Anderson claims U.S. Open slopestyle title

By USSA

VAIL -– Olympic gold medalist Jamie Anderson (Meyers) landed another major slopestyle victory at the Burton U.S. Open. Anderson clinched the TTR World Snowboard Tour slopestyle title with her win Friday at the snowy Vail Mountain venue.

Canadian Spencer O'Brien took second and Isabel Derungs of Switzerland third in the women's final.

Canada's Mark McMorris took the victory for the men with Norwegian Stale Sandbech taking second and Candian Max Parrot third.

Falling snow throughout the day created flat light conditions and delays while the event staff thoroughly cleared new snow from the course.

Anderson's winning run: gap to boardslide, 50-50 to frontside boardslide, 50-50 to backside 180 tail-tap out, cab 720 nose, switch backside 540 Indy and frontside 720 mute.

"It feels amazing. We definitely were under the winter elements today, which kind of felt good. It's snowy, the course is a little crazy, but I was so impressed with all the girls' riding and just happy to be out here in Vail," Anderson said. "This win is different than the Olympics because I didn't have all the pressure on me, but I like to do my best all the time and being able to participate in the U.S. Open is huge for me. It mean's so much."

Study: Consumers unaware of their water usage

By Monte Morin, Los Angeles Times

Americans use twice the amount of water they think they do, and appear to be particularly oblivious about how much H2O they flush down the toilet on a daily basis, according to new research.

In a paper published online Monday in the journal PNAS, a researcher concluded that Americans underestimated their water use by a factor of 2, and were only slightly aware of how much water goes into growing the food they eat.

The study's conclusions were based on an Internet survey of 1,020 people, and comes amid a national drought that extends from the Pacific Coast to portions of the Mississippi Valley, with the most severe conditions in California.

Read the whole story

Lawsuit alleges Nev. deputy illegally seized cash

By Scott Sonner, AP

A rural Nevada sheriff's deputy is accused of stopping travelers on a lonely stretch of Interstate 80 and confiscating tens of thousands of dollars for the county without bringing charges, according to two federal lawsuits.

Two men who were traveling alone through Northern Nevada's high desert last year offer strikingly similar accounts of their stops by the same Humboldt County deputy near the town of Winnemucca, about 165 miles east of Reno.

Neither search produced drugs or an arrest, but in one case the deputy took a briefcase filled with $50,000 and in the other he seized $13,800 and a .40-caliber Ruger handgun, according to the lawsuits filed in U.S. District Court in Reno.

Both men said they were told they'd be released with their vehicles only if they forfeited their cash.

"It's like Jesse James or Black Bart," said John Ohlson, a longtime Reno defense lawyer who filed suit on Jan. 16 on behalf of Tan Nguyen, 37, of Newport.

The lawsuits say the cash seizures are part of a pattern of stopping drivers for speeding as a pretext for drug busts, which violation the Constitution. They maintain Sheriff Ed Kilgore, Deputy Lee Dove, Humboldt County and its prosecutors condone the practice of seizing assets regardless of criminal prosecution.

Two Reno lawyers representing the county did not immediately respond to telephone or email messages seeking comment, nor did Kilgore or Dove.

Chief Deputy District Attorney Kevin Pasquale said the district attorney's office would not discuss the lawsuits. "As a matter of policy, we never comment on pending litigation," he told the Associated Press.

County officials were not shy in the past about discussing their cash seizures. The day after Nguyen had his money taken, the sheriff issued a news release with a photograph of Dove pictured with a K-9 and $50,000 in seized cash "after a traffic stop for speeding."

“This cash would have been used to purchase illegal drugs and now will benefit Humboldt County with training and equipment. Great job,” the statement said. Dove’s report said he had the money counted at a Winnemucca bank, then gave it to the district attorney’s office “for asset/seizure/forfeiture.”

Nguyen’s suit says Dove stopped him Sept. 23 for driving 78 mph in a 75 zone in what his lawyers described as a “profile stop” based on suspicion he was transporting drugs in a rental car picked up at the Denver airport.

Dove wrote in his report Nguyen agreed to a search before opening the briefcase with the $50,000 in cash. Nguyen denies that he consented.

Nguyen told Dove he won the money at a casino on the way to visit his cousins in California, according to Dove’s report, but Dove told Nguyen he suspected the money was obtained illegally. Dove reported he smelled marijuana but didn’t find any.

Nguyen was given a written warning for speeding but wasn’t cited.

As a condition of release, Nguyen signed a “property for safekeeping receipt,” which indicated the money was abandoned or seized and not returnable. But the lawsuit says he did so only because Dove threatened to seize his vehicle unless he “got in his car and drove off and forgot this ever happened.”

Safeway bought by parent

company of Albertsons

By Heather Somerville, San Jose Mercury News

PLEASANTON – Safeway announced on Thursday it had been bought by private equity firm Cerberus Capital Management in a $9.4 billion deal that will merge the Bay Area's dominant grocery chain with Albertsons, creating a massive chain that promises to further transform how Americans shop for groceries.

By merging Pleasanton-based Safeway with its Boise, Idaho-based Albertsons, Cerberus hopes to cut costs and expand product selection, and compete in a market Safeway and Albertsons have been steadily losing to big-box retailers, convenience stores and niche grocers.

For shoppers, the sale could mean lower prices, as executives pledge to pass cost savings on to the consumer, although some analysts are not so confident. For Safeway employees – who will be negotiating a new contract with the company later this year – jobs could be on the line, as antitrust regulations and duplication between the companies may lead to individual store sales and closures.

It's too soon to know if the sale will impact the South Lake Tahoe, Round Hill, Kings Beach and Truckee Safeways.

Read the whole story

Change smoke alarm batteries

as clocks turn

By Teri Mizuhara

Smoke alarms saves lives. They are your first line of defense in a structure fire, especially since most home fires start in the middle of the night when you are sleeping.

In the event of a fire, properly installed and maintained smoke alarms can save your life by alerting you and your family and giving you time to escape. Since everyone will be setting their clocks ahead one hour on Saturday night before going to bed, take the time to check your smoke alarms and practice your exit drill.

Photoelectric smoke alarms are better at sensing “smoldering fires” because smoldering fires produce large smoke particles. A smoldering fire may burn for hours before bursting into a flaming fire. Often these fires are caused by a cigarette, dropped match or stick of incense burning in a couch or in bedding.

Ionization smoke alarms are better at sensing small smoke particles which are usually produced by a flaming fire that is burning items fast and spreading throughout an area very quickly. This may be a grease fire or a garbage can that caught fire. If your current smoke alarm goes off when you cook, consider replacing that alarm with a photoelectric smoke alarm and placing the other ionization alarm away from your kitchen.

Never disable a smoke alarm. Never remove the battery from your smoke alarm. National statistics indicate that 66 percent of people who died in house fires did not have a smoke alarm or the smoke alarm they had was not working.

Consider interconnecting your smoke alarms, although this is more expensive, this would allow one smoke alarm to “talk” to

the others by a hardwired system or wireless technology. If one alarm senses smoke it will relay the information and all the alarms in the home will go off making sure everyone is aware of a problem and allow them to safely exit the home.

The best scenario is to make sure you have a linked smoke alarm in each bedroom, outside the sleeping area(s) and on each level of the home. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions when installing the smoke alarm, test the battery monthly and change the battery once a year. Don’t forget to vacuum the smoke alarms since dust and bugs can cause false alarms Don’t forget to replace the smoke alarms every eight-10 years; just because the light is on does not mean it will work properly.

For households with hearing impaired family members, there are smoke alarms designed to meet the needs of these individuals. The systems utilize extra loud (90dB) signaling combined with a bright strobe light to alert sleeping individuals and/or vibrating pager systems that transmit to hardware placed on bed frames, under pillows or to specialized wrist watches.

If your household includes children, some studies suggest that smoke alarms that allow a parent to record their voice instead of the common “beep” alarm work better at rousing children from stage 4 deep sleep. Although they are more expensive, it is cheap insurance in the event of a house fire. Don’t forget to practice your exit drills several times a year, during the day and at night with all of your family members.

Teri Mizuhara works for the Amador-El Dororado unit of CalFire.

Truckee dealing with rash of burglaries

By KRNV-TV

Thieves are targeting specific types of homes throughout the Truckee area at a higher rate than usual. Often, these crimes go unnoticed for weeks.

A significant number of houses throughout Truckee are vacation hubs for secondary home owners, a demographic being heavily targeted this winter.

From November to the present, more than 20 Truckee homes have been broken into and ransacked, with three just this past weekend. “It started off primarily as, unfortunately, kicking doors in, a lot of damage that way,” said Truckee police Sgt. Robert Womack.

Read the whole story

Yosemite bears eating like it’s 1915

By Bettina Boxall, Los Angeles Times

Black bears in Yosemite National Park aren’t snacking as much on human food as they did decades ago, according to new research that traces changes in the diet of Yosemite bears over the last century.

Researchers analyzed samples of bear bones from museums and

bear hair collected from the field to determine the ratio of human-to-wild-food that Yosemite bears consumed as far back as 1915.

Not surprisingly, they found that the proportion of human food rose significantly after the park started feeding bears in 1923 to keep the animals away from developed areas. Lighted feeding platforms were even used to entertain park visitors until 1940.

Read the whole story

EPA restricts sulfur in gas to cut auto emissions

By Neela Banerjee, Los Angeles Times

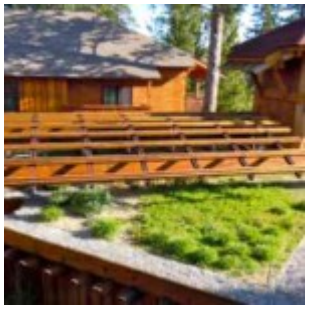
WASHINGTON – The Environmental Protection Agency issued final rules Monday to slash the amount of sulfur in gasoline, which would help cut smog-causing pollution from autos and bring the rest of the country's fuel supply in line with California's standards.

The new rule for "Tier 3" gasoline calls for reducing the amount of sulfur in fuel by two-thirds, to 10 parts per million from 30 parts per million. Similar low-sulfur gasoline is already in use in California, Europe, Japan and South Korea.

The new gasoline would be available at the pump by January 2017.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Cedar House Sport Hotel in Truckee was named by *Outside* magazine as the place to stay in the Lake Tahoe area.

• The Tahoe Junior Freeride Series will return to Sugar Bowl March 8-9 for the second stop of the 2014 season.

• Children in foster care in California have typically lost their Medi-Cal health insurance coverage once they turned 21. Under the Affordable Care Act, former foster youth can now continue to have health insurance until 26. The change went into effect Jan. 1.

• The North Face Park and Pipe Open Series presented by Nissan will be making the fourth stop of the series at Heavenly Mountain Resort on March 13-15. This slopestyle event in Ante Up Park is open to all competitors. Register online.

• Tahoe Type 1 is a support group for those affected by Type 1 Diabetes. It is designed to support one another and share ideas, experiences and resources. Certified diabetes educator Jaime Pekari will be the guest speaker May 6 at 5:30pm in the board room at Barton Memorial Hospital in South Tahoe. The group meets the first Tuesday of every month.

Not all states think chickens should have leg room

By Stephanie Strommarch, New York Times

ATWATER -– Hens in California are living the good life. Many can now lay their eggs in oversize enclosures roomy enough to stand up, lie down – even extend their wings fully without touching another bird.

Hens in most other states don’t have it so good. Their conditions, as the head of California’s egg trade group explained, are “like you sitting in an airplane seat in the economy section all your life.”

So if you’re a hen, you want to live in California. Short of that, you want California-size leg room. And that’s precisely what lawmakers in California are demanding of out-of-state farmers who sell eggs in California – setting off a feud over interstate commerce that has spilled over into the farmyard at large.

The Missouri attorney general has filed a lawsuit to block the California egg rules, and at least three other states are considering doing the same. The beef and pork lobbies are also lining up against the California rules in an effort to prevent any new restrictions on raising livestock.

Read the whole story