Grandson of Vail Resorts founder killed in avalanche

By Kieran Nicholson, Ryan Parker and Jason Blevins, Denver Post

The grandson of Vail's founder was killed in an avalanche while skiing near the resort Tuesday.

Tony Seibert, 24, the grandson of Peter Seibert, was killed and three others were injured in the out-of-bounds avalanche.

Vail Resorts declined to comment on the matter and directed all questions to the sheriff's office. The identity of the victim has not been officially released, but was confirmed by a close family friend and through a family member on social media.

Teri Salani Seibert, Tony's mother, works for Vail Ski Patrol, according to her Facebook page. His father is Peter Seibert Jr.

The avalanche struck about 11:35am in East Vail Chutes, said Jessie Mosher, an Eagle County Sheriff's Office spokeswoman.

Read the whole story

Flu bug circulating throughout Lake Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

While there have been no deaths this season in the Lake Tahoe

Basin from the flu, that is not the same case for bordering counties.

A woman in her 30s and a man in his 50s died last weekend in Sacramento County from the H1N1 flu strain. This is the same strain that gripped the country in 2009. On Friday, a 61-year-old woman was the first recorded flu death for Sac County.

This strain, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is predominately afflicting young and middle-age adults who are otherwise in good health.

Barton Health's PR department said four times the number of people are coming in with flu symptoms this year compared to a year ago, but no numbers were provided so it's hard to ascertain if this is a big deal.

"From what they have observed, the community clinic is much busier and they are seeing more cases of the flu. The flu cases they are seeing are more severe and more frequently in young, typically healthy adults," Molly Hucklebridge, Barton communications specialist, told *Lake Tahoe New*s.

According to the CDC, for the last week of 2013, 20 states experienced high levels of influenza-like illness. Nevada was one of those states. Three people in Southern Nevada this season have died from the flu. California, to date, has had a minimal number of cases.

"Although H1N1 primarily affects children and young to middle-aged adults, it can affect anyone of any age. This year's flu vaccine is designed to provide protection against H1N1, along with two or three other flu strains," Margaret Williams with El Dorado County Health & Human Services told *Lake Tahoe News*.

It is not too late to be vaccinated. It costs $10 through the Public Health Division. Call (530) 573.3155 in South Lake Tahoe.

El Dorado County Public Health urges individuals to take the following actions to protect themselves and others from the flu:

• Get vaccinated against the flu annually. Minimum age is 6 months.

• Avoid close contact with sick people.

• Stay home if you are sick.

• Wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

• Sneeze or cough into your arm or a tissue; not your hand.

• Take flu antivirals if your doctor prescribes them.

Paul Rork, a physician with Barton Health, told *Lake Tahoe News*, "As soon as you experience flu-like symptoms – which may include a high fever, muscle aches, sore throat, chills, fatigue, cough, and/or headache – visit a doctor immediately. If you see a doctor early, they can treat the flu with medication. If you find your symptoms getting worse after your flu symptoms have improved, you need to visit a doctor. You are at risk of contracting a secondary infection."

Study: Color-coded food changes eating habits

By Michaeleen Doucleff, NPR

Could a little red circle really make me bypass short ribs and mashed potatoes for some cod and rice instead? You've got to

be kidding.

Well, a team of doctors at Massachusetts General Hospital sure think so – at least sometimes – and they have a study that backs them up.

After six months, people started changing their eating habits, the researchers found. The number of red, unhealthy items purchased in the cafeteria dropped by 20 percent, while green purchases rose by 12 percent. But the biggest change occurred when it came to drink choices: Consumption of sugary sodas dropped by nearly 40 percent.

Read the whole story

Snowshoe cocktail event tests balance, speed

Snowshoe Cocktail Races at Camp Richardson are scheduled to start Jan. 18.

Racers run up and down the beach with a cocktail tray full of drinks. The goal is to be the fastest snowshoer with the least amount of spilled beverages. It’s possible to win prizes in multiple race categories.

The event begins at 7pm at the Beacon restaurant. There is no cost to participate.

There will be races Feb. 15 and March 15, too.

Calif. lawmaker wants free public preschool

By Sharon Bernstein, Reuters

SACRAMENTO – A top California lawmaker on Tuesday is expected to unveil a proposal to fund free public preschool for all children in the most populous state.

The plan by Senate Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg, D-Sacramento, to offer a pre-kindergarten program to 4-year-olds comes as he and other Democratic legislators try to push Gov. Jerry Brown to increase spending on social services, including education, in next year's budget.

The proposal is expected to involve expanding an existing program aimed at children who turn 5 years old too late in the year to attend regular kindergarten. Details such as the cost of the plan would be released today.

A spokesman for Brown on Monday said the governor, who is set to release his budget on Friday, has no comment on the preschool plan.

Read the whole story

Ladies night at Lake of the Sky Outfitters

Lake of the Sky Outfitters is hosting a ladies night on Jan. 17 from 6-9pm.

For the first hour it’s about shopping. All apparel and footwear in stock is 40 percent off. Then at 7pm the movie “Climb Against the Odds, Mt. McKinley”, the story of the 1998 all women’s expedition for Breast Cancer, will be shown.

The movie is free.

Lake of the Sky Outfitters is at 1023 Emerald Bay Road, South Lake Tahoe.

Why is cancer so prolific?

By George Johnson, New York Times

Every New Year when the government publishes its Report to the Nation on the Status of Cancer, it is followed by a familiar lament. We are losing the war against cancer.

Half a century ago, the story goes, a person was far more likely to die from heart disease. Now cancer is on the verge of overtaking it as the No. 1 cause of death.

Troubling as this sounds, the comparison is unfair. Cancer is, by far, the harder problem – a condition deeply ingrained in the nature of evolution and multicellular life. Given that obstacle, cancer researchers are fighting and even winning smaller battles: reducing the death toll from childhood cancers and preventing – and sometimes curing – cancers that strike people in their prime. But when it comes to diseases of the elderly, there can be no decisive victory. This is, in the end, a zero-sum game.

Read the whole story

Vonn to miss Sochi Olympics

By USSA

PARK CITY -– Olympic gold medalist and 17-time Audi FIS Alpine World Cup title winner Lindsey Vonn (Vail) announced today that she will miss the 2014 Olympic Winter Games in Sochi, Russia.

“I am devastated to announce that I will not be able to compete in Sochi. I did everything I possibly could to somehow get strong enough to overcome having no ACL, but the reality has sunk in that my knee is just too unstable to compete at this level,” Vonn said.

Vonn sustained a season-ending injury to her right knee on Feb. 5, 2013, during a crash in the opening race of the World Championships in Schladming, Austria.

Vonn staged a comeback, returning to snow on Aug. 31 during a U.S. Ski Team training camp in Portillo, Chile.

She re-aggravated the same knee during a downhill training crash on Nov. 19 at the U.S. Ski Team Speed Center at Copper Mountain, Colo., causing her to miss the debut of Raptor, the 2015 World Championships women’s venue at Beaver Creek.

She then returned to the World Cup tour Dec. 6-8 with a successful three-race series in Lake Louise, Alberta, including an impressive fifth the super G.

A subsequent racing injury suffered Dec. 21 during a World Cup downhill in Val d’Isere, France, made it impossible to stabilize her knee and be ready in time for the upcoming Olympic Winter Games.

Vonn will undergo surgery shortly and will turn her focus on the 2015 World Cup season that includes the 2015 FIS Alpine World Ski Championships set for Feb. 2-15 in Beaver Creek.

Vonn is the most successful female alpine skier in American history with 17 World Cup titles including a record six consecutive downhill titles and four overall crowns.

Vonn has 59 World Cup victories, currently three short of tying the women's all-time record of 62 held by Austrian Annemarie Moser-Proell.

Lawsuit threatens future Lake Tahoe fireworks

By Kathryn Reed

Fireworks at Lake Tahoe may come down to tourism vs. the environment.

There is no question the twice annual fireworks show shot from barges on Lake Tahoe on the South Shore are a crowd pleaser on July 4 and Labor Day weekend. But the piles of debris collected afterward and the perchlorate entering the water are another story.

A lawsuit has been filed by Joan and Joseph Truxler of Zephyr Cove against Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority and Pyro Spectaculars. Pyro has been putting on the Lake Tahoe shows for 30 years. LTVA is the lead agency responsible for paying for the fireworks shows that cost upward of $100,000 each.



Fireworks at Lake Tahoe are rated some of the best in the country. Photo/Howie Nave

These are the two biggest fireworks shows in the Lake Tahoe Basin. However, there are other shows around the lake during July 4 that are mostly tied to municipalities celebrating Independence Day as well as private fireworks displays throughout the year. The South Shore pyrotechnics are in South Lake Tahoe, but the current can take debris into Nevada.

LTVA has divers collect debris, most of which is cardboard because that is what explosives are stuffed into. The material is also plucked from the surface of the lake.

“These are pollutants that people are consciously shooting into the lake,” Mike Lozeau, the attorney representing the Truxlers, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “The Truxlers are not interested in stopping the events. They just don’t want to pick up trash.”

Although the fireworks company picked up more than a dozen bags of trash after the July event, the Truxlers reportedly spent days picking up trash on Pinewild beach. They were doing the same in September after that show.

They have owned their house since 1999 and have been full-time residents since 2006, according to the lawsuit.

However, this is the first year they or anyone has complained

to LTVA about trash from the fireworks.

“At this point because of the litigation we are not able to offer additional details or comments,” Carol Chaplin, executive director of LTVA, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

A goal of the lawsuit, according to Lozeau, it to have the fireworks permitted by Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board in California and/or Nevada Division of Environmental Protection.

The lawsuit claims the Clean Water Act is being violated. Court documents state, “Both the state of California and the state of Nevada have established water quality standards strictly prohibiting floating debris on Lake Tahoe and other waters. California’s water quality standards provide that ‘[w]aters shall not contain floating material, including solids, liquids, foams, and scum, in concentrations that cause nuisance or adversely affect the water for beneficial uses.’”

Lahontan after the July 2001 display monitored the water, but has not done so since then. On July 4, 2001, 63 micrograms per liter of perchlorate were found. This is 10 times the amount the federal government says should be in water. However, 12 hours later non-detectable levels of perchlorate were found in the same location.

Lauri Kemper with Lahontan told *Lake Tahoe News* that because the perchlorate had dissipated her agency determined there were no long-term effects to the lake from the chemical.

She added that no one has asked for a fireworks permit. If they were to do so, that is something the Lahontan board would have to address.

Nevada also does not issue fireworks permits.

“The Nevada Division of Environmental Protection encourages the Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority and its contractors to

continue compliance with any applicable local permits, plans or requirements. NDEP does not require additional oversight of the twice a year firework displays," JoAnn Kittrell with the Nevada Department of Conservation & Natural Resources told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Jeff Cowen with the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency said his agency also does not issue any permits for the fireworks shows.

Mediation is the next step for both sides; however, a date has not been set.

Opinion: Battle over school money is just one issue

By Dan Walters, Sacramento Bee

As chronicled here and in other venues, there's a fierce battle under way between competing factions over how to spend billions in extra state school funds to improve the education of poor children.



Dan Walters

The education establishment is demanding "flexibility" in rules being considered by the state Board of Education, while

civil rights and business-backed reform groups want more specificity and tighter monitoring.

A subset of the larger conflict is how the targeted students are being defined, because their concentrations govern how much extra state money school districts would receive. The new law defines them as those eligible for free or reduced-price school meals, “English-learners” and foster children, and by offering big bonuses, the state is creating a financial incentive for districts to beat the bushes to qualify as many as possible.

Read the whole story