Out of town cops raid empty Tahoe house

Citrus Heights cops raided an empty house on the South Shore earlier this month.

Western Highland Mortgage owns the house on Guadalupe Street. An employee with the company said the house is vacant and for sale, and that “it was obviously a mistake” by the cops. He didn’t want to comment further.

Jeff Catchings, with the South Lake El Dorado Narcotics Enforcement Team, said the Citrus Heights officers were following up on a case that involved a drug lab explosion. He told *Lake Tahoe News* one of the suspects in that case used to live in the El Dorado County house.

The lead detective from Citrus Heights Police Department was not available for comment.

El Dorado County sheriff’s deputies were on scene when this went down. Lt. Pete Van Arnum said it’s a courtesy among agencies to let another one know when a search warrant will be executed.

When a search warrant is executed officers surround the house to secure the perimeter, if no one answers, then forced entry is allowed – as was the case June 19 at the Guadalupe house.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Kahle to host youth soccer camp

A youth soccer camp is coming to Kahle Community Center in Stateline.

Douglas County Parks and Recreation Department with Steve Maltase and former Whittell High School soccer players will be offering a weeklong youth soccer camp from July 8-12. This is for ages 4-14.

For more information or to register, call (775) 586.7271.

Players will need to bring a lunch, water bottle, wear sunscreen and have cleats & shin guards.

Play is from 10am-1pm for ages 4-6 and cost is $125. Ages 7 and up play from 10am-3pm; cost is $145.

Felon accused of possessing stolen gun



John Liska

A convicted felon was found driving through South Lake Tahoe with a stolen gun in his vehicle.

John Liska, 34, of South Lake Tahoe was pulled over in a routine stop about 6pm June 26. South Tahoe officers said at first the suspect gave a false name.

Officer Chris Webber recognized Liska's name as that of the suspect in an active criminal case he had investigated in May involving a local vehicle burglary. In that vehicle burglary, a check was stolen, forged and passed for cash at a South Lake Tahoe bank.

Liska is a convicted felon from Alaska.

Officers said when they searched Liska and his vehicle they found the stolen firearm, ammunition, metal knuckles, an illegal spring-loaded knife, a sap (a sap is weapon which is typically a flat-profiled, leather-covered lead rod, fitted with a spring handle, and is a felony to possess in California), marijuana and drug paraphernalia.



Weapons confiscated on June 26 in South Lake Tahoe. Photos/Provided

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

El Dorado County Sangiovese scores at State Fair

Sierra Foothill wines were judged among some of the best in the California State Fair’s commercial wine competition.

Judges had 2,625 wines to rate.

Tying for best Sangiovese in the state were El Dorado County wineries Boeger Winery and Windwalker Winery.

Crystal Basin Cellars, also in El Dorado County, was rewarded for being the best Syrah.

While Macchia Winery is in Lodi, it used grapes from Amador County to create California’s No. 1 Zinfandel.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Tony Lashbrook, Truckee town manager, is looking for input about banning plastic bags. Click here to read more about the topic.

• Now in its third year, Cowboys and Cornbread is a daylong celebration of western living and old-fashioned fun. It is

July 21 from 11am-5pm at the El Dorado County Fairgrounds, 100 Placerville Drive, Placerville. It costs $10 per carload (up to six people per car) or $2 walk-in per person.

• The National Football League Foundation has awarded a grant of $250,000 to the Gene Upshaw Memorial Fund. The grant will be paid in $50,000 installments over five years. Upshaw died in August 2008 of pancreatic cancer at age 63. The Gene Upshaw Memorial Fund is held by the Tahoe Forest Health System Foundation, and benefits the Gene Upshaw Memorial Tahoe Forest Cancer Center and the Tahoe Institute for Rural Health Research.

• There will be a wine tasting at Raley's in Incline Village on Aug. 16 from 5-8pm to raise money for the Sugar Pine Foundation. Cost is $10.

• Linda McCall, who owns the Decorating Den Interiors franchise at Lake Tahoe, was named decorator of the year by Decorating Den Interiors, North America's largest interior design and home furnishings franchise company.

Placerville winery transports guests to Italy

By Kathryn Reed

PLACERVILLE – Pam is back in Tuscany. Sue is in heaven. And I don't want to leave.

Wine glasses keep being filled and plates of divine food are continually placed in front of us.

To set the mood even more, our sommelier, Orietta Gianjorio,

has an Italian accent. It was only five years ago that she moved to the States from Rome. She educates us about the wines we are drinking and how they are bound to complement the food.

Our chef for the day comes across more of a free spirit who could be at home in Tahoe. After all, he spent some time as a ski bum in Breckenridge. But Damon Barham's cooking pedigree is more prestigious, having attended the California Culinary Academy Le Cordon Bleu. He is now an instructor at the San Francisco school and chef at their Technique Restaurant.



Miraflores Winery allows guests to dine among the vines on summer weekends. Photos/Kathryn Reed

Pam was our tablemate last Saturday afternoon at Miraflores Winery. She came up from the Bay Area for this four-course lunch and wine pairing.

Sitting outside on the terrace with the vineyards a stone's throw away reminds Pam of her recent trip to Tuscany where the villa she stayed at was on a working winery.

This is the third summer the Placerville winery has put together a chef and sommelier to plan a weekend lunch. The duo does the lunch Saturday and Sunday, with each weekend through October being a different pair.

"It's becoming a bit of a competition," Miraflores General

Manager Matricia Haigood says in how she goes about selecting the chefs. “We let them cook anything they want.”

With each weekend being a new event, Haigood said it’s common for people to attend more than one lunch throughout the summer.

It’s up to the sommelier to pick whatever Miraflores wine she wants to go with each course.

“My first and main inspiration is what is in season,” Barham tells *Lake Tahoe News*.

He sent Gianjorio his menu and from there she decided what to pour.

“Damon is a young chef and likes to try things. I wanted the attention to last to the last bite,” Gianjorio explained. “That is why I try to keep the wines light.”

This was the menu on June 22:

• First Course:

2012 Barbera Rosé

Asparagus soup shot with dry jack puff

• Second Course:

2012 Pinot Grigio

Miraflores estate “smoked” trout salad with arugula, brioche, cherries and almonds

• Third Course:

2007 Syrah

Late spring lamb stew with artichokes, polenta fries and caponata

• Fourth Course:

2009 Botricelli

Strawberry-rhubarb and frangipane tartlet with lavender-white chocolate mousse.

Vegetarians are welcome with advance notice. I was served the salad without the trout – which Pam and Sue said was a shame because it was the highlight of the salad.

Pam said the cherry dressing brought out the flavor of the trout.

The chef said he made his own brine to make it taste like it was smoked.

I was still wishing the soup had been more than a shot. A big bowl – not even a cup – would have been more to my liking.

But the presentation made it fun and whimsical. Barham comes out of the kitchen to each table with a pitcher full of the chilled soup that he pours into tall shot glasses that each have two asparagus tips in them. It's served with a cheese stick that can be used as a spoon or dipping utensil before one throws back the soup like a shot.

One of the things Miraflores owner Victor Alvarez likes about these lunches is the chefs "talk to the people. They don't hide in the kitchen."

The caponata with the entrée has the three of us in search of yet another superlative.

The chef tells us he used a pressure cooker for the tomatoes. It is their natural sweetness that makes this relish of sorts that is dominated by eggplant have such a sweet flavor.

The Syrah is a fabulous choice for this dish. Pam and Sue agree – especially with the lamb.

While I’m not one to usually like sweet wines, the Botricelli has me thinking otherwise. Some of the strawberries used in the dessert were soaked in the wine.

There is no rush to eat or drink. We have the table for the afternoon if we want. Miraflores has learned a second seating isn’t possible because some people make the lunch a daylong event.

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Notes:

• More info about the pairings may be found online.

• Lunches go through Oct. 27.

• Cost is $40.

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Letter: Time to celebrate equality

To the community,

Yesterday was a momentous day, not only for LGBT Americans, but for all beings who hold the vision of justice and equality for our country.

Today we celebrate the Supreme Court and its defeat of the discriminatory and misnamed Defense of Marriage Act. We celebrate the return of marriage equality rights in the state

of California.

Thank you to all the justices who sided with fairness on this issue. This decision has been a long time coming and we have worked hard to make it happen. Those of us, LGBT and our "straight" allies, should feel proud of the work we have done these many years and decades. We have made history. LGBT civil rights join the ranks of those won by women, by racial minorities, and by people with disabilities.

This great country of ours has never been better than when we live by our own motto, "Liberty and justice for all".

As a community, LGBT rights have slowly evolved for decades, with the gradual overturning of sodomy laws, adoption laws, and the protections of hate crime legislation, fair housing, and job protection just to name a few examples. We still have much work to do, as too many states still do not have these rights and protections. Almost 75 percent of America's states still do not recognize same gender marriage, despite Wednesday's Supreme Court ruling.

We have every reason to feel gratified, but we should not be satisfied until full equality, in all aspects of life, is the law across this great country, with no exceptions. But, for today, let's take time to celebrate and dance and sing and shout out the joy that we feel. Tomorrow, we can roll up our sleeves and get back to work with the huge momentum we have gained.

Today my heart is very full. When I heard the Supreme Court announcement I turned to my beloved Heide and told her, "I have been waiting for this moment all of my adult life"; the right to legally marry the person I love and have committed my life to. I am going to propose to Heide and say those words I have been longing to say to her for 14 years, "Will you marry me?"

Janice Eastburn, South Lake Tahoe

(**Note:** Heide said yes.)

President releases sweeping global warming plan

By Paul Rogers, San Jose Mercury News

In the most sweeping action the federal government has taken to date to combat the warming of the planet, President Obama on Tuesday announced the nation's first mandatory restrictions on greenhouse gas emissions from new and existing power plants.

The new rules, a centerpiece environmental initiative of Obama's presidency, follow the lead that California set last year when it began to impose statewide greenhouse gas limits on power plants, factories and other industrial sources.

Speaking at Georgetown University, Obama took a swipe at climate deniers and described global warming as a major threat to the nation's economy, farm production and its environment, noting that severe storms, droughts and forest

"We limit the amount of toxic chemicals like mercury and arsenic and sulfur in our air and water," Obama said. "But power plants can still dump unlimited amounts of carbon pollution into our air for free. That's not right. That's not safe. And it needs to stop."

The announcement sets up years of legal and political battles, with environmentalists and the administration on one side and the coal and utility industry, along with most Republicans in Congress, on the other. Opponents contend that the rules will

cost too much and drag down the economy.

Experts said Tuesday that the president's new climate strategy – which does not require approval from Congress – is expected to boost Silicon Valley companies involved in solar, wind, energy efficiency and other cleantech businesses, while also spurring more construction of large solar and wind projects in the Southern California desert.

"This is important for our environment and for the Silicon Valley companies that have made this the cleantech hub of the world," said Carl Guardino, CEO of the Silicon Valley Leadership Group. "Companies like SunPower, SolarCity and Tesla Motors are leading the way in developing the innovative technologies and financing we need to meet the goals of deploying more renewable power, advancing energy efficiency and delivering on the promise of next-generation transportation."

Obama's new strategy on climate change also included broad new initiatives to increase renewable energy construction on federal land, tighten rules for appliance efficiency and begin planning for coastal cities and other areas to deal with the effects of the warming climate.

"This is exactly the way environmental policy moves forward in this country," said Mary Nichols, who chairs the California Air Resources Board. "California starts out and takes a leadership post, then other states join in and the federal government comes in, and eventually we get a nationwide program. I think it's great."

Power plants – mostly from the burning of coal and natural gas to generate electricity – produce 33 percent of the nation's greenhouse gases, the largest source. By comparison, all cars, trucks, planes, trains and boats account for 28 percent.

Obama is able to crack down on the dirtiest power plants through executive action.

In 2007, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the federal Environmental Protection Agency can regulate carbon dioxide, the primary gas that traps heat in Earth's atmosphere, under the Clean Air Act – the same as it does with soot, lead and other types of air pollution.

"This is the change Americans have been waiting for on climate," said Michael Brune, national executive director of the Sierra Club, based in San Francisco. "President Obama is finally putting action behind his words."

Coal industry and utility groups are expected to try to block the rules through lawsuits. The new regulations, scheduled to be released next summer by the EPA, will make coal-fired power plants – which emit more greenhouse gases than other types of power plants – more expensive to build and operate.

"The last thing our economy needs right now is another layer of government red tape that will make it harder to grow businesses and hire more workers," said House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio.

Obama's new climate plan also directs the Interior Department to approve enough renewable energy projects, such as solar and wind, on public lands by 2020 to power 6 million homes. Millions of acres of California desert are federally owned by the Bureau of Land Management. In addition, it makes up to $8 billion in loan guarantees available for energy efficiency projects and advanced fossil fuel technology.

It also expands energy efficiency standards for federal buildings and home appliances, an area where California has led since the 1970s. And the plan commits to developing new gas-mileage standards for heavy-duty trucks on 2018 models and later.

Nichols said she doesn't anticipate the new rules on power plants will upend California's carbon-trading market or result in higher utility bills for California consumers. She noted

the state already has a law requiring mandatory carbon limits from power plants and that California law requires that 33 percent of the state's electricity come from renewable sources by 2020.

California uses very little coal-fired electricity because coal is not mined in the state and because power plants run on natural gas, which burns more cleanly, and have fit better with the state's strict smog regulations. California's electricity mostly comes from natural gas, hydroelectric power, nuclear energy and renewables.

Globally, the 10 hottest years on record have all occurred since 1998. Sea level rose 7 inches in the 20th century. Ice sheets in Greenland, Antarctica and the Arctic sea are all shrinking in size, as are most of the world's glaciers.

"We don't have time for a meeting of the Flat Earth Society," Obama said. "Sticking your head in the sand might make you feel safer, but it is not going to protect you from the coming storm."

Antibiotics in food chain affecting human health

By Monica Eng, Chicago Tribune

While Sam Spitz's friends were loading up on pizza for lunch, the Whitney Young High School sophomore opted for a chicken Caesar salad.

Spitz was in training for a big sophomore baseball season – after having pitched on the school's varsity team as a

freshman – so, he says, he “wanted to make the healthy choice.”

But soon he was not so sure he’d chosen wisely. Severe gastric distress kept him in the bathroom for hours, and eventually he started losing blood.

After multiple trips to the emergency room, Spitz learned he’d been infected with an antibiotic-resistant strain of campylobacter, a pathogen most commonly linked to poultry. He blames the salad, as the chicken Caesar was his only source of poultry that week.

One month, 30 pounds and several failed antibiotics later, Spitz had lost his baseball season along with much of his confidence. He’d also lost a lot of faith in the “miracle drug” of the 20th century, antibiotics.

“I was 15 and I never pitched in high school again,” said Spitz, now 22. “I’d spent that entire offseason training, and I was stronger than I’d ever been. I thought I was invincible, but I watched myself and my baseball career wither away. … I thought antibiotics were supposed to work. But they didn’t and that was terrifying.”

Concern has been intensifying in recent years over the use of antibiotics in agriculture, which world health authorities agree contributes to the development of drug-resistant bacteria. These so-called superbugs infect hundreds of thousands and kill tens of thousands of Americans each year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Legislation before Congress would rein in the use of medically important antibiotics on healthy livestock through mandatory restrictions as well as public disclosure of how antibiotics are used on animals and in what quantity.

But such efforts face resistance from the meat industry, and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration says the issue is better

handled through voluntary guidelines it hopes to finalize this year, including more veterinary oversight.

Critics doubt that a voluntary approach would decrease use and say the current lack of transparency would prevent anyone from knowing whether it did – an issue also noted by the Government Accountability Office.

Health authorities say antibiotics should be used sparingly because any bacteria that can survive the drugs will multiply, increasing the strain's overall resistance. Dr. Jean Patel, deputy director of the Office of Antimicrobial Resistance at the CDC, calls antibiotic resistance one of the nation's most serious health threats.

"Resistance often emerges in the health care setting where antimicrobials are commonly used," Patel said, "but these drugs are also used on the farm, and a number of foodborne pathogens, like salmonella, are becoming increasingly resistant to antimicrobials that are important for human health."

The Environmental Working Group, a research and advocacy group, analyzed government data and reported last month that 69 percent of pork chops and 81 percent of ground turkey sampled in 2011 were contaminated with antibiotic-resistant bacteria. Turkey raised without antibiotics – including organic turkey – carries fewer such pathogens, according to recent research by Consumers Union, the advocacy arm of Consumer Reports.

About 80 percent of all antibiotics sold by weight in the U.S. in 2011 were used on livestock, according to FDA figures. That year, 7.3 million pounds of antibiotics were used to treat humans, compared with 29.9 million pounds sold for meat and poultry production.

All parties in the antibiotics debate agree that it makes sense to treat sick animals with appropriate antibiotics. And

nearly all say that using antibiotics just to make animals grow faster – a practice long banned in the European Union – is, as the FDA puts it, “injudicious.”

If the FDA’s voluntary guidance is finalized this year, livestock producers will be asked to stop using antibiotics solely to fuel growth starting sometime in 2016. Antibiotics still could be given to animals to control and prevent disease, but licensed veterinarians would oversee the process.

Critics say the strategy is too weak. Noting that many antibiotics are marketed for growth promotion as well as disease prevention, environmental and consumer groups fear that animals will remain on a steady diet of antibiotics, if for different stated reasons.

“The first problem is that it is voluntary. As far as we are concerned the FDA has tried a voluntary approach on this for almost 40 years, and it hasn’t worked,” said Avinash Kar, an attorney who works on antibiotic issues for the Natural Resources Defense Council, an environmental advocacy group. “The second problem is that it leaves a giant loophole for so-called preventive uses.”

Dr. Bill Flynn of the FDA’s Center for Veterinary Medicine said the agency does not condone using preventive antibiotics for “just whatever disease might come along” in a herd of healthy animals. “Licensed veterinarians will need to play a key role in making sure these drugs are used appropriately,” Flynn said.

A bill from Democratic Rep. Louise Slaughter of New York, a microbiologist, would take a stricter approach, aiming to preserve the effectiveness of medically important drugs by limiting their use in animal agriculture. But that effort does not have the support of the FDA or the major players in the livestock and pharmaceutical industries.

“Antibiotic resistance is a very complex topic,” said Liz

Wagstrom, the National Pork Producer Council's chief veterinarian. "And so what might be appropriate for one bacteria in one type of animal might not be appropriate for another. So the idea of legislating this with a broad-based ban doesn't seem appropriate."

Speeding growth with antibiotics allows animals to eat less food over a lifetime, leaving "more corn available for the production of renewable fuels and less manure for the producer to manage," according to the pork council. It also says its research has found a negligible direct risk to humans from antibiotic resistance linked to agricultural uses.

Two other bills in the House and Senate would require the FDA to make public the data it collects on how the drugs are marketed and used on animals, as well as require the agency to collect more information that could indicate, for example, whether drugs are being used to compensate for unhealthy living conditions.

Flynn said the agency is exploring its own "approaches for enhanced data collection" with a goal of having some baseline data before the voluntary guidance goes into effect.

In addition to legislation, some advocacy groups have launched legal challenges. The Natural Resources Defense Council successfully sued last year to compel the FDA to follow up on its own 1977 findings that nontherapeutic use of penicillins and some tetracylines was leading to antibiotic resistance and should be stopped. The FDA has appealed.

In April, month Spitz and his mother, Jennifer Amdur Spitz, traveled to Capitol Hill with other survivors, scientists, doctors and chefs to support legislative action in Congress.

Everly Macario, of Chicago, who has a doctorate in public health from Harvard University, told of losing her 18-month-old son, Simon, in 2004 to methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus, or MRSA.

Macario says her previously healthy and hardy boy contracted the infection one night and was dead within 24 hours despite the use of a powerful broad-spectrum antibiotic. Even with her public health training, Macario said, she wasn't aware how serious the issue of antibiotic resistance had become.

Even in "highly educated, high-income circles," she said, "many still don't know what MRSA is or they don't understand how it is connected to antibiotics given to food animals."

Like Macario, Spitz and his mother said they were grateful to have the opportunity to speak to lawmakers but found the experience dispiriting in the end.

"We came to Washington for only one day, and all we had to share were our stories," he said. "But industry lobbyists are there every day, and they come bearing real gifts."

As the legislative and legal battles drag on, some advocates say the fight also must be taken directly to the consumer.

Spitz's father, Jeff, a documentarian, and his wife are making a film called "Food Patriots" that highlights food innovators around the nation and ways consumers can vote with their dollars for a safer and healthier food production system.

Amdur Spitz also started a petition in March on change.org urging the U.S. Department of Agriculture to ensure that at least some meat distributed to schools through its commodity program be raised without the use of antibiotics.

The Northbrook mom, a strategic communications consultant, notes that Chicago Public Schools already buys chicken raised without antibiotics for school meals once a month. A nationwide program, she said, would help preserve the effectiveness of antibiotics while offering safer meals and a lesson for students.

"The first thing is that you reduce the risk of superbugs in

our children’s meal,” Amdur Spitz said. “And the second is that you create a dialogue at school and in the community about antibiotics in animal agriculture. … At the same time it pushes the marketplace toward producing more meat in ways that are healthier for the public.”

Some Chicago institutions, including O’Hare International Airport, Midway Airport, Shedd Aquarium and McCormick Place, recently announced or completed plans to source a portion of their meat from producers that don’t use antibiotics. The Chicago-area restaurants Sopraffina, Poag Mahone’s and Trattoria No. 10 say 100 percent of their meat is raised without antibiotics, amounting to about 400,000 pounds a year.

Consumer groups and other advocates say they will continue to apply pressure in Washington, though Macario said she is frustrated by the slow pace of legislative change.

“I just don’t get it,” she said. “I can’t understand why more people aren’t freaked out that we are on the precipice of a postantibiotic era.”

Miraflores Winery lunch

Chef Damon Barham talks June 22 at Miraflores Winery in Placerville about cooking with fresh ingredients that pair well with good wine.