K-9 finds 12 oz. suspected meth in vehicle



Quattro with the goods he found this week. Photo/Provided

Two Bay Area residents were arrested Monday morning in South Lake Tahoe on hit and run, and drug charges.

A Jaguar reportedly crashed into a fence and streetlight on Lake Tahoe Boulevard near Tata Lane and then drove off Jan. 20 at 11:38am.

South Lake Tahoe police officers found the vehicle on Julie Lane in a church parking lot.

Marleni Fuentes-Perez, 22, of San Mateo allegedly told officers she was driving when the accident occurred, however it was Jesus Cruz-Torres, 28, of San Mateo who was in the driver's seat when they were stopped.

Quattro the K-9 was called in to search the vehicle. He found 12 ounces of suspected methamphetamine.

Fuentes-Perez and Cruz-Torres were arrested on charges of hit and run, conspiracy to commit a crime, and transportation-sales of methamphetamine.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Suspect accused of hurting 92-year-old S. Tahoe man

Updated Jan. 22 3pm:

A suspect accused of roughing up a 92-year-old South Lake Tahoe apartment manager Tuesday was arrested this afternoon.

South Lake Tahoe police officers were called to an apartment complex in the 1100 block of Third Street on Jan. 21 just after 11pm regarding a burglary in progress.



James Michael Valero

Officers said the victim, whose name has not been released, told them he discovered a man trespassing in the laundry room of the apartment complex. The suspect, James Michael Valero, had allegedly been on the property before.

The suspect reportedly forced his way into the manager's

apartment and shoved him twice, which hurt the victim's disabled knee.

An arrest warrant for Valero was issued. Police tracked Valero down Jan. 22 about 2:45pm and arrested him on several charges. He was walking near Fourth and South streets, not far from apartment complex.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Brown urges caution in State of State speech

By David Siders, Sacramento Bee

Gov. Jerry Brown said today that California is continuing its "comeback," with a budget surplus and am improving economy, but he urged the Legislature to restrain spending.

"This year, Californians have a lot to be proud of," Brown told a joint session of the Legislature in his State of the State address. "For a decade, budget instability was the order of the day. … But three years later, here we are, with state spending and revenues solidly balanced, and more to come."

However, Brown said the state budget is based on fluctuating revenue, and long-term liabilities are high. As he did in his State of the State speech a year ago, Brown offered the cautionary, biblical account of Joseph and the Pharaoh's dream of seven cows.

The 17-minute speech was the final State of the State address of Brown’s third term. The 75-year-old Democrat is widely expected to seek re-election, and the speech served to preview his campaign.

Read the whole story

Cowboy Mardi Gras fundraiser for Austin’s House

The sixth annual Cowboy Mardi Gras fundraiser to benefit Austin’s House is Feb. 28 at the Carson Valley Inn from 6-10pm.

The atmosphere will be of Bourbon Street in New Orleans on Fat Tuesday. This casual fundraiser features food, music, dancing, games, raffle prizes, and silent auction.

The party starts at 6pm with a cocktail hour, then a barbecue buffet dinner featuring tri-tip beef, pulled pork and mesquite rubbed chicken with all the trimmings. Beer, wine and cocktails are also available.

After dinner, the Cowboy Mardi Gras party hits full stride with music, dancing and games.

Ticket are $50. Only 250 tickets will be sold. Call Austin’s House at (775) 267.6711 to order tickets.

Blood drive in South Lake Tahoe

BloodSource will be conducting a blood drive in South Lake Tahoe on Feb. 3 from noon-6pm.

Walk-ins are welcome. Blood drive participants will receive a parking validation for Lake Tahoe Resort Hotel parking lot at the blood drive check in.

The blood drive is sponsored by the Barton Memorial Hospital Auxiliary.

Donors must weigh at least 110 pounds, be at least 17 years old (16 with a signed BloodSource Parental consent form) and be generally healthy. There is no upper age limit for blood donations. Donors must bring a photo ID and should drink plenty of fluids before donating.

For more information, call Dan Kerr at (775) 781.5343.

Millions of dollars flow to Nev. politicians

By Andrew Doughman, Las Vegas Sun

Nevada’s politicians dropped millions of dollars in campaign expenditures last year – and collected millions more, too.

Disclosures provided under state law last week provide a glimpse behind the curtain of Nevada’s political world and offer a first look at the strength of candidates in the 2014

election. Voters can see who’s donating to the elected officials and candidates who are vying for the right to make important decisions for Nevada’s communities, schools, roads, parks, health care, safety, business and the economy.

“It strikes at the heart of the public state and the process,” said Secretary of State Ross Miller of the campaign reports filed Jan. 15. “The public should be able to discern from publicly available information who is funding campaigns.”

Read the whole story

Dry conditions create winter fire threat

By Joseph Serna, Los Angeles Times

California is bracing for what officials fear could be an unprecedented winter fire season fueled by record dry conditions that show no signs of letting up.

January is typically a time when forest fire camps and air bases are closed and seasonal firefighters go home. But not this year. Calfire has responded to 150 wildfires so far. During the same period last January, there were none, and the historic average is 25.

Across California, vegetation that typically rehydrates with rain between December and April continues to get dryer and more dangerous. The fires so far this winter have been relatively moderate compared with some of the state’s largest, but officials worry that the fires will get worse as the fuel gets even dryer. Forecasters say there is little relief in

sight. The National Weather Service last week released a forecast for the southwestern United States calling for unseasonably dry and hot conditions.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Brown wants to avoid past budget errors

By Dan Walters, Sacramento Bee

Fourteen years ago, the governor of California solemnly pledged not to squander a $12.3 billion revenue windfall on unsustainable tax cuts or spending.



Dan Walters

“I intend to resist the siren song of permanent spending whether it comes from the left or the right,” Gray Davis told reporters. “And I will stand up to anyone who tries to convince the Legislature that they should spend most or all of this money in ongoing expenses.”

Davis caved within a few weeks, agreeing to use two-thirds of the windfall for permanent spending and tax cuts. Not surprisingly, the state faced multibillion-dollar deficits a year later.

On Thursday, Gov. Jerry Brown stood at the same podium that Davis used in 2000 and solemnly pledged not to overspend a new surge in state revenue – even alluding indirectly to Davis' failure.

Read the whole story

Placer supes keep Kings Beach academy alive

Placer County Board of Supervisors on Jan. 21 voted 5-0 to deny an interim urgency ordinance.

County staff had recommended approval of the ordinance to stop the Tahoe Expedition Academy in Kings Beach from going forward. It is proposed to go on the lakefront property where Ferrari Crown Motel, Falcon Lodge and Goldcrest Resort properties are.

The item was originally going to be discussed at the Jan. 7 meeting in Auburn, but public outcry got it moved to the Kings Beach meeting on Tuesday.

The agenda item read, "Notice is hereby given that the Placer County Board of Supervisors will conduct a public hearing, on the date and time noted above, to consider adoption of an interim ordinance prohibiting certain uses, including hospitals, day care centers/preschools, churches/religious assembly (TRPA New Definition), schools – business and vocational, schools – college, schools – kindergarten through secondary, animal husbandry services, collection stations, single-family residences, service stations, auto repair and services, and contract construction services within Plan Area

Statement 001A, Special Areas No. 1 through No. 5 of the Tahoe City Community Plan, Plan Area Statement 029, Special Areas No. 1, No. 2 and No. 4 of the Kings Beach Community Plan Area, and Plan Area Statement 032 of the North Stateline Community Plan Area."

The ordinance would have created a 45-day moratorium to stop processing applications for the above uses.

County staff wants this piece of prime real estate to be used for a more tourist-oriented business. Plus, the academy would not be consistent with the area plan that is wending its way through the regulatory approval process.

There could be financial implications for Kings Beach and Placer County if it were to lose transient occupancy tax dollars as well as other dollars overnight visitors spend compared to day trippers.

Dave Ferrari, whose family has operated the hotel business for more than 60 years, told the board, "We simply ask that you acknowledge our long-held property rights and vote no."

While the academy cleared this obstacle, it is far from a done deal. County and Tahoe Regional Planning Agency approval are still needed.

The proposed academy has scheduled informational meetings for Feb. 12 and March 19 from 6-7:30pm at North Tahoe Event Center in Kings Beach.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Cork still matters in the wine business

By Will Lyons, Wall Street Journal

In a temperature-controlled cellar with little damp, a good cork will be able to protect wine for several decades. The problem arises on those rare occasions when it doesn't. Anyone who has built up a collection of fine wines over, say, 40 years will know that perhaps the biggest factor in maintaining their quality is the longevity of corks. At what age does one wear out and have to be replaced?

The answer lies in the quality of the cork. There are three main types. Regular corks are made from bark that's stripped, without harm to the trees, from the cork oak, found in Portugal and the western Mediterranean. They come in a range of lengths, with the finer wines opting for a longer cork. Second is the agglomerated cork, made of fragments of ground-up cork bound together, either by the bark's natural resins, released by heating, or with some added adhesive. Thirdly there are synthetic corks, made of plastic foam: Like screw caps and glass closures, these are really only used for wines with a short life-span.

Cork is an excellent material for stoppering wine. The Romans knew a thing or two about viticulture, and cork was used to seal amphorae throughout the Roman Empire. It's impervious to liquid, long-lasting and doesn't rot. There is, of course, the problem of cork taint. This arises, usually, through the contamination of the cork with a chemical compound called TCA (2,4,6-trichloroanisole). TCA is produced in the cork when airborne fungi encounter chlorophenols (perhaps deposited by industrial pollution), and it imparts to the wine an unmistakable pungent, moldy odor that I have heard described as anything from mustiness to a dank swimming pool.

Read the whole story