Sugar pine planting helpers needed

Help the Sugar Pine Foundation plant fungus-resistant sugar pine seedlings at two community planting days.

The first planting is Oct. 21 from 1-3pm. Meet at Rideout Community Center (740 Timberland Lane Tahoe City) to carpool to the planting site at Ward Creek.

The next planting is Nov 3 from 10am-noon. Meet at Jewell Drive, off Highway 50, across from Lake Tahoe Airport.

Seedlings, tools and instruction and light snack will provided. Bring gloves and a shovel.

For more info, email admin@sugarpinefoundation.org or call (650) 814.9565.

Letter: TRPA expresses its appreciation

To the community,

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency would like to everyone who made TRPA's Community Appreciation Day Open House and Lake Spirit Awards Ceremony such a great success last month including: Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District, Tahoe Science Consortium, Tahoe Environmental Research Center, Tahoe Resource Conservation District, Tahoe Catering Company, the

Red Hut, our wonderful band, Suspect Terrane, the staff and Governing Board of TRPA, and all the community members that took the time to attend.

We also want to congratulate our Lake Spirit Award winners this year: Heather Segale (Tahoe Environmental Research Center), Jacquie Chandler (Sustainable Tahoe and the Tahoe Expo), John Dayberry (World Canoe Project and PaddleFest), and the family of Alan Tolhurst who received a posthumous award for his lifetime of service.

Finally, we would like to thank all the unsung heroes of our community for their efforts, large and small, at protecting the beauty and clarity of Lake Tahoe.

We couldn’t do it without you.

Kristi Boosman, TRPA spokeswoman

South Tahoe investment broker headed for prison

Lori Zoval, 47, of South Lake Tahoe was sentenced Oct. 12 to three years and eight months in prison for embezzling client money while employed as a licensed investment broker with a brokerage firm in Folsom.

A hearing is set for Nov. 2 to determine the restitution amount.

Lake Tahoe News first wrote about Zoval in February 2011.

A year ago, Zoval pleaded guilty to using her position of trust to embezzle at least $24,939 from the investment and

retirement accounts of her clients between October 2005 and April 2006. At sentencing, however, the court found that Zoval had stolen more than $430,000 from these clients.

At sentencing, the court found that Zoval had fraudulently created documents making it appear that her clients authorized money transfers from their accounts and took steps to lull the victims into believing that she was making legitimate and profitable investments on their behalf.

U.S. District Judge Garland E. Burrell Jr. refused to grant probation, which is what her attorney requested.

Burrell, in a statement, said, “Her actions show a lack of respect for the law and her failure to accept full responsibility for what she did.”

When Zoval gets out of prison she will be subjected to three years of supervised release.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Tahoe Mountain Resorts Foundation has money to give away

Organizations that are based in or serve the Truckee, Donner Summit, Squaw Valley, Alpine Meadows and North Shore of Lake Tahoe may submit applications to Tahoe Mountain Resorts Foundation to possibly receive a grant.

The deadline to do so is 5pm Oct. 31. Recipients will be announced in January.

A copy of the application and other details are online.

Tahoe Mountain Resorts Foundation gave out $128,800 last year to 17 area nonprofits.

Safeway’s third quarter profits boosted by sale of Genuardi’s

By Steven E.F. Brown, San Francisco Business Times

Safeway Inc. finished selling 16 Genuardi’s stores for $80.4 million, and the $49 million of that left after taxes kept the company’s third quarter profit above that of the same quarter a year ago.

Pleasanton-based Safeway earned $157 million on sales of $10.049 billion in the quarter ended Sept. 8. A year earlier the company earned $130.2 million on sales of $10.064 billion.

Per share earnings were 66 cents in the most recent quarter, up from 38 cents a year earlier. But the company had just 237 million shares outstanding in the most recent period, down from 343 million a year earlier.

Comparing income from continuing operations, Safeway earned $108 million in the most recent quarter, down from $130.3 million a year earlier.

Safeway spent $159.6 million in capital expenditures during the quarter. All in all, it closed 23 stores, including those 16 Genuardi’s that it sold.

The company still expects to earn $1.90 to $2.10 per share for the full year.

Truckee Elementary School becomes all things Halloween for a day

Truckee Elementary School playground becomes the home of the much anticipated annual Pumpkin Patch on Oct. 20 from 10am-2:30pm.

Admission is fee. Cost for event activities ranges from $1 to $4.

If it rains or snows, the festivities will be moved inside.

This ghoulish event includes a pumpkin patch, carnival games, pony rides, haunted and not-so-haunted houses, petting zoo, mini golf, slime the witch, a Día de los Muertos table, cake walk, music, food vendors, spider hockey and much more. Pumpkins will be available to purchase, as will food and treats of all kinds.

Proceeds support a wide range of classroom expenditures, including art supplies, books for creative story-telling time, field trips that encourage environmental-based learning and much more.

Truckee Elementary School is located at 11911 Donner Pass Road.

A road trip through California’s produce empire

By Mark Bittman, New York Times

I left Los Angeles at 4 in the morning, long before first light, and made it to Bakersfield — the land of oil derricks, lowriders and truck stops with Punjabi food — by 6. Ten minutes later, I was in the land of carrots.

You know that huge pile of cello-wrapped carrots in your supermarket? Now imagine that the pile filled the entire supermarket. That’s how many carrots I saw upon my arrival at Bolthouse Farms. Something like 50 industrial trucks were filled to the top with carrots, all ready for processing. Bolthouse, along with another large producer, supplies an estimated 85 percent of the carrots eaten by Americans. There are many ways to put this in perspective, and they’re all pretty mind-blowing: Bolthouse processes six million pounds of carrots a day. If you took its yield from one week and stacked each carrot from end to end, you could circle the earth. If you took all the carrots the company grows in a year, they would double the weight of the Empire State Building.

At Bolthouse’s complex, carrots whirl around on conveyor belts at up to 50 miles an hour en route to their future as juliennes, coins and stubs, or baby carrots, which the company popularized and which aren’t babies. Other carrots become freezer fare, concentrate, salad dressings and beverages.

Fiber is separated for tomato sauce and hot dogs. Whatever's left becomes cattle feed.

Bolthouse is just one of the many massive operations of California's expansive Central Valley, which is really two valleys: the San Joaquin to the south and Sacramento to the north. All told, the Central Valley is about 450 miles long, from Bakersfield up to Redding, and is 60 miles at its widest, between the Sierra Nevada to the east and the Coast Ranges to the west. It's larger than nine different states, but size is only one of its defining characteristics: the valley is the world's largest patch of Class 1 soil, the best there is. The 25-degree (or so) temperature swing from day to night is an ideal growing range for plants. The sun shines nearly 300 days a year. The eastern half of the valley (and the western, to some extent) uses ice melt from the Sierra as its water source, which means it doesn't have the same drought and flood problems as the Midwest. The winters are cool, which offers a whole different growing season for plants that cannot take the summer heat. There's no snow.

The valley became widely known in the 1920s and 1930s, when farmers arrived from Virginia or Armenia or Italy or (like Tom Joad) Oklahoma and wrote home about the clean air, plentiful water and cheap land. Now the valley yields a third of all the produce grown in the United States. Unlike the Midwest, which concentrates (devastatingly) on corn and soybeans, more than 230 crops are grown in the valley, including those indigenous to South Asia, Southeast Asia and Mexico, some of which have no names in English. At another large farm, I saw melons, lettuce, asparagus, cabbage, broccoli, chard, collards, prickly pears, almonds, pistachios, grapes and more tomatoes than anyone could conceive of in one place. (The valley is the largest supplier of canned tomatoes in the world too.) Whether you're in Modesto or Montpelier, there's a good chance that the produce you're eating came from the valley.

I came to the valley both by choice and by mandate. In

preparation for the magazine's Food and Drink Issue, I asked readers to suggest my assignment. They could send me anywhere they wanted, within limitations of climate and jet lag. After reviewing the suggestions, it became clear that readers wanted an article that incorporated big farming, small farming, sustainability, politics, poverty and, of course, truly delicious food – and in the United States, if possible. So I decided to head to the Central Valley, where all of this was already happening. This also happened to satisfy a curiosity of mine. From a desk in New York, it's impossible to fathom 50 mph carrots, hills of almonds, acres of basil and millions of tomatoes all ripening at once. How can all of this possibly work?

But I was also inclined to head to the valley because I know that, for the last century or so, we've been exploiting – almost without limitation – its water, mineral resources, land, air, people and animals. Mark Arax, a writer who lives in Fresno and has chronicled the region's past and present, offered his opinion while serving me and a dozen others marinated lamb, a terrific recipe from his Armenian family: "This land and its water have gone mostly to the proposition of making a few men very wealthy and consigning generations of others, especially farmworkers, to lives in the dust." I'd already seen an example of how wealth has been concentrated and captured in the valley: this summer, Campbell's bought Bolthouse Farms for $1.55 billion. Meanwhile, there are thousands of valley farmworkers who are often victims of wage-theft and (illegally) required to supply their own tools.

So for five days I drove through the southern half of the valley. I wanted to learn as much as I could about the agriculture in America's produce factory; where thoughtful farmers were leading it; and how – if at all – it might become sustainable.

I have driven through the valley numerous times, almost always on Interstate 5, where, like everyone else, I have had the

experience of getting out of the car and being hit by what felt like a giant hairdryer blowing 120-degree, manure-scented air. Like many others, I've also pulled over to the side of the road and taken pictures of the Harris Ranch in Coalinga, which, if it isn't the largest feedlot in the country (capacity: 100,000 cows), is certainly the one with the most drive-bys.

The best way to enter the valley, though, is from the south, through the Tehachapi Pass, west of the Mojave and Edwards Air Force Base. Although the land is scarred by roads and electric lines, it's still easy to imagine what it looked liked 150 years ago. Not so Fresno, the center of the valley's agriculture industry about 110 miles to the north of Bakersfield. There the valley's problems are readily evident. Since 1970, the population has more than doubled to 6.8 million, virtually all of whom, it seems, drive (more often than not a Ford F-150). The air, trapped between mountain ranges, stinks, and the pollution is consistently ranked among the most severe in the country. Worse, there are so many cows nearby in megadairies and feedlots that the air contains microscopic particles of dried dung, enough so that you can taste it. I smelled it on my clothes when I unpacked each night and even brought it home with me. I have never carried Visine in my life, but there I was using it every half-hour.

Then there's the water and soil. On the west side of the valley, water is scarcer, and hundreds of thousands of acres can't be farmed because of salt buildups (the land is naturally salty) and selenium from irrigation drainwater. Tulare Lake, which was once the biggest freshwater lake west of the Mississippi, was drained long ago; now there's barely a trace of it. The San Joaquin River, the second longest within California and once among the best salmon-fishing rivers in the country, was dammed in the '40s and essentially drained for irrigation, 60 miles of a once-beautiful river run dry. (The Natural Resources Defense Council won a lawsuit that is

re-establishing the flow of the San Joaquin.)

Then there's the toxic waste, meth labs and rampant unemployment, which is above 30 percent in some towns. One, Corcoran, bills itself as the "farm capital of the world," but it's actually the "famous-prisoner capital of the world." Charles Manson and Juan Corona — a schizophrenic who was convicted of murdering at least 25 farmworkers in 1971 — are both there. (Until recently, so was Sirhan Sirhan.) Low wages are compounded by wage theft and correspondingly high poverty levels. Fresno, Modesto and Bakersfield are three of the five poorest cities in the United States. The valley suffers from this, but it can be blamed for it in part, too.

This, and not the verdant hills of a Green Giant commercial, is where our food comes from. Part of the reason is the size and scope of production. Bolthouse farms and manages 60,000 acres, or more than four Manhattans, annually. Though nearly 15 percent of its production is organic, there is no way an operation of that size can avoid chemical fertilizers and pesticides. But the industrial farms don't have a monopoly on doing damage to the land. One day I visited the most unindustrial operation imaginable, a four-acre farm run by May Vu, a Hmong immigrant and former nurse. The valley is home to countless individual farmers like her who work a few acres in marginal land in and around Fresno, much of which was slated for development before the crash. Now it can be rented for around $400 an acre a year.

Vu grows what she believes she can sell locally. (The Hmong population is about 6 percent of that of Fresno, and a visit to a Hmong supermarket is breathtaking.) This includes squash (a kind that lasts for years on the shelf), several varieties of basil, tomatoes, herbs that I can't possibly recognize, okra, a few different eggplants, green beans, daikon, cabbages, cilantro, onion, long beans, chard, zinnia, sunflower, squash and more. This is post-green-revolution farming as it happens in much of the Third World, and there is

something to be said for the independence it affords. But on farms like these, almost no one gives much thought to sustainability. It's too time-consuming; the primary goal is not sustaining the land but sustaining themselves. (Vu works seven 10-hour days a week.) It's also historically true that renters — especially those who move from plot to plot every half-dozen years as the Hmong do there — are bound to the land in general but have no ownership of any particular piece. Their mind-set is often to get as much as you can out of the land this year and don't worry about the next decade.

There must be, I thought (or fantasized) as I traveled through the valley, some movement toward pushing farmers, big and small, to produce decent food sustainably. Because if there's not, the valley's problems will only worsen, and we'd be complicit in destroying one of the country's greatest resources, one that has served us amazingly well until now. Indeed, I found a number of large farmers experimenting with sustainability and scale. John Diener's 4,500-acre Red Rock Ranch, in the west valley town of Five Points, uses mostly so-called conventional methods, but does so in creative and intelligent ways. Over all, his vision of big farming — minimizing chemical application, for example, and reducing tillage (turning over or otherwise disturbing the soil) — may point a way toward a future in which big-time farming can become more sustainable. Diener has also already instituted a system of mining (and even selling) minerals that he extracts — via a series of tiles under his farmland — after irrigation. This keeps local businesses from having to purchase minerals mined in more destructive ways.

Likewise, Keith Gardiner, the principal owner of Pacific Ag Management, farms about 10,000 acres of almond groves using plenty of conventional techniques. But the company is experimenting with solar energy to pump water and trying to reduce chemicals through an integrated pest management system. It was almond-harvest time when I visited Pacific Ag. In one

field, Gardiner and Holly King, whose family land is farmed by the company, showed me a shaker, a squat four-wheel vehicle with a robotic arm that grabs the trunk of a tree and shakes it until the nuts fall to the ground. There they sit, drying for a week or so (the chances of rain are almost nil), until a sweeper comes along and gathers them. This is followed by a harvester, which scoops them into trucks that bring them to be hulled and shelled. The result is dozens of towering hills of almonds waiting to be processed and a small but growing mountain of shells.

It's not labor-free, but it's pretty easy compared with growing tomatoes or broccoli. And along with the fact that almond trees go for 25 years, it explains why so many valley farmers are turning to nuts. A decade ago, many analysts thought that the crop had reached its peak of one billion pounds. This year the harvest is something like two billion pounds, and farmers are still ripping out other crops and planting almonds. They're selling, too, if not here, then in China. The same is also true of grapes, which are feeding China's growing and extraordinary thirst for wine.

All of this made me wonder what, if anything, big farmers owe a society — not only in terms of what they do to their land but in terms of what they actually grow. The food that's grown in the valley may be copious, but it's not necessarily all that good. The fruits and vegetables at my breakfast buffet in Glendale were pretty much the same as the stuff I bought two weeks ago at a supermarket on Broadway. And though I ate well on my trip, I tasted plenty of produce that was grown to withstand a couple of weeks in transit and on the shelf.

Do we have a right to expect tomatoes that taste like tomatoes and to have them grown in sustainably? It might sound like a ridiculous question. These are for-profit enterprises operating on private land and dealing with the difficulties of distribution and the vagaries of the market. But it's not so outlandish to think we should have some collective say in what

is farmed and how. After all, between 1862 and 1934, the Homestead Act transferred 10 percent of all land in the United States from federal to private control, and it's federal money that pays for much of the roads and irrigation systems that make farming in the valley so profitable.

I badly wanted to visit Tom and Denesse Willey in Madera, 25 miles northwest of Fresno. I'd met them over dinner at Mark Arax's house at the outset of my trip. (Denesse's plum cake was the best I've ever had.) The Willeys represent another part of valley culture that usually gets little credit: making a sizable organic farm work, with few compromises. It's true that 75 acres is small by Central Valley standards, but their model is important and their impact large: they have 800 families in their C.S.A., or community-supported agriculture, program, some of whom live 60 miles away. They have a largely year-round, full-time staff of 60, all of whom can qualify for vacations and a bonus pool. The Willeys farm 40 crops on their land, with a four-season rotation and customers from the Pacific to the Mississippi.

There are people who will tell you that the valley is all food production and no food culture, but that's not true at the Willeys' farm, where varieties are chosen for flavor and color — the overall look of the place is dazzling, almost psychedelic — as well as hardiness and productivity. When I arrived, Tom was struggling with a basil problem that showed me just how seriously he takes his produce. Basil is a huge crop for the farm — at four acres, it might be the biggest basil patch in the country — and downy mildew had attacked the crop. There were two 25-gallon garbage barrels of basil ready to be recycled. The bright green leaves looked gorgeous to me, but Willey deemed them unfit for sale.

We took a golf-cart ride in the afternoon heat, during which I admired Willey's tomatoes (6 acres), potatoes (25, in two crops), peppers (2), eggplant (4) and cool-weather crops like lettuce and artichokes. T & D Willey Farms is different from

the valley's largest operations in four important ways. First, the farm averages nearly one worker per acre, a remarkable rate by industrial standards. Second, unlike other farms, their rotation allows them to offer year-round work. Third, the farm's land is replenished at or near the rate that it's being exploited. Perhaps most important are his superior crops. Though I arrived late in the season, I tasted Willey's tomatoes and eggplant, and they did for me what all the best California produce does: they made me want to farm. Or at least garden — but definitely in California.

The Willeys are pioneers in the organic (and fair) farm movement, and Tom is as articulate and committed a representative of it as I've found. He's unshakable in his belief in organic farming, though "we're all pioneers," he reminded me. "For 95 percent of history, we were hunter-gatherers. There's no reason to assume that agriculture of any kind will be successful in the long run."

Willey argues frequently with his friend Paul Buxman, who lives about 50 miles southeast, in Dinuba, and who has become gradually disillusioned with organics. After stints as a painter and a teacher, Buxman bought a majority of his 58-acre family farm from his father 30 years ago and went broke almost immediately. He survived, incredibly, by selling art, and now he is one of the best tree-fruit growers in the state. Part of the land he purchased had been contaminated by a once-popular soil-treatment chemical known as DBCP that was believed to double grape yields. That is, until it was shown to cause sterility and maybe worse. Health officials told Buxman that not only should he not use his groundwater on his crops but also that his family shouldn't wash in it, cook with it or breathe near it. Buxman's 32-year-old son, Wyeth, came down with leukemia when he was 3. Buxman became an organic farmer immediately.

But after a few years, Buxman came to believe that nonorganic chemicals can target problems more precisely and more

accurately than organic ones and that it was time to leave “organic” behind. “An organic pesticide is still poisonous,” he told me, over his fabulous biscuits, served with his (ditto) apricot jam.

There is, it’s true, a spirit and letter of what’s organic. What Tom and Denesse Willey do is organic in every sense of the word, but they’re the exception. When consumers buy organic, they are guaranteed little more than food that is (in theory at least) produced without synthetic chemicals or G.M.O.’s (genetically modified organisms), and with some attention (again, in theory) to the health of the soil. They’re not guaranteed fair treatment of laborers. They are not guaranteed a minimized carbon footprint or anything approaching local. (Organic vegetables, as you probably know, may come from China.) Nor, for that matter, are they guaranteed anything that tastes good.

“The public is tired of corporate food,” Buxman said. “But the word ‘organic’ has been misused and usurped.” Instead, Buxman devised a rating system called California Clean, which would allow for chemical fertilizers but exclude farms of more than 100 acres and require the farmer and his or her family to be the primary laborers. It would also require that produce be of high quality, with high nutrition, and would require that the farms had an active biology, including healthy soil, birds, worms and so on.

It hasn’t caught on, and it may be imperfect, but Buxman’s idea of splitting the difference between “organic” and “conventional” seems to me to point the way forward to a place beyond a simplistic label like “organic.” Big farmers can be encouraged and taught — and perhaps incentivized — to use fewer and more precise pesticides, to reduce tillage and water use, to evaluate soil not only based on output but on health. The biggest beneficiary, of course, is the land, but the health of workers, animals, the environment and consumers are all important considerations as well. And in the valley right

now, not much attention has been paid to them.

No matter what, though, it seems as if the valley is eventually going to become less productive. In fact, that's already happening. Development and contamination have taken land out of production. And disproportionate swaths are being devoted to grape and almond farming solely because those crops can be reliably processed and profitably shipped to China. There are pioneers in the valley, people working to figure out ways to make their style of farming – whether big or small – work over the long term. But beyond the profit motive, there is little public support or encouragement for them or their ideas and no way for consumers or even officials to know whom to support. As a result, our land use and, to a considerable extent, our diet are dependent on the hunches and whims of landowners. If we want a system of farming that's sustainable on all levels, we have to think about a national food and farming policy. And as I was looking out at Buxman's amazing land, it occurred to me just how amazing it is that we don't have one.

Environmental groups want stricter pesticide rules in California

By Robert Rodriguez, Fresno Bee

A group of environmentalists is calling for tighter government restrictions on pesticide use, saying current regulations are creating a health risk among children.

The Oakland-based Pesticide Action Network released a report Tuesday blaming pesticide use for a rising number of health problems among children, including developmental disabilities, autism and attention deficit disorder.

The report titled, “A Generation in Jeopardy: How pesticides are undermining our children’s health and intelligence” compiled existing academic and government research to make its claims.

The report was released in several cities across the country, including Fresno.

“The growing body of research tells us that pesticides, in combination with other environmental and behavioral factors, are creating a looming epidemic of diseases and disorders,” said Sarah Sharpe, environmental health director of Fresno Metro Ministry.

Sharpe said the report urges federal regulators to create tougher policies that would make it easier to pull existing pesticides off the market when scientific studies suggest they may harm children.

The report also calls for more support for farmers to help them transition away from using pesticides and to create a national goal for reducing pesticide use.

But state officials say some of what the environmental groups are asking for already is being done.

Lea Brooks, spokeswoman for the California Department of Pesticide Regulation, said the agency has spent more than $6 million since the 1990s to support 60 projects and 130 different organizations to reduce pesticides.

The department is also the only one in the nation that routinely does environmental monitoring of soil, water and air. It also tracks pesticide residue in fresh produce.

“And we use this information to determine if any further regulatory measures are necessary,” Brooks said. “Our job is to enforce the regulations on pesticide use to assure proper and safe use of pesticides.”

Brooks said the department’s scientists are reviewing the report’s findings.

Changing habits may prevent headaches

By Mandy Kendall

I remember a lot of my chiropractic patients’ complaints centered around headaches and their causes varied from case to case.

The majority of headache cases that I treated could be generally attributed to muscular and emotional tension. These were most commonly classified as tension type headaches and were, for the most part, lifestyle related and not life threatening.

The World Health Organization states that ‘tension type headache (TTH) alone affects two-thirds of adult males and more than 80 percent of females and that 3,000 migraine attacks occur every day for each million of the general population. Less well recognized is the toll of chronic daily headaches: up to one adult in 20 has a headache every or nearly every day.



Mandy
Kendall

There can be a number of factors contributing to headaches, many of which can be alleviated with a change in lifestyle.

Here are some *Qwik-e* tips to help rule out the cause of, and alleviate the frequency and severity of headaches;

Hydration – A frequent contributor to headaches is dehydration. Caffeine can also lead to headaches, especially during caffeine withdrawal, (although thankfully these are short lived and stop once the body has adjusted to having less caffeine). Before reaching for painkillers try a couple of large glasses of water to rehydrate the body (and the brain more importantly).

Eat regularly – Your brain needs oxygen and glucose to function, so low blood sugar can trigger headaches for some people. Try eating unprocessed foods little and often to see if that helps reduce your headaches. If you tend to wake with a headache, try eating a piece of fruit before going to bed (rather than fruit juice which can spike blood sugar levels and then drop again) and drinking a large glass of water upon waking.

Muscle tension – Strong muscles run up the back of the neck and up over your head. Tension in these muscles from poor posture and/or overuse can cause headaches through the compressive nature of tight muscles. For example, working on a laptop for prolonged periods can cause the head to be held in a tilted-down position and cause the muscles at the back of the neck and head to be overused. To release tension try this *Qwik-e* stretch every 30 minutes; sit up straight, hang your

arms loosely by your sides, gently let your head lower forward as if you were trying to rest your chin on your chest. Breathe deeply five or six times (letting your head sink down a little further with each exhale). A warm pad placed around the shoulders and the base of the neck before this stretch will also help release the tension in the muscles.

Emotional tension – In the same way that mechanical overuse of muscles can cause tension, emotional issues can cause muscles to tighten in much the same way. During times of emotional stress, some simple deep breathing may help to dissipate muscle and emotional tension. Repeating accepting on the in-breath and releasing on the out-breath will help to deepen the relaxing effect.

Trauma – Physical trauma to the body can affect the alignment of your spine, which in turn can cause increased muscle tension and decreased nerve function. A common side effect of many accidents can be ongoing headaches. Consult a healthcare professional who deals with body alignment (a Chiropractor for example) to rule out misalignments that may be a factor in causing the headaches.

Environmental – For some people artificial lighting can be the cause of headaches. Flickering neon tube lighting or even the imperceptible flickering on a computer screen can trigger headaches. Try and assess whether you only get headaches in certain places and eliminate the possibility that lighting could be a factor.

Foods – Many foods such as chocolate and caffeine can be contributors to headaches, as well as preservatives and additives in foods. We know it is common for people to have intolerance for food types such as wheat, dairy and gluten, but intolerance to chemicals added to foods often goes undetected. Try totally avoiding processed foods for at least a week (along with drinking plenty of water) to monitor any affect on the severity and number of headaches.

Medications – Some medications are known to cause headaches (and don't forget the contraceptive pill is considered a medication). Check the list of side effects of any medications you are taking and consult your doctor to see if there might be a better version for you to try.

Allergies – Especially those that affect the sinus area can be a major contributing factor to headaches. Taking local honey during the pollen season can be very effective at reducing your body's inflammatory response to local pollens etc. Being tested for allergies could help determine if they are a factor in your frequent headaches.

Important note – Discuss any concern over headaches with a healthcare professional. Especially if they are severe in nature, last for long periods of time, are associated with vomiting, a temperature, cause changes in vision, a strong aversion to light and/or a stiff and painful neck. Any headache associated with any kind of trauma to the body should also be reported to a healthcare professional.

Until next time.

Mandy Kendall operates Health Connective in South Lake Tahoe, which aligns wellness seekers with their ideal wellness provider. If you have questions, would like some advice, or would like to request some Qwik-e tips on any health and well-being topic, drop her an email at connect@healthconnective.com or keep an eye out on Lake Tahoe News for regular Qwik-e tips on how to make healthy changes one Quick and Easy step at a time.

Halloween safety starts with costumes

I would like to encourage everyone buying costumes for Halloween to check the labels to make sure they are made of flame retardant materials. Materials made of 100 percent polyester are best suited for Halloween costumes.



These costume materials may be purchased at most local fabric stores.

The use of commercial flame retardant sprays is not recommended.

Avoid Halloween costumes that are loose or baggy to prevent fabric from coming in contact with any open flames.

Children should carry flashlights or use battery operated lights. Jack-o-lanterns that have an open flame device should be placed up off the ground so long or full costumes and young trick-or-treaters' hands cannot come in contact with the flames. The use of masks that obstruct vision should be avoided. Costumes should incorporate reflective tape in their design so children can be easily seen at night.

Trick or treat while it's still light outside, and stay in your neighborhood, visiting only the homes you know. Finally, always check your children's candy before allowing them to eat any of it.

Have a fun and safe Halloween.

– Sallie Ross-Filgo