Truckee sailor dies in military crash

By CNN

The search has been suspended for a U.S. Navy sailor missing after the crash of a MH-53E Sea Dragon off Virginia's southern coast, a Coast Guard official said Thursday.

The search for the sailor lasted more than 30 hours and covered more than 500 square miles, Coast Guard Capt. John Little said.

At least two sailors have died and two were injured in the crash Wednesday about 20 miles east of Cape Henry.

The Navy has not identified the missing sailor. The dead were identified as Lt. Wesley Van Dorn, 29, of Greensboro, N.C., and Petty Officer 3rd Class Brian Collins, 25, of Truckee.

Read the whole story

Brown's budget increases spending by 8.5 %

By Jim Christie and Sharon Bernstein, Reuters

Gov. Jerry Brown continued his message of fiscal restraint in his state budget plan, which would increase funding for education but not restore many recession-era cuts, including healthcare services for the poor.

Brown's plan, which was leaked Wednesday night and posted online, proposes spending $106.8 billion from the state’s general fund, and sets up a $1.6 billion rainy day fund, according to a copy posted by the *Sacramento Bee* and confirmed to Reuters by an aide to a top Democratic lawmaker. The official release was planned for Friday, but was changed to today.

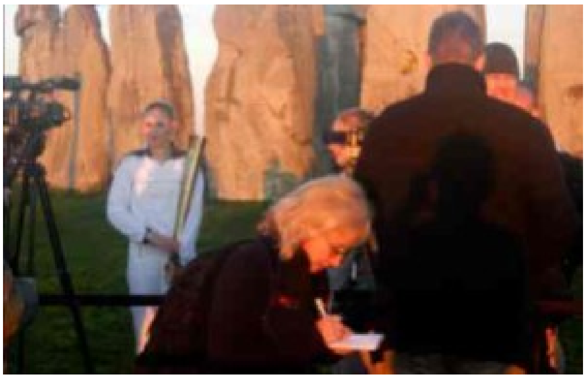
While the plan would increase general fund spending in the state’s next fiscal year – by $8.3 billion, or 8.5 percent – it does not include many programs pushed by his fellow Democrats.

Read the whole story

Do you have one of the 10 most stressful jobs?

By Lauren Weber, Wall Street Journal

It’s Jan. 9. Are you feeling frazzled yet?



Lake Tahoe News reporter Susan Wood on assignment. Photo/LTN file

You might be — especially if you're a soldier, public-relations executive, newspaper reporter, or airline pilot. Those are among the most stressful careers for 2014, according to a new ranking from job-search website CareerCast.com.

Every year, CareerCast.com compiles lists of the ten most and least taxing jobs, scoring 200 occupations according to 11 different stress factors including physical demands, deadlines, competitiveness, and the amount of travel the job requires. The scores are then added up to give a total, with higher numbers signaling higher stress. (Sources for the data include government agencies such as the Bureau of Labor Statistics, but also private surveys. See the full methodology here.)

It's a cruel fact that some of the toughest positions in today's economy, according to the lists, pay salaries that barely account for the shoulder-crunching tension they tend to inflict.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

• El Dorado County officials this week will begin construction on a $57 million Highway 50 interchange at Silva Valley Parkway. It is one-half mile east of the El Dorado Hills-Latrobe Road interchange. It's to accommodate future development.

• The Sugar Pine Foundation will be able to plant 10,000 trees this year because of funding from the Arbor Day Foundation.

• Foster Family and Adoption Services is having a meeting Jan. 23 at 5:30pm for people to learn about fostering and adopting in Lake Tahoe. The meeting is at 2580 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe.

• Lake Tahoe WinterFest Gay and Lesbian Ski Week is March 2-9.

• Pamela’s Pilates of South Lake Tahoe is having a grand re-opening celebration Jan. 25 from 4-7pm.

Pot stocks lighting up the market

Ben Rooney, CNN Money

The business of legal marijuana is booming in Colorado — and investors are catching a contact high.

Yes, there are pot stocks. Nearly all of them are thinly traded penny stocks available only on over-the-counter exchanges, but shares of companies that service the growing cannabis market have been blazing in recent weeks.

Medbox is the latest example. The company provides products and services for businesses that dispense medication, such as pharmacies. It announced plans Tuesday to tailor its products for use in recreational and medical marijuana facilities. Shares soared 65 percent. (Medbox, for the record, is not a penny stock. Shares trade for about $66 and the company is valued at nearly $1 billion.)

Read the whole story

Crystal Bay firm wants to reinvent South Shore

By Kathryn Reed

MEYERS – A Crystal Bay company has been contracted to come up with two development proposals for the South Shore.

One was met with trepidation, a bit of suspicion and some optimism Wednesday. The other the co-founder and principal of One Globe didn't want out in the public. The first involves Meyers, the latter the Chateau project – aka the hole in the ground in South Lake Tahoe on the border of Stateline.

"There is no plan for Meyers from One Globe. That is not a plan for Meyers. That is a case study, an analysis of a possibility, a project concept," El Dorado County Supervisor Norma Santiago emphatically told *Lake Tahoe News* on Jan. 8.

Santiago was unable to attend the Meyers Community Advisory Council's meeting Wednesday night.

Sheri Woodsgreen on Jan. 8 explains her company's development concept for Meyers. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Sheri Woodsgreen of One Globe presented her concept to the council for the first time on Wednesday. She told *Lake Tahoe News* she was hired a year ago to start looking at what type of development project Meyers could sustain. However, some members of the Meyers group had no idea Woodsgreen had been hired; and knew nothing about the catalyst project until last month.

One Globe was paid about $20,000 for the Meyers concept from the second round of funding from a Strategic Growth Council grant. The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency was the pass-through agency for the federal grant.

One Globe also has a $50,000 contract with the county to work on economic development in the basin. However, only half of it has been paid because all of the work has not been done. Chief Administrative Officer Terri Daly signed the contract. She has the authority to sign contracts up to $50,000, so the Board of Supervisors never approved this. It is something Santiago advocated for.

The money comes out of the Economic Development budget, which the CAO has control over.

"What they were putting together was a strategic implementation plan to get projects on the ground for El Dorado County," Santiago told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The county contracted with One Globe without input from South Lake Tahoe officials or the party that is developing the site. The contract was signed last summer at about the same time the city issued permits for the current retail to be constructed.

Woodsgreen first told *Lake Tahoe News* that writing about her involvement with the Chateau would derail the project, but then said, "It is only in the concept and discussion phase."

City National Bank and Owens Financial own the 11-plus acre parcel that until last year had been dormant because the previous developer went belly up.

Tahoe Stateline Ventures is the company property owner Bill Owens formed to develop part of the acreage his firm Owens Financial owns. The $11 million retail project fronting Highway 50 is expected to open later this year.

When Lew Feldman, attorney for TSV, was asked if he knew about the Globe One contract, he told *Lake Tahoe News*, “No. Why would El Dorado have an agreement with One Globe for a project El Dorado has no jurisdiction over?”

That question has yet to be answered by El Dorado County officials.

Daly has not returned multiple calls, Assistant CAO Kim Kerr deferred detailed comment to Santiago, and Santiago on Wednesday said she didn’t have time to get into it.

Plans for Meyers

The first part of the Jan. 8 meeting in Meyers was about the area plan being putting together that will be the guiding planning tool that will have to be approved by the Board of Supervisors and TRPA Governing Board.

The draft of the plan and associated environmental documents are expected to be released in early February, with a tentative date of Feb. 13 to have a public meeting to gather input. The documents will be in circulation for a 30-day public comment period.

It was decided the Meyers council will seek from the Board of Supervisors to be a more official governing body that would have first crack at any development plans for Meyers.

Making it easier for people to build is a goal of the area plan. This includes ironing out differences between the county and TRPA.

“We want consistency. That is why we want your area plan adopted into our General Plan,” Kerr said.

TRPA and county staff are meeting next week to help get them on the same page.

Meyers resident Jennifer Quashnick is concerned about the height and density regulations. The Meyers Area Plan allows for a maximum height of 35 feet in the town center, which is what the California Conservation Corps building is. The One Globe proposal calls for 45 feet. Per the area plan, this higher height would be allowable if a series of criteria are met.

Quashnick also questioned whether the California Tahoe Conservancy would sell its non-contiguous 5.76 acres in Meyers under its Asset Lands Management Program. And then she wondered if it’s possible to tie properties together for a larger project. (The CTC is meeting today from 10am-noon at Inn by the Lake to discuss the program.)

There is talk of making a website for coverage and CFA so people would know who or what agency has what. And it’s possible it could bring down the price of these commodities.

Some of the local property owners wondered why incentives were not being offered to current businesses – such as help with coverage and access from the highway, which Caltrans has banned.

“In the next year we are looking at transfer coverage policies. We hope to simplify that,” Adam Lewandowski with TRPA said.

But it was stated that incentives involving coverage are not likely.

According to the TRPA, there are 33,650-square-feet of commercial floor area available in Meyers.

“The Meyers Community Plan had requirements for CFA allocation that made it difficult to apply for. The Meyers Area Plan will likely revise the CFA allocation requirements to simplify it and make it easier to apply for new CFA,” Jeff Cowen with TRPA told *LTN*.

Catalyst project

While Santiago and Woodsgreen called the One Globe proposal “merely a concept”, the document comes across as more than that.

The 71-page document says, “The proposed theme is an Athlete’s Village attraction or The Meyers Basecamp. This athlete’s theme would attract complimentary [sic] entities such as 1) a multiuse education and event center that may include space for meetings and workshops, a cross-training area, or a physical therapy center; a sustainable food center; large anchor sponsor and/or retail store, such as a sport or outdoor adventure store; and lifestyle sports event services.”

Woodsgreen said this is needed because “athletes don’t feel comfortable on the South Shore. We know that.”

She did not explain her comment. Perhaps she has not heard of Maddie Bowman, Jamie Anderson, Elena Hight, Hannah Teter or Sho Kashima – all who live on the South Shore and all who could be representing the United States in the Olympics next month.

What worries some Meyers council members, who spoke off the record, is that Globe One came up with an idea that would fit into the area plan, so it could be a slam dunk based on legalities even if the community doesn’t want it.

Woodsgreen said her firm came up with the idea based on what people in Meyers have been saying they want.

In one breath Woodsgreen said, “… our infrastructure is outdated." And in another she said, "Let's leap from old technology. We don't need broadband."

In one breath she praised the Prosperity Plan, saying geotourism, wellness and the environment should be the focus of the basin. The irony is the Prosperity Center, while it has not produced anything tangible, has solely been working on establishing broadband for the basin – something Woodsgreen said is not needed.

In one breath Woodsgreen said the total maximum daily load issue is all about cars. In the next, she said, "If you want people off the highway, you have to have a place for them to be." In other words, drive to Meyers and then park. Her plans call for underground parking for the sports facility as well as public parking at both ends of town.

(A factual correction: Cars are not the No. 1 issue with TMDL; it's fine sediment.)

The project calls for melting snow at the sports center as well as what comes from snow removal and treating it in Meyers so it is potable.

Instead of an overpass to get from one side of Highway 50 to the other, One Globe proposes an underground passage for pedestrians and cyclists.

The proposal calls for bungalow-type lodging for athletes and the people they bring. However, currently only 10 tourist accommodation units are tied to Meyers. More could be transferred in if other jurisdictions are willing to do so.

Woodsgreen said she anticipates her project would cost $200 million to build. She proposed the funding come via using the 63-20 IRS rule, which has been on the books since 1963. It involves a nonprofit overseeing the facility for the life of the 30-year bonds and a public agency taking over the aging facility when the debt is paid. (More info about the 63-20 is available here from the state of Washington.)

It was decided at a future date the One Globe proposal needed a full vetting by the Meyers Council, if not the entire community.

Opinion: It’s a conspiracy to keep you fat

By Deborah Cohen, Los Angeles Times

At this time of year, a lot of Americans have vowed to develop more healthful habits. Unfortunately, most of those who have made weight loss resolutions will fail. But it won’t be entirely their fault.

Americans today live in a food swamp. We are constantly exposed to marketing and advertising designed to keep food on our minds and treats at our fingertips. If you go out to dinner, you will probably be served more food than you need and eat more than you should. At the market, you’ll be encouraged to buy unhealthful foods. It’s not easy to avoid or ignore all the forces that trigger bad eating habits.

Humans are hard-wired to notice food over other items. Once we perceive food, through sight, smell, hearing, taste or touch, we find ourselves wanting to eat, even if we are already full. This was no doubt a useful adaptation as humans evolved. But today, in a time of plentiful food, such impulses aren’t in a person’s best interest.

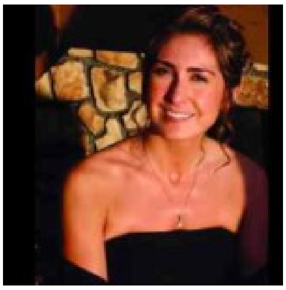
Read the whole story

Corey Rosalie McCauley – 1978-2014

Corey Rosalie McCauley, who graduated from South Tahoe High School in 1996, died Jan. 3 after a valiant battle with cancer. She was 35.

Corey was born March 7, 1978, in South Lake Tahoe.

She earned an associate of arts degree from Lake Tahoe Community College in 2003 and an associate of science degree in nursing from Sierra College in Rocklin in 2011.



Corey Rosalie McCauley

She was employed at Barton Memorial Hospital for 17 years. Her last job was as a registered nurse at Barton's Skilled Nursing Facility.

Corey loved the outdoors and enjoyed an active Tahoe lifestyle. Her favorite activities were hiking, trail running, biking and spending warm summer days at the beach. She also enjoyed playing softball and volleyball. Her leisure time was enjoyed by working on arts and crafts projects, building miniatures, watching movies, listening to music and enjoying her technologies and social networking.

Corey is survived by her husband, Dan; daughter Danica and devoted stepdaughter Morgan; mother Linda Baysinger of Gardnerville; brother Doug Glover of South Lake Tahoe; mother-in-law Frances McCauley of Sacramento; and numerous aunts, uncles and cousins.

She was preceded in death by her father, Michael Glover.

There will be a celebration of life Jan. 10 at 3pm at the Lake Tahoe Christian Fellowship, 3580 Blackwood Road, South Lake Tahoe. A reception will follow the service. Attendees are requested to bring a single flower which will then become a unified arrangement. In lieu of other flower arrangements, an educational fund has been established for 23-month-old Danica. Donations may be written out to Danica Faith McCauley and given in love at the service.

Dana Benedict – 1960-2013

Dana Benedict, the founder of Pinnacle Real Estate Group in South Lake Tahoe, died Dec. 30. He was 53.

Dana was born June 10, 1960, in Willows. He was raised in Boulder Creek, attended San Lorenzo Valley High School and graduated from the University of Oregon. Those that knew him well were drawn into his passion for the Oregon Ducks and life in the mountains.

Dana Benedict

Always an entrepreneur, family and friends smile with memories of his many ventures such as raising and selling earthworms, Christmas wreaths designed from computer punch cards and packaging ashes for sale from Mount St. Helens.

He helped create Tahoe Property Management and Pinnacle Lake Tahoe Getaways.

His lifelong passion for the outdoors began with numerous family trips to the Sierra. That passion grew to include camping, fishing, skiing, snowmobiling and dirt bikes. Among his personal outdoor highlights was hiking the Pacific Crest Trail.

He supported every activity his kids participated in, never missing baseball or football games, or cross country meets.

Dana is survived by his wife, Michelle Blue Benedict, and their children Sarah and Todd. Siblings include Kent and Paula Benedict, Barbara and Spencer Kimball, Carolyn and Charlie Baird. Also left behind are 14 nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Joseph Arje Benedict and Kathryn Kent Benedict.

A celebration of life will be Jan. 25 from 4-6pm at Lake Tahoe Golf Course. Those looking to make a memorial donation are encouraged to contribute to the children's college funds. E-gift pages may be found online. Todd's account number is 616075329 and Sarah's is 616075310.

U.S. healthcare costs rising at slower pace

By Noam N. Levey, Los Angeles Times

WASHINGTON — The relentless rise in healthcare spending — which had threatened government budgets and helped pave the way for President Obama’s health law — continued to moderate in 2012, the fourth year of a historic slowdown, newly released federal data show.

Overall spending on healthcare rose less than 4 percent in 2012, less than half the rate of a decade ago, independent economists at the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services concluded.

For only the third time in the last 15 years, health spending grew more slowly than the overall economy as measured by the non-inflation-adjusted U.S. gross domestic product. That meant that healthcare shrank slightly as a share of the U.S. economy, from 17.3 percent in 2011 to 17.2 percent in 2012.

Read the whole story