend and network with fellow business people while enjoying complimentary appetizers and wine. This event is free.

Ganong 18th in super G, Miller finishes with one pole

By U.S. Ski Team

GARMISCH-PARTENKIRCHEN, Germany -- Four-time World Champion Bode Miller of Franconia, N.H., produced a run in Wednesday's FIS Alpine World Ski Championship super G like only he can. Miller was leading by 0.29 before his right pole was ripped out of his hand on a gate. He then continued to build his lead to 0.93 before losing balance near the bottom and standing up into the finish.

"I wasn't out of the race when I hooked my arm. It was a matter of making it to the finish without a big mistake and I probably couldn't have avoided that mistake with a pole. I just need to hang on to all my equipment until I get to the finish," Miller said.

Miller ended the day 12th as 30 racers, including Ted Ligety of Park City failed to finish.

Tommy Ford of Bend, Ore., was 14th and Travis Ganong of Squaw Valley was 18th, with Italian Christof Innerhofer taming the unforgiving Kandahar track for victory.

"Anyone who's willing to throw down and risk it all is going to be successful on this course. We're all talented enough to be fast, it's just a matter of who's willing to risk it for the podium," Ganong said. "I wish I'd have gone after it a little more, but this is my first World Championships start. It feels good to know I still have the downhill to look forward to."

Official Result, FIS Alpine World Ski Championships, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, Super G

Gold: Christof Innerhofer, Italy, 1:38.31

Silver: Hannes Reichelt, Austria, 1:38.91

Bronze: Ivica Kostelic, Croatia, 1:39.03

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12. Bode Miller, Franconia, NH, 1:41.06

14. Tommy Ford, Bend, OR, 1:41.06

18. Travis Ganong, Squaw Valley, CA, 1:41.49

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Did not finish

Ted Ligety, Park City, UT.

Pika may be listed as at-risk species

By Matt Weiser, Sacramento Bee

The American pika, a tiny rabbit-like resident of the Sierra Nevada, will get another shot at the state Endangered Species Act.

On Thursday, the state Fish and Game Commission ordered a review of the pika's status in response to a San Francisco Superior Court ruling that found the Department of Fish and Game failed to consider new information in a review completed last fall.

This came in response to a lawsuit filed by the Center for Biological Diversity, which first petitioned the state to protect the pika in 2007.

Read the whole story

Book sale at South Tahoe library

On Feb. 26 from 10am to 3pm the South Lake Tahoe Branch Library will be having a book sale to support the Friends of

the Library Free Children's Programs.

Many hardcover and paperback books will be available at deep discounts. DVDs, VHS and books on tape will also be available.

The library is at 1000 Rufus Allen Blvd., South Lake Tahoe.

All Friends of the Library members are invited to a pre-sale from 9-10am. If you are not currently a Friend, you may join at the door. Membership is \$10 per individual, \$25 for a business, and \$250 for a lifetime membership.

Call (530) 573.3185 for more information.

Nevada water quality lab looking to expand

By Bob Brundage, Reno Gazette-Journal

Western Environmental Testing Laboratory has found a growing need for its services in Nevada, California and Colorado during its short existence, and now it is trying to stretch its reach even farther.

"We're definitely looking to stay on the West Coast, in Arizona, Utah, Oregon and Idaho," operations manager Nick Ross said. "Those are the states we're looking at."

Founded in 2002 with five employees, WETLAB now employs 28 at a state-of-the-art laboratory in Sparks that was completed in 2006 and recently expanded by 11,000 square feet.

There also is a new office in Elko. The office started in a part-time employee's home in 2007 and moved into a larger

facility in 2009.

So what does the fast-growing company do? WETLAB monitors water contaminants for its clients. The company monitors the water in Lake Tahoe as well as the ground water in the Elko mining region.

“We do a lot of continuum monitoring, that’s the bulk of what we do,” Ross said. “Mining companies have to be monitored monthly, quarterly or yearly, depending on the size of their operations, to make sure they aren’t introducing contaminants into the ground water.

“The different towns or cities or counties that surround Lake Tahoe have to do monthly, quarterly or yearly monitoring because their goal is to preserve Lake Tahoe, so they’re regulated for different types of contaminants than mining companies. Their main goal is to maintain the clarity of Lake Tahoe.”

Read the whole story

Big mountain snowboarding at Kirkwood

The fourth annual North Face Masters is the largest big mountain snowboarding competition in the country, and it provides a venue for the best snowboarders in the world to compete for a total \$45,000 cash prize purse.

The third stop on the tour is at Kirkwood Mountain Resort March 3-5.

TNF Masters is an open, three-stop, competitive snowboarding

tour providing the best big mountain snowboarders in the world with an all-natural stage to express skill, creativity and athleticism. In an arena designed and built by Mother Nature, it's a unique opportunity for elite riders to mix style with cliffs, chutes, and powder. Athletes are judged based on their lines, control, fluidity, creativity and style.

In addition to the \$15,000 cash prize purse at each stop of the tour, TNF Masters also recognizes riders under the age of 25 who demonstrate raw talent and innovation in their riding style for the Young Gun Award.