Rescue teams tapped out physically, monetarily

By Nina Keck, NPR

Fresh snow lures a lot of people to do some outdoor exploring, but sometimes that exploring can go too far. When snowmobilers or skiers wander off or get in over their heads, many call 911, putting a strain on already underfunded search-and-rescue budgets.

Some states can bill skiers for search-and-rescue efforts. Often, those who need rescuing wandered into out-of-bounds areas and couldn't find their way back.

In Vermont, state police have had to help find 50 lost skiers in the past four weeks.

At the Killington resort in Vermont, snowboarders are checking out an expert run on the summit, watching others hit the white powder. These folks may not be troublemakers, but there are riders who go looking for fun in all the wrong places.

Bob Giolito, a former Killington ski patroller who is now part of the state police, points to an unmarked trail into the woods. "It's almost moguled up," he says. "You see all the ski tracks? There's high volume of people coming through here."

Areas like these aren't quite accessible. There's a bright orange rope that a person would have to duck under, and several big signs say "Out of Bonds" and "No Skiing Beyond This Point." Despite all that, Giolito says, an alarming number of ill-equipped skiers keep trekking on.

"I mean, if we look out here, you'll see tracks into that field," he says. "Now, if I'm looking out there, I'm like, 'Wow, that looks like some powder, I'm going to ski that.' So

they’re going to head downhill. And as they go down, the trees get closer and tighter and tighter, and then they’re in a problem.”

This part of the ridgeline drops off fast and leads far away from any lifts, so within a few hours, the skiers will be exhausted, cold and in the dark.

Giolito and Vermont State Police Capt. Donald Patch believe more skier education is needed, but how to accomplish that remains unclear. In the meantime, Patch says, the cost to taxpayers for so many search and rescues is troubling.

“When a trooper is tied up on a lost skier case, that’s time when they’re not following up on their other investigations,” Patch says.

Vermont is one of a handful of states that allow billing for certain rescues. But because Vermont depends on skiing and tourism – and because of safety reasons – billing is controversial and rarely used.

“As search-and-rescuers, we feel very strongly that there should never be any disincentive for somebody to call for help when they need it,” says Neil Van Dyke, who heads Stowe Mountain Rescue and is a former president of the Mountain Rescue Association.

He says there have been documented cases in Colorado where people in trouble have put off calling for help because they were afraid of getting billed.

But not everyone agrees with that.

Kevin Jordan, who helps run New Hampshire’s search-and-rescue program, says “when people get in trouble, they don’t hesitate to call.”

“They call immediately because they are in trouble,” he says.

His program – which frequently handles rescues in the White Mountains, an area known for severe weather – has been less squeamish about billing when it finds that those who were rescued have been reckless or negligent.

Jordan says the policy has stirred up debate, but he doesn't think it deters anyone from seeking help – though he admits there isn't a way to prove that.

"What I did notice is when we conduct the mission, as we're getting this person down, our conversation now is generated, 'Am I going to get a bill?' And that's the only difference I've seen," he says. "I've seen no effect on tourism."

But billing isn't ideal, Jordan says. Many people simply can't pay. He says they've collected only about two-thirds of the $83,000 they've billed in the past five years. And that's just a fraction of the roughly $1.5 million New Hampshire spent on all rescues during that time.

"It's a very hot debate in this state because people are very passionate and have very strong feelings about it," Jordan says. "But the problem is that on Monday the bills have to be paid. And when we're not buying equipment and we don't have a training budget and we're sending guys up above tree line in January in 60-below weather, we have a responsibility to ensure their safety – so we're walking a dangerous tightrope."

It's an issue many states are struggling with.

In Wyoming, a state lawmaker pointed out that demand for search and rescue in the state hasn't necessarily increased. But he says more funding is needed because those who need help are taking bigger chances and ending up in more dangerous situations.

Soroptimist honor 4 STHS young women

Publisher's note: ***Soroptimist International South Lake Tahoe on Jan. 23 recognized four Young Women of Distinction from South Tahoe High School The following are comments that Principal Ivone Larson said at the noon lunch at Harrah's Tahoe about Kate Albrecht, Emily Barnett, Bailey David and Janelle Spandau-Buts.***

By Ivone Larson

Katherine Albrecht

Some day, it is the dream of this young woman to have a career focused on her passion, photographing nature. Although Kate Albrecht has enjoyed and done well in school, it wasn't until she took the digital photography course that she realized her talents behind the camera lens.

She has applied to several schools, but her top choice is the University of Utah where she hopes to major in art with a photography concentration.

In addition to being a shutterbug, Kate also enjoys listening to music and watching movies.

Even with a GPA of 4.0, Kate is involved in numerous activities. Along with her best friend, she is the co-editor of the South Tahoe High School yearbook. She has been a Girl Scout for 10 years, receiving both the Bronze and Silver Award and is just a few steps away from receiving her Gold Award, the highest award a Girl Scout can earn.

She actively participates in several sports, including cross country running, which she began in the sixth grade; track, (before) she switched to swimming in her junior year; and Nordic skiing, which she has done every single year since sixth grade and was awarded the Athlete of the Season.

As a result of her membership with the National Honor Society and the Girl Scouts, community service has become an integral part of her life. Kate was the recipient of the Violet Richardson Award for her service project titled “Chemo Buddies”, which delivers teddy bears to children getting chemotherapy treatment at the Stanford University Children’s Hospital.

Kate has had three significant life changing events, all of which have one element in common, cancer. In her sophomore year, her step-grandmother died of cancer, and later that winter, her PE teacher and Nordic coach, Scott Hudson, lost his fight with cancer. The following year, as a junior, Kate was diagnosed with cancer. Everything in her life changed as she underwent treatment and started on her path to recovery. Although most of her life has returned to a level of “normalcy,” her outlook on life has changed forever. As she battled cancer, Scott Hudson’s example continued to provide her inspiration and strength. And through it all, she had the love and support of her parents and family who were and are always there for her. Her new outlook focuses on appreciating the little things in life.

Todd McIntyre, coach and teacher at STHS said of her, “I have had the privilege of knowing Kate Albrecht for 15 years. She has excelled as a student athlete competing in cross country running, cross country skiing, track and swimming. She is an outstanding student, well liked by faculty and peers alike. Last year Kate was diagnosed with cancer and bravely fought and defeated the disease. She serves as an excellent role model for all students who wish to succeed at a high level.”

Kate, your strength, your grace and your perseverance are your gifts to us. Keep doing what you are doing and keep sharing your views of our world through the lens of your camera. Like you, we all need to learn to appreciate the wondrous little things life has to share."

Emily Barnett

When asked about her interests and hobbies, this young woman enthusiastically answered that she had spent the last two summers working with the Forest Service in aquatics and botany. Her love of the outdoors has lead Emily on a path to pursue the study of science at Humboldt State University and hopes to be working in the environmental field in 10 years with all her debts from college paid off … quite the lofty goal.

Emily is no ordinary student. She has been on the honor roll in grades 4-8, received the Soroptimist Award in eighth grade, received the Spirit of Saint Theresa's Award, ran JV cross country, and received various sports awards including varsity letters in volleyball and Nordic ski. As an active member of the Generation Green Club at South Tahoe High School, she served as vice president, and has served as a volunteer with the U.S. Forest Service.

Even with all this recognition, it wasn't until Emily, working with her friend and colleague Tyler Myers, became recognized nationally and internationally in the scientific community. The two worked together under the guidance and support of Joy Barney, a conservation education specialist, and Hugh Safford, a regional ecologist with the U.S. Forest Service. Their research project titled, "The Effects of Fire and Forest Thinning on the Biodiversity of Understory Plants in the Lake Tahoe Basin," won third prize amongst 52 projects presented by students from around the world. This was the first time the United States had representation in this international competition and dialogue concerning forestry issues. The

students were honored during a concert celebrating “Day of the Forest Worker” in Moscow, during which the host and head of the Russian Federal Forestry Agency, V.N. Maslyakov, presented their prizes. What an amazing accomplishment for a young woman from South Lake Tahoe.

Thanks to the tremendous support systems, Emily has been able to achieve at the highest levels. She graciously recognizes her parents, her friends, especially those who run cross country with her, and Ms. Luquin for being influential, supporting her endeavors, and encouraging her to succeed in all she does.

Joy Barney, mentor, guide and U.S. Forest Service liaison to South Tahoe High School said, “Through Emily’s dedication and quiet leadership over the past two years, the Generation Green program of South Tahoe High School has flourished and exceeded all expectations. Emily is reliable, consistent, has an excellent work ethic and is willing to go the extra mile in everything she does. Her work as the first delegation to enter the Russian Junior Forestry Competition brought national and international accolades to both herself and to South Tahoe High School.”

At such a young age, Emily has already achieved what others only dare to dream. I am sure all will agree that this girl truly is on fire.

Janelle Spandau-Buts

Janelle Spandau-Buts names math as her favorite subject, having aced calculus AB and BC in her Junior year, although recently art has become her favorite, as it is relaxing and allows her imagination to flow. With so many talents, selecting a career path can be challenging, but one thing she knows for sure is that wherever life takes her, she wants to make sure it’s outdoors.

She is giving serious consideration toward a career in

environmental science, like her sister Kelsi who is studying at UC Santa Barbara, however she has decided to pursue her higher education at either UCLA or UC Berkeley.

Janelle is very involved in school and athletics, having participated in cross country running, soccer, Nordic ski, track, swim, and the National Honor Society all while maintaining an amazing 4.5 GPA. She has received varsity letters in Nordic skiing and soccer having competed at state. Along with receiving academic awards for her straight A's, she was nominated for RYLA Camp and Girls State.

So, what is it that makes Janelle excel? In two words: attitude and support. She is always positive, and when something does get her down, she looks on the bright side and stays happy. But she has always had a strong support system. She grew up in an environment where her parents were open to let follow her interests, and never got down on her. Her older sister was a great role model and friend. Even her dog Lucy is there for her on weekends and joins Janelle and her dad on cross country ski escapades.

Melissa Berry, STHS coach and teacher states: "Janelle is a young woman who is passionate and driven in both her academics and sports. She has the unique quality of being a fierce competitor while possessing a grace and kindness that draws others to her for support."

With all the issues facing our environment, it is comforting to know that there are bright and multi-talented young women like Janelle taking on these problems and looking towards finding solutions. Janelle, we know that an investment in you will bring returns to our global environment tenfold.

Bailey David

This young woman proudly states, "My family is my best friend." Bailey David says her mom, her dad, and her younger brother are always there for her, challenging her to do her

best. Her nana and her grandpa support her in all her sports and her schooling. She gleefully attributes her family in becoming the person that she is today.

In addition to maintaining a 4.1 GPA, Bailey enjoys all sports, staying active and being outdoors. She is captain for volleyball, softball, and basketball and is secretary of the Associated Student Body. She has received numerous awards including first team all league for basketball, second team all league twice for volleyball, honorable mention for softball, selected for the NFL Wharton Prep Leadership Program and she was selected for RYLA where she spent a week in Portola focusing on leadership through self-discovery, an “eye-opening” journey.

Bailey’s favorite subject is AP biology because she enjoys learning about how the human body and other species function. After an injury to her ankle, she met Angie, the PT angel who inspired her to pursue a career path in sports medicine. As a result, she plans to either attend Long Beach State to major in kinesiology or attend UC Santa Barbara and major in biology.

Coach Kevin Hennessee, and Bailey’s weight training teacher states, “Bailey David is by far one of the hardest working, selfless student athletes I have had the privilege to be around. She is intelligent and always finds opportunities in challenges. She is a communicator that is truly genuine, which is a quality very hard to find. She is someone who will be achieving amazing things as she progresses through life.”

With her exuberance and enthusiasm, we have no doubt that Bailey will be an outstanding physical therapist or Sports Trainer, and hope that someday she returns to South Lake Tahoe to share her talents with others in our new Sports Medicine Center at South Tahoe High.

Courts rule social media is form of free speech

By Steven Greenhouse, New York Times

As Facebook and Twitter become as central to workplace conversation as the company cafeteria, federal regulators are ordering employers to scale back policies that limit what workers can say online.

Employers often seek to discourage comments that paint them in a negative light. Don’t discuss company matters publicly, a typical social media policy will say, and don’t disparage managers, co-workers or the company itself. Violations can be a firing offense.

But in a series of recent rulings and advisories, labor regulators have declared many such blanket restrictions illegal. The National Labor Relations Board says workers have a right to discuss work conditions freely and without fear of retribution, whether the discussion takes place at the office or on Facebook.

In addition to ordering the reinstatement of various workers fired for their posts on social networks, the agency has pushed companies nationwide, including giants like General Motors, Target and Costco, to rewrite their social media rules.

“Many view social media as the new water cooler,” said Mark G.

Pearce, the board's chairman, noting that federal law has long protected the right of employees to discuss work-related matters. "All we're doing is applying traditional rules to a new technology."

The decisions come amid a broader debate over what constitutes appropriate discussion on Facebook and other social networks. Schools and universities are wrestling with online bullying and student disclosures about drug use. Governments worry about what police officers and teachers say and do online on their own time. Even corporate chieftains are finding that their online comments can run afoul of securities regulators.

The labor board's rulings, which apply to virtually all private sector employers, generally tell companies that it is illegal to adopt broad social media policies – like bans on "disrespectful" comments or posts that criticize the employer – if those policies discourage workers from exercising their right to communicate with one another with the aim of improving wages, benefits or working conditions.

But the agency has also found that it is permissible for employers to act against a lone worker ranting on the Internet.

Several cases illustrate the differing standards.

At Hispanics United of Buffalo, a nonprofit social services provider in upstate New York, a caseworker threatened to complain to the boss that others were not working hard enough. Another worker, Mariana Cole-Rivera, posted a Facebook message asking, "My fellow co-workers, how do you feel?"

Several of her colleagues posted angry, sometimes expletive-laden, responses. "Try doing my job. I have five programs," wrote one. "What the hell, we don't have a life as is," wrote another.

Hispanics United fired Cole-Rivera and four other caseworkers

who responded to her, saying they had violated the company's harassment policies by going after the caseworker who complained.

In a 3-to-1 decision last month, the labor board concluded that the caseworkers had been unlawfully terminated. It found that the posts in 2010 were the type of "concerted activity" for "mutual aid" that is expressly protected by the National Labor Relations Act.

"The board's decision felt like vindication," said Cole-Rivera, who has since found another social work job.

The NLRB had far less sympathy for a police reporter at the Arizona Daily Star.

Frustrated by a lack of news, the reporter posted several Twitter comments. One said, "What?!?!?! No overnight homicide. … You're slacking, Tucson." Another began, "You stay homicidal, Tucson."

The newspaper fired the reporter, and board officials found the dismissal legal, saying the posts were offensive, not concerted activity and not about working conditions.

The agency also affirmed the firing of a bartender in Illinois. Unhappy about not receiving a raise for five years, the bartender posted on Facebook, calling his customers "rednecks" and saying he hoped they choked on glass as they drove home drunk.

Labor board officials found that his comments were personal venting, not the "concerted activity" aimed at improving wages and working conditions that is protected by federal law.

NLRB officials did not name the reporter or the bartender.

The board's moves have upset some companies, particularly because it is taking a law enacted in the industrial era, principally to protect workers' right to unionize, and

applying it to the digital activities of nearly all private-sector workers, union and nonunion alike.

Brian E. Hayes, the lone dissenter in the Hispanics United case, wrote that “the five employees were simply venting,” not engaged in concerted activity, and therefore were not protected from termination. Rafael O. Gomez, Hispanics United’s lawyer, said the nonprofit would appeal the board’s decision, maintaining that the Facebook posts were harassment.

Some corporate officials say the NLRB is intervening in the social media scene in an effort to remain relevant as private-sector unions dwindle in size and power.

“The board is using new legal theories to expand its power in the workplace,” said Randel K. Johnson, senior vice president for labor policy at the United States Chamber of Commerce. “It’s causing concern and confusion.”

But board officials say they are merely adapting the provisions of the National Labor Relations Act, enacted in 1935, to the 21st century workplace.

The NLRB is not the only government entity setting new rules about corporations and social media. On Jan. 1, California and Illinois became the fifth and sixth states to bar companies from asking employees or job applicants for their social network passwords.

Lewis L. Maltby, president of the National Workrights Institute, said social media rights were looming larger in the workplace.

He said he was disturbed by a case in which a Michigan advertising agency fired a Web site trainer who also wrote fiction after several employees voiced discomfort about racy short stories he had posted on the Web.

“No one should be fired for anything they post that’s legal,

off-duty and not job-related," Maltby said.

As part of the labor board's stepped-up role, its general counsel has issued three reports concluding that many companies' social media policies illegally hinder workers' exercise of their rights.

The general counsel's office gave high marks to Wal-Mart's social policy, which had been revised after consultations with the agency. It approved Wal-Mart's prohibition of "inappropriate postings that may include discriminatory remarks, harassment and threats of violence or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct."

But in assessing General Motors's policy, the office wrote, "We found unlawful the instruction that 'offensive, demeaning, abusive or inappropriate remarks are as out of place online as they are offline.' " It added, "This provision proscribes a broad spectrum of communications that would include protected criticisms of the employer's labor policies or treatment of employees." A G.M. official said the company has asked the board to reconsider.

In a ruling last September, the board also rejected as overly broad Costco's blanket prohibition against employees' posting things that "damage the company" or "any person's reputation." Costco declined to comment.

Denise M. Keyser, a labor lawyer who advises many companies, said employers should adopt social media policies that are specific rather than impose across-the-board prohibitions.

Do not just tell workers not to post confidential information, Keyser said. Instead, tell them not to disclose, for example, trade secrets, product introduction dates or private health details.

But placing clear limits on social media posts without crossing the legal line remains difficult, said Steven M.

Swirsky, another labor lawyer. “Even when you review the NLRB rules and think you’re following the mandates,” he said, “there’s still a good deal of uncertainty.”

Hight may go to new heights at X Games

By Pat Graham, AP

There’s a snowboarder working on a trick so difficult that if the feat is pulled off in a competition, it just may be game over for everyone else.

Heard this one before?

Only, this time it’s not Shaun White honing the mechanics of an intricate maneuver in a hush-hush location as he did before capturing gold at the 2010 Vancouver Games.

No, this is Elena Hight, South Lake Tahoe’s 23-year-old two-time Olympian who doesn’t have White’s name recognition – who does, really? – but she can alter an event just like him, especially once she dials in her game-changing trick that’s essentially two backflips with a 180-degree rotation.

She plans to debut it this weekend at the Winter X Games in Aspen.

That is, if she can work up the nerve. Because, really, it’s still a work in progress.

“There’s a lot that can go wrong,” said Hight, who’s chasing after an elusive Winter X gold after taking second in Aspen and again in Tignes, France, last season. “More than anything,

it’s getting past that fear.”

Hight has landed the trick – the one snowboarders refer to as a “double alley-oop backside rodeo” – on a trampoline, into a foam pit and then onto an air bag set up at the end of the halfpipe. Her breakthrough moment came last May at U.S. team camp, when she successfully performed the feat on the course to become – as the snowboard community is saying – the first female to do so.

Now comes the tricky part: Taking it from practice and attempting the endeavor in a competition, under the bright lights and in front of a big audience.

Pull this off, though, and Hight instantly leaps into the role of favorite heading into the 2014 Sochi Games. As it stands, she’s someone that everyone is carefully watching.

“I was there that day when she landed it and what she did was just amazing,” said Gretchen Bleiler, an Olympic silver medalist at the 2006 Turin Games. “By doing that, she’s already progressed women’s snowboarding. It’s already on everyone’s mind. It’s like, ‘OK, maybe this is something I need to start doing?'”

This is the sort of trick that even White is trying to incorporate into his repertoire.

That’s saying something, right?

“It’s the only double I’ve tried,” Hight said. “I wouldn’t want to do some of the doubles that Shaun or some of the guys do. Hopefully, I can get it going and show it off at X Games.”

She very well may need it, too, given the talent in the halfpipe these days. Also expected to compete this weekend are reigning Olympic champion Torah Bright of Australia and 2002 Salt Lake City Games gold medalist Kelly Clark of West Dover, Vt. Clark also is the two-time defending champion in Aspen.

“Kelly is riding amazing,” Hight said. “She’s out there doing her thing, always pushing it. It’s great to see. We’re all such good friends, so it’s awesome when someone is stepping it up, because it makes you push yourself even more.”

Born in Hawaii, hardly a hotbed for snowboarding, Hight’s father moved the family to the mountains of Lake Tahoe when she was a kid. She’s been constantly pushing the field since bursting on the scene, landing a 900 – two full rotations – in a competition at just 13.

“Snowboarding was just our family’s sport,” she said. “Once we started, we just never stopped.”

Hight has had plenty of unique experiences on a snowboard, including this: Gliding down a volcano.

That’s right, a volcano.

A few years ago, she coasted down the side of Mauna Kea, which is on the island of Hawaii and has an elevation around 13,800 feet.

“It was really cool,” she said.

Almost as cool as this: Landing her new trick a few times in practice. Obviously, she had to build up to it. The trampoline helped, as did the foam pit and jumping into an air bag, with each stage giving her more confidence.

“I didn’t go out and just throw it. You have to be safe about these types of things,” she said.

Then, she attempted it for real. Not in some secretive place, either, but in Mammoth Lakes at a training camp.

That’s a little bit different from White. Before the Vancouver Games, the snowboard icon trained in seclusion on a halfpipe built for him in the back country of Colorado. White perfected his daring Double McTwist 1260 in secret, before unveiling it

for the world to see, ultimately leading to an Olympic gold medal.

Ever thought about keeping her trick a secret until closer to Sochi?

“One of my favorite parts of snowboarding is snowboarding with all of my friends,” Hight said. “I think it’s way easier to progress when you have your friends there rooting for you. We want each other to progress and we cheer each other on. I’m not a … secretive person.”

And when she finally landed it?

“It’s like landing any new trick: You come around and you’re like, ‘Whoa, I actually did it,'” Hight said. “I was definitely really stoked.”

Tahoe cop Poland behind bars on federal charges

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe police Officer Johnny Poland is behind bars on five federal charges.

Poland, who has been in and out of trouble with the department, has been under investigation locally and by the FBI for more than a year. That investigation culminated Jan. 23 when he was arrested without incident outside the police department.

He faces five charges related to trying to get others to change their testimony and tampering with evidence. The

violations allegedly started on June 29, 2011, and continued through Dec. 20, 2011.



Johnny Poland

Police Chief Brian Uhler told *Lake Tahoe News* the charges have to do with charges Poland faces and not other cases.

Poland, 44, will be spending the night in Sacramento County Jail. He is scheduled to be in court Thursday morning.

Part of the federal complaint says, “In 2009, law enforcement had observed Poland, again off duty, in close association with gang members at a funeral.”

It goes on to say he was having a relationship with a gang member with whom he shared sensitive information.

The complaint says Poland in 2003 had sex with a 17-year-old South Tahoe High School student while he was the school resource officer. He was 35 at the time and married.

Poland has been on paid administrative leave since November 2011. That status will change to unpaid after the court hearing on Jan. 24, according to Uhler.

“We have a sense of conclusion or closure with the events that happened today. They were not unexpected,” Uhler told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Poland had been asked to come to the station Wednesday morning to fill out paperwork. He did. And then he was arrested in the parking lot.

Uhler said he met today with officials from El Dorado County District Attorney's Office regarding state charges. A decision on whether more charges will be filed has yet to be determined.

Uhler is also working on what happens next in regards to Poland being an employee of South Lake Tahoe.

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Poland complaint

People urged not to skate on Donner Lake

Truckee police officers and firefighters are warning people to not skate on Donner Lake.

With conditions warming, the ice is generally unstable.

"Unlike the Eastern United States, we generally do not have the consistently cold temperatures to sustain ice on area lakes and ponds due to their size and water currents," authorities warn.

Five years ago a skater fell through the ice and drowned in conditions similar to what they are now.

There is no law or ordinance prohibiting ice skating on Donner Lake.

Truckee rescue teams urge people who recreate on area lakes or ponds to consider wearing a life jacket, bring a rope, and a

buddy.

K’s Kitchen: Roasted winter veggies

By Kathryn Reed

The butternut squash kept calling to me. And I kept ignoring them. Then I bought one and put it on the counter. Finally, I couldn’t keep ignoring it. Hunger will do that to you.



I knew I didn’t want to put anything sweet on it – like brown sugar. And I knew I didn’t want it alone.

I decided to chunk up half of it. Then I added about the equivalent in red potatoes. Both were cut into bite-size pieces.

To the 9 x 13 baking dish I added chopped carrots – not quite as much as the other two veggies.

I wished I had a red onion, but used yellow instead.

Then I peeled a few garlic cloves. The large ones I cut in half or thirds length-wise. I had about 10 total.

All this I mixed together in the dish.

The amount of spices you use will depend on how many veggies you use. I just started shaking the sage and white pepper. It’s always better to start off conservatively because you can add more. Too much spice isn’t always possible to rectify, though in this case adding veggies would work.

I used lavender sea salt because it’s been in the cupboard since I bought it last fall in Buellton. Sue and I had been biking in this Central California town and came across the Andre Lavender Farm. The aroma made us want to stay there all day, but Sue made me get back on my bike after my purchase.

The saleswoman said to use the lavender like I would any sea salt.

I mixed all the spices into the veggies.

Then I cut the butter into pieces and distributed onto the veggies.

Put into oven at 400 degrees. After about 10 minutes, stir the veggies so the melted butter coats them. In all, the veggies will cook for about 1 hour – though that depends on the veggies you used, elevation and size of the pieces. In the last 15 minutes, add the Brussels sprouts. Stir.

Taste the veggies as you go along to decide if seasoning needs to be adjusted. When all the veggies are done, you are ready to serve them.

I used this as a main course, but it would make for a great side dish.

Roasted Veggies

½ butternut squash, peeled and chopped

Red potatoes, chopped

Medium onion, chopped

Carrots, chopped

Brussels sprouts, cut in half

Garlic

Sage

White pepper

Lavender salt

½ cube butter

Ski report: Weather about to change



Get early because wind could be an issue in the afternoon.

Here is the Jan. 23 ski report.

— Curtis Fong

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Sugar Bowl Ski Resort, as part of the National Ski Area Association's Ski Safety Awareness Week, is putting on a safety campaign through Jan. 27 promoting a different safety message each day, with perks, prizes and giveaways for active participation.

• The College of Education and the College of Business at UNR had their online graduate programs recognized this month in *U.S. News & World Report's* 2013 Best Online Education Programs.

• The public is invited to attend a dedication ceremony of the newly constructed Genoa Vista Trail on Jan. 26 at 10am at the north end of the trail on Foothill Road across from Carson Street.

• Sierra-at-Tahoe Resort team riders and South Lake Tahoe locals Jamie Anderson, Maddie Bowman and Hannah Teter will invade Aspen Jan. 24-28 for the 17th Winter X Games. All three Sierra athletes have prequalified for X Games and will shoot to make it back-to-back podiums.

• Carve Tahoe needs volunteers Feb. 4-6 and Feb. 8-12. The volunteer meeting is Jan. 24 from 6:30-8:30pm at Jake's On The Lake, 780 North Lake Blvd., Tahoe City.

S. Tahoe council refuses to ban plastic bags

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe's proposed plastic bag ban is in the garbage – for now.

The council on a 3-0 vote (Councilwoman Angela Swanson was absent) decided to not adopt an ordinance that would have banned plastic bags at stores throughout the city. They were not convinced of the environmental need in Tahoe or why they would want to legislate morality.



Plastic is allowed in
South Lake Tahoe.

The city's Sustainability Commission brought the idea forward after it had been discussed for more than three years. At the same Jan. 22 meeting, the council did away with the commission. That decision was initially proposed in the fall. Now the commission must decide if it wants to remain intact as a committee.

As for the plastic bags, it's not that the council doesn't

want to help the environment, but the three had issues with various components of the proposal.

“I would like the stores to decide if they want to charge for paper,” Councilman Hal Cole said.

The proposal was to charge 10 cents per paper bag.

Kay Ogden, a member of the Sustainability Commission, said there are legal reasons for needing to have a fee associated with the paper if plastic were banned.

City Attorney Patrick Enright said changing the wording from “shall” to “may” for the paper fee would also trigger more CEQA analysis. As written, South Lake Tahoe’s proposal got by the California Environmental Quality Act with a categorical ban.

The bags used for produce and meat would have been exempt. And plastic of a certain thickness are considered reusable.

But Councilwoman JoAnn Conner says she and many of her friends reuse the plastic bags groceries come in.

The EPA says 5 percent of plastic bags are recycled. The Sustainability Commission says 8 million single use plastic bags are used in South Tahoe each year.

Ogden along with Juliana Prosperi said the plastic bag ban would help Tahoe businesses. Their presentation said it is estimated $200 a year in state and federal taxes are spent per person to clean up litter and waste associated with single use bags.

“In all of your documents you talk about cost savings, but I don’t see it,” Mayor Tom Davis said.

His biggest issue was with the potential bacteria growing in reusable canvas bags if people aren’t regularly washing them. He cited a study that says 97 percent of people don’t wash

their bags.

Davis said he would prefer the plastic bag issue be resolved at the state level. In California, 60 cities and eight counties have adopted plastic bag bans, according to Ogden.

Everyone agreed educating the consumer about perceived and real harms of plastic bags needs to be done so more people would voluntarily use something other than a one-time plastic bag.