Arrest made in S. Tahoe bike shop theft

A 34-year-old South Lake Tahoe man is accused of breaking into South Shore Bikes and stealing one bike.

Officers found Lee Sparks at Barton Memorial Hospital about 1am March 18.

“He had several fresh cuts on his arms and when interviewed admitted to the burglary at South Shore Bikes,” South Lake Tahoe police Lt. David Stevenson said in a press release.

Sparks allegedly gained entry to the Emerald Bay Road store just after 9pm March 17 by forcing his way through a roof vent. He reportedly left through a window at the front of the business.

Officers said they found blood at the scene and other identifying evidence.

Sparks was arrested on charges of burglary and booked in the El Dorado County Jail.

— Lake Tahoe News staff report

S. Tahoe bank robbery suspect in custody



Paul Cortez

A South Lake Tahoe man has been arrested and charged in the March 27 robbery at El Dorado Savings Bank.

Police got wind that the suspect was in Reno. They met Paul Cortez, 29, there and subsequently obtained an arrest warrant.

Cortez was arrested by Reno officers on March 21 and is waiting to be transferred to South Lake Tahoe.

“Cortez confessed to the robbery including specific details of how the robbery occurred and how much money was taken,” South Lake Tahoe police Lt. David Stevenson said in a press release.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Bowman scores X Games medal

By USSA

TIGNES, France – South Lake Tahoe’s Maddie Bowman earned another X Games medal on Friday. She came away with the bronze in the women’s halfpipe finals.

She was fifth until her final run put her into third at the very end of the contest.



Maddie Bowman

Pushing the limits of her sport, Bowman spun both a left and right 900 in her run, but she her missed grabs.

Only 1.33 points separated the top three finishing women at the end of the tight competition.

“It was the best run of my life. It feels really good to have that run especially coming back after falling in Sochi and having a hard time in Voss,” Bowman said. “I feel like I just had a bit of a mental breakdown. It’s been a long season, and I got it turned around. I’m really happy to know that I can overcome that mental part of the game too. It’s a great end of my season and I cannot wait to go home.”

Marie Martinod-Routin from France took the gold.

On the men’s side, Torin Yater-Wallace (Basalt, Colo.) took the gold medal and left silver for David Wise (Reno). It was the second year in a row that Yater-Wallace and Wise went gold and silver at X Games Tignes.

Truckee Ranger District to begin prescribed fires

The Truckee Ranger District will begin spring prescribed burning in the Truckee area as weather permits. The timing of burning will depend on favorable weather conditions.

Weather is the most critical factor in determining when a prescribed burn can begin. Temperature, humidity, fuel moisture, and wind conditions are monitored for the right burning conditions. In addition to weather factors, wildlife needs, soil conditions, tree survival, sensitive plants, and fire suppression activities are all considered in the timing of prescribed burns.

A benefit of the prescribed burning will be reduced intensity of future wildland fires in the treated areas. These areas may also provide firefighters with safe locations to control wildfires in the future

Some of these burns are located in more remote areas of the forest, while some are near communities. Within the Truckee Ranger District of the Tahoe National Forest underburning is planned near Stampede and Boca reservoirs.

Smoke will be visible in these areas. Forest Service fuels management personnel work closely with the California Air Resources Board and the local air quality management districts to minimize smoke impacts to communities. Not all smoke can be avoided, however. At times smoke will settle into low areas and drainages during the evenings and last into the next morning until daytime heating increases air movement and smoke dispersal.

In addition to prescribed fire, crews are working to reduce fuels by thinning dense stands of trees and cutting back or removing brush and smaller trees using mechanical thinning,

mastication, and hand removal of vegetation throughout the forest.

To receive up to date prescribed fire information, contact Linda Ferguson at (530) 587.3558 to be placed on an email notification list.

Incline students to get lesson in tobacco danger

On March 28, students at Incline Middle School will learn all about the dangers associated with using tobacco.

Thanks to the Incline High School leadership students, the American Lung Association's Teens Against Tobacco Use program and the North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District, this collaborative program will provide life-saving information presented by the leadership students to the middle school students in a peer teaching fashion.

This is one of many education programs the NLTFPD coordinates and conducts in the schools throughout the year. This collaborative effort offers valuable information for the students that they can take home and share with their families.

"The information not only focuses on Tobacco Education and being properly informed about the health risks that tobacco usage poses, but making right choices and not giving in to peer pressure", said Jill Andersen, who coordinates the Tobacco Education Program for NLTFPD.

Ganong wins super G at Squaw

By USSA

OLYMPIC VALLEY – Travis Ganong (Squaw Valley) carved his home mountain on Friday to a 0.20 second super G victory at the Nature Valley U.S. Alpine Championships to regain a title he first held in 2010 and lead a commanding 1-3-4 performance by local skiers.



Travis Ganong

NorAm overall and U.S. downhill champion Jared Goldberg (Holladay, Utah) was second ahead of Mark Engel (Truckee), who started with bib 16. Bryce Bennett (Olympic Valley), who grew up on the Squaw Valley Ski Team along with Ganong, was the top junior in fourth.

One of the most technically difficult U.S. Championships slopes in recent history, athletes lauded the set and slope preparation at Squaw Valley.

Anderson takes silver at X Games in France

By USSA

TIGNES, France -– Jamie Anderson (South Lake Tahoe) threw down a stylish and technical run to win silver in snowboard slopestyle at X Games Tignes on Friday. She was gunning for an X Games three-peat, after winning gold at X Games Tignes in 2011 and 2012.

She put down a progressive line in the first round, but couldn’t match it in her final two runs. Norwegian Silje Norendal went home with the gold.



Jaime Anderson

Her first run put her on the podium, in particular the rails section with her super stylie boardslide 270 out with a nice gap before the landing.

En route to Tignes, Anderson’s snowboard bag went missing and she was forced to ride on all new gear without having time to break it in.

“My board bag has been lost for like two weeks and it’s a little challenging to break in all new boots and bindings. I am thankful to get some runs and be safe and sound,” Anderson said.

Norwegian Silje Norendal went home with the gold.

It was a progressive comp with new tricks performed by a talented field of international women. Anderson was the only American in the women's final.

In the men's final, Eric Willett (Breckenridge) took the top spot for U.S. Snowboarding in fourth place.

Sage Kotsenburg (Park City) wound up fifth, matching his season best fifth in Spindleruv last weekend.

Chas Guldemond (Reno) did not advance into the finals.

The beautiful bluebird weather and plentiful sunshine was a welcome sight after heavy snow early in the week threatened the competition.

Friday's event wraps up another X Games Tignes for snowboarding.

Hotel lobbies becoming Wi-Fi magnets

By Barbara De Lollis, USA Today

Travelers may hate paying for Wi-Fi in their guest rooms, but more hotels are getting ready to offer it for free in lobbies.

More than 300 Marriott Hotels & Resorts locations will flip the switch in the coming weeks on free lobby Wi-Fi to please guests and non-guests alike, a senior Marriott executive tells USA TODAY.

Wi-Fi currently is free in the lobbies of about 185 of

Marriott’s nearly 500 hotels, and it will become standard across all hotels by March 31, says Marriott’s Michael Dail.

“We have so many people who don’t spend the night but may come for a meeting or happy hours. That’s what they want,” says Dail, the brand’s marketing vice president. “A lot of our hotels already offer (free Wi-Fi), but we want to make it standard.”

The move toward free lobby Wi-Fi underscores how hotels have sought to reinvent lifeless lobbies and common areas to lure a new generation of travelers who work and socialize differently. The hotels are adding libraries, lounges, communal tables, desktop computers, ping pong tables and various other conversation starters with the hope that people will linger and work over coffee, cocktails or a $10 hummus plate.

“Over the past five years, we have renovated (hotel lobbies) and overhauled the menus, so the last piece is opening up the Wi-Fi access,” Dail says. “These are great social hubs for meetings, for leisure travelers, for social business. People are congregating there like people do in a house kitchen.”

Some owners of upscale hotels predicted this would be the future. Sunstone Hotel Investors, for instance, began making Wi-Fi free in the lobbies of its Marriott-brand hotels starting about three years ago as they were updated, says Marc Hoffman, the company’s executive vice president. The company owns Marriott hotels in Boston, Philadelphia, Portland, and Park City.

“We noticed several years ago the trend for travelers to want to enjoy public area, bars, restaurants, lobbies in a new way,” he says. People also rely on lobby Wi-Fi to “reduce the frustration” over paying for Internet in their rooms, he says.

As Sunstone revamped each lobby, the spaces were unveiled with free Wi-Fi. As a result, Sunstone has seen a “dramatic

increase” in the use of the spaces, food and beverage sales, and guest satisfaction, Hoffman says.

Hyatt behind Marriott

Lagging behind Marriott is Chicago-based Hyatt, which still has several locations where lobby visitors seeking Wi-Fi will be asked to pay a fee, says Hyatt spokeswoman Amy Patti.

Many of Hyatt’s full-service hotels in the U.S. have installed two desktop computers that provide 15 minutes’ worth of free Internet, she says.

But in today’s wired world, travelers get annoyed and may even move when they discover that they have to pay, since Wi-Fi is free in so many other places.

“It’s interesting how many of the upper end and luxury hotels want to charge for this service, while at the same time trying to position their public spaces as ‘social hubs’ that are supposed to be friendly places to informally connect, socialize and relax,” says frequent traveler Mark Snyder. “It happened to me recently in NYC, so I went around the corner to a place that truly is a ‘social hub’ – Starbucks.”

Frequent traveler Henry DeLozier also has a strategy to get around Wi-Fi fees in hotels where he doesn’t have elite status, such as Fairmont. “I refuse to pay and carry a wireless modem instead,” he says.

Hilton, Doubletree, Sheraton: Free lobby Wi-Fi old news

Marriott and Hyatt, however, are exceptions.

Wi-Fi, for instance, has been free in the lobbies of the 300-location Doubletree by Hilton chain since 2005. And last year, the 550-location Hilton chain made it free, says spokeswoman Dasha Ross.

Starwood’s Sheraton chain also offers free Wi-Fi in its

lobbies.

Does Marriott’s move mean that travelers can expect even bigger news: That the chain will make Wi-Fi free in guest rooms?

“We’d love to do the full hotel, but we’re not ready,” Dail says.

Potential downside?

When large hotels make Wi-Fi free in public spaces, data usage typically soars, says Roger Crellin, president of hotel-Internet provider iBahn.

“We have seen an up to 300 percent increase in data traffic,” he says. “From a business perspective it’s a great service.”

Mancuso third in super G behind Ross, Cook

By USSA

OLYMPIC VALLEY – Laurenne Ross (Bend, Ore.) captured the first U.S. title of her career with a mere 0.01 second super G victory over Stacey Cook (Mammoth Mountain) on Friday at the Nature Valley U.S. Alpine Championships at Squaw Valley.

The incredibly tight race saw favorite and defending champion Julia Mancuso (Squaw Valley) land third, 0.08 seconds behind Ross. Mancuso was skiing on borrowed equipment because her skis didn’t make it to Squaw from World Cup Finals.

Thousands were on hand as California sun continued to produce

perfect spring race conditions at the home of the 1960 Olympic Winter Games.

Top junior honors went to Abby Ghent (Edwards, Colo.) followed by Paula Moltzan (Lakeville, Minn.) and Lauren Samuels (Golden Valley, Minn.).

The challenging super G course starts in the shadow of the fabled KT22 and going down Julia’s Gold, named after Mancuso. It was a bumpy course with a tricky jump toward the finish.

The race served as the first half of the combined title, pairing the fastest times from super G and slalom.

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100 mph chase through S. Tahoe ends with arrest

Updated: March 22, 12:30pm

A car chase that hit speeds of 100 mph in South Lake Tahoe on Friday morning ended in the Carson Valley.

The California Highway Patrol at first chased a small black Chevy Malibu on Highway 50 starting in Meyers. The chase then went over Kingsbury Grade. There the driver sped through the town of Genoa.

The driver, Steven Linsey, 53, from San Francisco, was finally stopped at Jacks Valley Road and Trail Court.

According to Douglas County deputies, Linsey was arrested and transported to the Douglas County Jail and booked on charges of reckless driving, eluding a police officer, driving under the influence, possession of a controlled substance and

possession of paraphernalia.

Additional charges are pending from California. The CHP is not returning calls.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report