Dogs susceptible to illness during holidays

By Mark Robison, Reno Gazette-Journal

You’re throwing a Christmas party and, unbeknownst to you, everyone slips the dog a few tasty morsels from their plate.

The scenario may sound familiar, but it could also cause your dog to end up at the veterinarian with pancreatitis.

Fatty, greasy people food is especially to blame. Already chubby dogs seem most susceptible.

Dennis Wilson, manager at the Animal Emergency Center in Reno, said the hospital will see about a dozen cases between Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Read the whole story

Ski report: It’s going to be a jolly day



Santa delivered his gift to the ski resorts early with plenty of snow. Today he brings sunshine with a few clouds.

Here is the ski report from Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.

Snow forecast for tonight, Sunday

Updated Dec. 25 at 8:12am.

Christmas Day should be low-key when it comes to the weather, but the same cannot be said for this evening.

The National Weather Service in Reno says a low pressure system will drop south from the Gulf of Alaska and quickly move across the Sierra and Western Nevada tonight. A winter weather advisory has been issued from 4pm today to 4am Sunday.

Wind, rain and snow will be part of the storm in Lake Tahoe.

Expect snow totals of 5 to 10 inches above 7,000 feet, with 4 inches at lake level. Snow levels could drop to 5,000 feet.

A break in the snow will come Monday, with the white stuff returning for Tuesday and Wednesday

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Grandparents give more than trendy gifts

By Anita Creamer, Sacramento Bee

Mary Hopp has firm beliefs about her role as a gift-giver to her seven grandchildren.

Money deposited into their 529 savings plans for college? Absolutely, on every birthday. Money frittered away buying them trinkets, gadgets or (heaven forbid) cars? Not on your life. Every Christmas, the grandchildren – ranging in age from 5 to 16 – receive books.

“I don’t think I should be looked at as a bank,” said Hopp, 68, who lives in El Dorado Hills.

Her contributions to the so-called “grandparent economy” are carefully considered yet generous – a prime example of how America’s 70 million grandparents divvied up the $52 billion they spent on their grandkids in 2009, according to a study that was commissioned by www.grandparents.com.

With that kind of spending power, even in the depths of the recession, grandparents are clearly a key force driving the economy.

For them, the giving season neither begins nor ends with the holidays.

Read the whole story

The greatest gifts can’t always be wrapped

Publisher’s note: ***This originally appeared in the December 2010 issue of Ski magazine.***

By Edie Thys Morgan

We have developed a tradition in our house at Christmas. Every year the kids ask for a Wii, and every year they don’t get

one. This is not because we are the meanest parents in the world (though on some days we'd easily get two votes). This is because my husband and I share a theory about presents, and it is this: We believe the greatest gifts have two things in common: First, they are much needed (need being a relative term here); And second, they inspire us to get outside, rather than stay inside.

Because of our family's shared obsession with skiing, this theory holds particularly true for Christmas presents. What's not to love about comfy boots, flashy new skis, a stylin' warm coat or your very first racing suit?—all things that have been under the tree at some point. Inevitably, Christmas Day comes and goes with no disappointment other than the fact that it's over. I will say though, that it would be much more convenient if Christmas was on, say, Thanksgiving, when the ski season officially starts. It would be kinder too.

The year my oldest son graduated from hand- me-down and ski swap ski boots he was overjoyed and even somewhat surprised to discover the exact pair of bright blue Lange's he had tried on a month earlier—the ones he had fantasized about every time since when he'd crammed his feet into too-small boots. I felt a little bad about the pain, but he got over it. Likewise, it killed me to see my youngest son start his season like every other, in his brother's outgrown battered helmet, and look longingly at the kids with pristine new helmets. But when he unwrapped his first very own helmet, a glittering blue and silver masterpiece with matching goggles, the suffering was forgotten. His suffering, that is.

Read the whole story

Slopestyle, halfpipe competition at Northstar

The North Face Park and Pipe Open Series, a two-stop tour featuring ski slopestyle and halfpipe competitions, is Jan. 6-9 at Northstar-at-Tahoe in Truckee and Feb. 17-20 at Waterville Valley in New Hampshire.

The North Face Park and Pipe Open Series will dedicate one competition day to halfpipe and two days to slopestyle. Judging will be overall impression based on creativity, degree of difficulty, combinations, variations, style, and amplitude. The competition at Northstar Resort is the last event that will count toward getting an invite to the 2011 Winter X Games, and will count on the Association of Freeskiing Professionals (AFP) points list to qualify for the Halfpipe and Slopestyle FIS World Championships in February.

The North Face Park and Pipe Open Series will work in conjunction with the AFP on competition judging, with AFP General Manager and X Games competitor Steele Spence serving as head judge for the series.

Thrill of sledding can often mean a trip to the ER

By Kathryn Reed

SPOONER SUMMIT – Despite the sounds of fearful screams echoing in the woods, the sledders jumped off the plastic speed bullets to hike back up the hill.

Clearly, the thrill of spinning out of control on a plastic saucer is addicting.

Reza Rahinzadeh likes going fast over bumps. At 4, he has learned going backward keeps the snow out of his face.



Reza Rahinzadeh, 4, likes to sled fast with his Aunt Angie Winkler. Photos/Kathryn Reed

The Redding youth was visiting his Aunt Angie Winkler of South Lake Tahoe this month. She knew just the spot to take the youngster for his second sledding trip – to Spooner Summit.

Winkler said it's her favorite spot to sled.

Tucked off the side of Highway 28 at the junction of Highway 50, there is plenty of parking, it's free to sled and the hill is plenty steep to get the adrenaline flowing.

Saucers of all colors, shapes and sizes abound. By the end of the season a pile of plastic debris sits at the bottom – signs of sledding gone wrong.

The Messore family from Laguna Nigel didn't have to worry about buying an apparatus for their adventure. They were given items to slide on from the Stardust, where they were spending

a few days. It was a recommendation from the concierge that got them up to Spooner.

Sledding opportunities abound throughout the Lake Tahoe Basin. Some are free, some you pay to play.

However, this is one of those sports – if it can be called a sport – that often ends in the emergency room.

“Sledding can cause compressed fractures in backs due to people sliding down a hill and flying up and landing on their backs,” Cynthia Burkart, registered nurse and interim director of the Emergency Department and director of Occupational Medicine at Barton Health, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “Besides back compressions, we do see a lot of broken legs and this is usually caused when parents ride in the front of the sled and try to stop. There are no breaks and they can be hard to handle.”

The South Lake Tahoe medical facility doesn’t have stats on the number of sledding injuries doctors treat.

However, the Center for Injury Research and Policy in Columbus, Ohio, coalesced data from 1997-2007, which found there were 229,023 injuries serious enough for emergency room treatment for children younger than 19. This equates to about 20,000 hospital visits a year related to sledding – and that doesn’t include adults.

The total medical, legal and liability, pain and suffering, and work loss-related costs were more than $4 billion in 2007 for the 160,000 sledding related injuries for all ages, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

This group says most injuries are to kids younger than 14.

The American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons says sledding for ages 5-14 results in more than 15,000 trips to the ER each year. This compares to skiing and snowboarding for the same

age group that sees 29,000 hospital visits.

“Sledding accidents can happen to people of ages and I suggest that if you are going to sled, make sure you are at least 100 pounds, go on a safe, gentle and small powdery slope,” Burkart said. “Make sure there are no objects, such as people, animals, trees or rocks around. In addition, be sure and go slow and it never hurts to wear a helmet.”

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Official: Beavers wiping out trees in Reno on Truckee River

By Susan Voyles, Reno Gazette-Journal

Kim Toulouse, a Nevada Wildlife conservation educator, checked the recent work of beaver on a large Fremont cottonwood along the Truckee River, near the National Automobile Museum in downtown Reno.

With the trunk girdled or eaten all the way around, he said the 50- to 70-year-old tree is a goner. And the gnawed tree next to it is probably a goner, too. Then he spots the beaver’s lodge across the river.

Seeing Toulouse’s badge and uniform, Jay Hubbard, the museum’s collections manager, approaches.

“Who do we talk to?” he asks, about the damaged trees. Is it the museum’s responsibility? Or is the city responsible as it maintains the river path?

Toulouse said he doesn’t know. But he said some trees along this stretch could still be saved if they were wrapped in chicken wire.

“You guys have a lot of volunteers,” he said. “Here’s some work that needs to be done.”

No one is in charge of making sure the beaver population is kept in check along the Truckee River and its trees are wrapped, said Toulouse and Chris Healy, Department of Wildlife spokesman. And very little trapping is done within Reno and Sparks.

Read the whole story

Storms good for Tahoe tourism

By Ed Fletcher, Sacramento Bee

Bing Crosby should come to Lake Tahoe. With a fresh heap of snow blanketing the landscape, the classic “White Christmas” crooner couldn’t have dreamed it any better.

Nor could the area’s tourist industry.

An abundance of snow and a temporary pause in the inclement weather are promising for ski resorts.

“This is the second year in a row the West Coast has been blessed by the snow gods,” said Ralf Garrison, a ski resort industry consultant.

West Coast ski lodging reservations are up 3 percent through Nov. 30 compared with the same period last year, Garrison said. Additionally, the pace of reservations is quickening, up

7.5 percent in the month of November over last year.

While the improvement may be “nothing to brag about,” the trend is moving in the right direction, Garrison said. The great ski conditions can only help, as skiers share their experiences though word of mouth and social networking.

Dawn Fishler, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Reno, said the recorded snowfall for Tahoe City in November totaled 70.5 inches, just 3.5 inches shy of the record set in 1994. That compares with 8.5 inches for November 2009. So far this month, the area has received 30.5 inches, compared with 47.5 inches for the entire month of December 2009.

Read the whole story

Ski report: Expect it to be crowded



It’s definitely sunny and likely to be crowded today. Patience is the word Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe, is using today.

Here is his ski report.