Woman bit by dog while walking at West Slope lake

El Dorado County Animal Services is searching for the owner of an all-white male pit bull that bit a woman Sept. 10 at approximately 6:30pm while she was walking on the trail at Jenkinson Lake in Sly Park.

The incident occurred when the dog, on a long leash and jogging with its owner, approached the woman and bit her on her hip. The owner of the pit bull was accompanied by a young adult female who also had a pit bull on a leash. The second pit bull was black and white.

The owner of the biting pit bull was a young adult male in his early 20s, about 6-feet-3, with dark hair, who gave his name as Nathan, but refused to provide any other information.

While the woman's injuries were not life threatening, Animal Services officers are actively looking for the dog's owner to verify the dog is current on its rabies vaccinations. Without this verification, the woman may need to have post-exposure rabies treatments.

Anyone with information is asked to contact Animal Services at (530) 621.5795.

Alberta Crook – 1926-2012

Alberta Crook passed away Sept. 5, 2012, 16 days shy of her 86 birthday, in her beloved Maui, with close friends by her side.

Born and raised in the Los Angeles area, Alberta was stricken

with polio and spent part of her teenage years in an iron lung. The impact of this dreadful disease affected her ability to walk throughout her life, but to her it was just an inconvenience, not an obstacle.

After marrying the love of her life, Roy Crook, they continued to work in the LA area until deciding to move to South Lake Tahoe in 1970 with her mother and her aunt. Alberta and Roy cleaned houses, yards, and did whatever work they could find in their new environment. She was encouraged to get a real estate license by Opal Howell of Howell Realty. This was the beginning of her new career.



Alberta Crook

Within two years she joined Tamarack Realty, where she met L.J. Logan and David Kurtzman. After less than a year the three of them decided to go out on their own, and opened Aspen Realty on Nov. 1, 1973. Slowly the business grew into a strong, successful local business, due in part to her common-sense approach to simply taking care of people as a daily guide.

She continued her real estate career until her retirement in 1994. A few years later she and Roy moved permanently to Papakea Resort in Maui, their second home since the late1970s.

Alberta served hundreds of clients during her 24-year real estate career, and she served her profession as a Board of Realtors director and president. Not only was she successful in business, but also she was a community leader, serving on the Board of Directors and president of the South Lake Tahoe

Chamber of Commerce, Barton Hospital Foundation, and Barton Auxiliary.

One of her simple joys was being a notary public and refusing to accept payment, but asking for a donation to the Lake Tahoe Humane Society. She also could sign a check “A. Crook” and get it cashed. She enjoyed cruising with Roy, parties with friends around her miniature pool table, and an evening cocktail.

She leaves behind many Tahoe and Maui friends including those she treated as family at Aspen Realty. Whenever Mother Crook said, “never mind” you knew the conversation was over. At the end of the day we are all better having had the opportunity to know and work with Alberta Crook, a true friend.

A traditional Hawaiian service will be at 10am, Sept. 21, her 86 birthday, at Papakea where her ashes will be spread at sea, joining Roy’s. The next time you see a Hawaiian sunset, remember that Alberta and Roy are smiling back with a wink and saying, “thanks for remembering us.”

Food waste being repurposed

By Alice Park, Time

Nearly 1.5 billion tons. That’s how much spoiled and uneaten food people around the world throw out each year. In the U.S., roughly 40 percent of the food supply is wasted, according to the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC). But that kind of trash could soon become a lot more useful.

Building on efforts to turn grains and even human waste into biofuels and other valuable chemicals, Carol Lin, a biochemical engineer at the City University of Hong Kong, is developing a new kind of biorefinery. To head off a crisis at Hong Kong's landfills—they're going to be full within five years—she and her team, in partnership with Starbucks and a number of recycling groups, are converting organic food waste (think old pastries, bread and coffee grounds) into succinic acid. That chemical is a key component of biodegradable plastics, and is used in everything from laundry-detergent bottles to food additives to car parts.

The implications for the environment are huge. Succinic acid is currently made from petrochemicals in a process that leaves a harmful carbon footprint, and the U.S. Department of Energy has listed the chemical as one of a dozen that could be made more responsibly through bio-based processes. Although Lin's program is still in the pilot phase, companies in Europe, Asia and the U.S. are launching similar efforts to turn wasted food into a potentially valuable commodity. Lin is confident that the cost of the processing—it doesn't require any specialized tools—will make it a viable method for producing the acid.

She faces plenty of hurdles. Because food waste isn't as easy to transport (unlike petroleum, it starts to rot), researchers are still figuring out how to set up hygienic ways to process it quickly. Then there's the issue of scale: in her lab, Lin generates 81 kg of succinic acid from each ton of food waste she processes – a tiny fraction of the 44,000 tons manufacturers demand each year. But, says Allen Hershkowitz of NRDC, it's essential to keep trying. "No single undertaking is going to address all the waste we generate." But if this one can make good use of your stale muffin, that's a big step in the right direction.

Stop making excuses about why you are overeating

By Mandy Kendall

We just had a wonderful weekend with a houseful of guests. However, besides hours of fun and reminiscing, there was also quite a bit of indulging. When you are celebrating and entertaining it seems so much easier to say “oh what can it hurt just this once”. So now we need to get back on track and clean up our acts. The long weekend was fun but there are no more excuses now.

So what excuses do we use around food, why do we make them and what can we do about them?



Mandy Kendall

Here are this week’s *Qwik-e* tips on how to change those excuses for good habits:

I deserve this – Rewarding with food is a dangerous precedent that is often started in childhood by well-meaning parents. When we reward ourselves, Serotonin (the happy hormone) is released which is then associated with whatever it is we are rewarding ourselves (which is more often than not an unhealthy food). Better to reward yourself with something healthy (a fun

activity, a healthy food, etc.), which is what your brain will crave when you next go to reward yourself.

I've started so I'll finish – We all fall off the wagon at times, and it is all too easy to keep going. The trick is to stop yourself as soon as you realize the overindulgence. Put down the fork halfway through that piece of cake or that second helping. There is no law that you have to finish something just because it's on your plate (and, yes, your mom will forgive you when you tell her it's because you want to be healthier).

I've earned this – It's true that increased activity and exercise will have us burning more calories, but research has shown that we tend to seriously overestimate just how much more we can have. Try to refuel with nutrient rich foods as carbohydrate-rich foods can lead to slower recovery and increased inflammation.

Eating helps me when I'm stressed – A study published in Appetite found that foods like chocolate reduce feelings of stress for about three minutes, but then the stress returns. In the long run eating to control stress actually makes things worse. During stressful times our stress hormone cortisol makes you crave sugary food. However after eating sugary foods your blood sugar spikes, then crashes, making you feel irritable and prone to stress all over again. The good news is that you can lower your cortisol levels without calories by practicing relaxation methods such as deep breathing, stretching, sipping black tea, listening to soothing music, etc.

I'm addicted to it, I can't give it up – We tend to be addicted to the way a food makes us feel. Sugar especially affects our brain and body chemistry and how we feel. However, we can still get that feeling from other healthier foods (whole pieces of fruit for example) if we give our bodies time to adjust. Try taking a few days break from soda or a favorite

sweet treat, exchanging it for a healthier option and see how different it makes you feel.

I don't eat more than anybody else I know – Studies show that if your friends and family are overweight and/or unhealthy, then chances are you will be as well. Also, women will often eat similar amounts of food that their male partners do, when on average our calorie requirements might only be two-thirds that of our men. Ask a professional dietician to help you assess your personal requirements.

It's healthy so I can have more of it – A study from Cornell found that we become victims of something called the health halo. When we think a food is healthy we tend to eat more of it. It is still wise to be cautious of portion sizes, even with so called healthier foods, and check food labels to make sure the food is really nutritious and we are not being drawn into a marketing ploy.

It was just there – To help prevent eating for convenience have a kitchen clear out to get unhealthy options out of temptations way. Convenience food tends to be just that … a convenience and nothing else. Basic rule of thumb; the longer a food's shelf life, the less nutritious it is. Also, try to at least be aware of why you are eating something. Hunger? Boredom? Emotion? If it's boredom or emotion, just make a mental note of what lies underneath it, you may be surprised at what patterns emerge over time and of areas that might need addressing.

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.

Blue Ribbon award nominees being sought

Eight awards will be presented at the 5th annual Blue Ribbon Awards Ceremony & Dinner at Embassy Suites on Nov. 15.

Award categories include the Geotourism, Tourism, Experience, Entrepreneur, two Customer Service awards, and the large and small Green Business awards.

Nominations for this Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce event are being taken until Oct. 5 at noon. Nominations may be made online and then click on the Blue Ribbon Awards icon.

Opinion: Hoffman only viable candidate for judge

By Stephen W. Valentine

The day after the primary election I was contacted by representatives of each of the candidates slated for the run off in November each asking me to endorse their respective

candidates. Having spent five months touring the county and meeting so many wonderful people and listening to my two opponents talk, I decided not to offer an endorsement at that time.

For the past three months I have been asked by almost everyone I see and talk to which candidate I recommend. I thought that was odd. When deciding how to vote before every election I read and watch everything related to the election. I read every proposition and the arguments for and against. I find it amazing that people will vote without being fully informed; it is important to be informed. Voting without information seems like a good way to really mess things up.

The other night I was listening to a speech on television with my wife and commented that there were a few errors in his statement. My wife looked at me and asked me how I came to that conclusion. I told her what I had read and what documents I had examined to come to my conclusions.

Then she asked me if I had decided to endorse anyone in the November election. I started to explain that I thought people should make up their own minds based on the facts available. She shook her head and said, how can you expect anyone to catch up with you when you have been listening to and watching them for the past nine months and most people will only know what they receive in the mail as the election approaches, obviously biased to one side or the other.

She was correct of course, she always is, it just takes me a little longer to realize it sometimes.

I have contacted both candidates and asked for any additional information that they would care to share. Both sides offered to meet and talk. I asked for specific information from each and was ready to jump into the facts and work my way through any material they provided.

(Curt) Stracener’s representative indicated that they had some

“good information” and would provide it to me. Hasn’t happened. Based on the way things went in May I suspect that a revelation will come in early October or maybe even late September. It will be sensational and maybe even newsworthy and there will not be enough time for (Joe) Hoffman to explain the facts or even to address the issue.

If a sensational and negative story about Hoffman happens within six weeks of the election, I suspect it will be purely political and not about justice. Remember, Stracener has hired a political consultant that was part of the Schwarzenegger school of politics; it won’t matter whether there is any truth in the story as long as it breaks before the election and close enough to sway voters without time to disclose the truth. That is what mudslinging is all about.

I have read the papers filed in the federal lawsuit against Mr. Hoffman. Anyone can file a lawsuit and make any allegation you can think of when filing. It is not the truth; it is an allegation.

The important factors that I consider in voting for a judicial candidate is their ethics, their knowledge, their compassion and the people with whom they associate. Do not forget, attorneys have clients, not every client is an associate nor should be tied to the attorney as though he was a friend. We would never have attorneys to defend accused criminals if we had to like them.

Mr. Hoffman has been practicing law in El Dorado County since 1995. I have had cases against him and he has appeared before me on numerous cases while I was on the bench. I have always felt that I could trust him in his word and he has never been anything but ethical in his dealing with me and in my courtroom.

Mr. Stracener on the other hand seems to have an even greater lack of experience in practical law. Law that means something

to El Dorado County residents. His lack of familiarity with the truth is also bothersome. A good attorney will always maintain the truth for his client's sake. If the facts do not support your client you argue the law. If the law is against your client you argue the facts. If the law and the facts are against your client you beg for mercy. A good attorney always states the truth, politicians not so much. I want a good judge that was an attorney, not a politician that wants to be a judge.

In Mr. Stracener's case I have seen him try to change the facts to fit the truth he wants the voters to learn.

1. Mr. Stracener stated that he appeared before the Supreme Court. He may have had his name listed on papers filed with the court, but there is no record of his actual appearance. A Superior Court judge should be above the mere appearance of impropriety.

2. Mr. Stracener signed up for a Tea Party Patriot's shooting event while at lunch with the Republican Women of El Dorado County. When appearing before the League of Women Voters a short time later he was asked about attending the event. Mr. Stracener stated that he did not think it appropriate to attend such an event and denied ever having signed up for the event.

So not only does he change his statements to make himself appear better for the group he is speaking to, but he thinks an event supporting the constitutional rights guaranteed by the Second Amendment is inappropriate for a Superior Court judge to attend. The Bill of Rights is the most important part of the Constitution for a judge to know and defend.

3. When listing the number of cases Mr. Stracener claims to have heard since being appointed he erred by approximately 1,300 cases. His claim is that he counts the hearings and not the cases. All attorneys know the difference between a case

and a hearing, so should a Superior Court judge.

4. While speaking to a Tea Party group in El Dorado Hills, Mr. Stracener stated the it was inappropriate for a judicial candidate to accept support from attorneys that might practice in his courtroom yet his campaign disclosure and webpage lists attorneys that support his candidacy.

Honesty is not only the best policy; in a judge it is the only acceptable policy. While I expect mud to be thrown about, I suspect it will be mis-truths and lies. I suspect they will come out just in time for the election and too late for any real research or time to refute the allegations with the truth. That's politics. It's expected in Sacramento politics and Washington politics. It has no place in El Dorado County politics.

Mr. Hoffman has maintained the high ground, been honest and willing to discuss the real issues of El Dorado County's needs within the court. No politics, no dirty tricks, no slimy Sacramento mudslinging, just a desire to help our community and improve our court.

This November please join me in voting for Joe Hoffman for Superior Court judge.

Stephen W. Valentine was on the June ballot for El Dorado County judge.

Clarity emerging in future of

STHS softball field

By Kathryn Reed

“When I took this job three years ago, I was told it was called the Field of Dreams. I think it’s a Field of Nightmares.”

That is what Steve Kolesnik, South Tahoe High School softball coach, told the Lake Tahoe Unified School District board of education Sept. 11.



Consensus was found Sept. 13 about the STHS softball field by a diverse group. Photos/Kathryn Reed

While it may never evolve into what Kolesnik wants, movement came Thursday during a meeting where a diverse group assembled to find consensus. After two hours it was agreed by all in the room that the high school’s physical education program and athletic teams are what matters most when it comes to who uses that field and how it is used.

Also agreed to was erecting a 6- to 8-foot portable fence 200 feet into the outfield and that the staff restroom being built in the concession stand can be used by the public.

LTUSD Facilities Director Steve Morales, at the direction of

the group, has been tasked with finding out what the cost of a second restroom, which could contain more than one toilet, would cost. He is also going to evaluate whether putting it next to the concession stand or inside by the restroom under construction or by the portables would be more feasible.

Softball, baseball and tennis have access to the restrooms in the newly built Student Union because they can be locked off from the main building. But there are those who believe walking 140 yards is too far during a game.

It was decided that incorporated into the rental of the field will be the price to erect and dismantle the fence. Mostly likely it will remain up for the high school team from the time snow melts to the third week of June. This will also allow for ASA to finish the spring season.

At the Sept. 13 meeting that was facilitated by STHS Principal Ivone Larson were Morales, Kolesnik, Don Borges (former athletic director at STHS and current PE instructor), Joann Allister (PE, former softball coach), Doug Russell (AD), Julie Cain (PE), Kevin Hennessee (PE), and Marilyn Breisacher (JPA fields committee, ASA softball).

They all signed the paper Larson was writing the agreement on so no one could say later that they disapproved.

Ball field improvements, who uses them and who pays for them has been the subject of much discussion since the South Shore (California side only) Measure R was approved a year ago that changed how Measure S funds could be distributed. Compromise, until Thursday, has been lacking.

Several factors have created the critical mass situation:

• Improvements to the high school softball field – including dugouts, backstop, concession stand, scorekeeper’s booth – were built without the athletic director or softball coach being asked to give input.

• The state Office of Civil Rights involvement because of Title IX equity issues. Those are legally supposed to be resolved this fall – at least a plan for equity is supposed to be completed.

• The Fields Advisory Committee of the South Lake Tahoe Recreation Facilities Joint Powers Authority plays a role because it will recommend to the JPA board how to spend $500,000 in taxpayer money. (This is the Measure R money.) The committee is meeting Monday to discuss funding, but the school district won't have its request in by then.

• The LTUSD board at the Sept. 11 meeting tabled the item that originally called for $52,300 from Measure R dollars to pay for installation of a PA system, portable outfield fencing, concrete asphalt walkways, and walkway to Student Union. The board told those who spoke about the softball field to get together and come up with another recommendation in time for a special board meeting Sept. 25. (That is how the Sept. 13 meeting came about.)

More issues about the high school field remain outstanding – definitively where batting cages and bullpen go.

And there is no guarantee the fields committee will recommend to fund improvements at STHS or that the board that ultimately makes that decision will do so. The JPA board is slated to meet in January to distribute a portion of the money.

The Office of Civil Rights needs to sign off on plans as well.

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Things to know:

• The fields committee next meets Sept. 17 from 4-6pm at Lake Tahoe Airport.

• LTUSD board next meets Sept. 25 at 4pm at the district office.

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Tahoe Mountain News publisher frantic to find missing mom

By Stephen Baxter, Santa Cruz Sentinel

SANTA CRUZ – After three weeks of searches on the sides of Highway 101 and surrounding roads in five counties, Taylor Flynn has not given up hope of finding his mother.

Flynn, the 49-year-old publisher of the *Tahoe Mountain News* in South Lake Tahoe, was one of the last people to see 70-year-old Deanna Brooks before her disappearance Aug. 24. He wrote a column in his paper this week that described parts of two searches he has made – along with crisscrossing searches made by his older brother and younger sister. They flew from their homes in Georgia and New York, respectively.

Brooks, who lives on Berkeley Way in Santa Cruz, had planned a trip on Aug. 24 to see her mother, Nan, for her 90th birthday in San Diego.

She usually took Highway 101, but she failed to arrive in San Diego. She was reported missing Aug. 26.

Flynn described Brooks as a "loving, with-it grandmother of eight who had been planning this trip for weeks." She is 70 but seems younger and does not have dementia, Flynn said.

"My mind's always been that she fell asleep and drove off the side of the road," he said Thursday.

Now, he and other family members don’t know what to think.

In his column “We’re still looking for you, mom,” Flynn described how his heart dropped on Sept. 7 when he learned that a body had been found near highways 101 and 156 outside Aromas.

He called it “one of the worst nights of my life,” in part because it was close to his mother’s intended route. Flynn and his wife watched a video from a television news website “in horror.”

Deputies did not release the name, age or gender of the victim that day, but Flynn said he reached a San Benito County deputy about midnight requesting information.

“I could hear myself rattle off mom’s statistics in a monotone (voice). Then, Sgt. Burbank replied ever so clearly, ‘I cannot tell you anything about the investigation, except that it is definitely not your mother.'”

Read the whole story

Heller wants House to lead on poker legislation

By Karoun Demirjian, Las Vegas Sun

WASHINGTON – Ever since online poker legislation faltered and failed in late 2010, the prevailing wisdom has been that the road to successful passage leads though the Senate, via the collective efforts of Majority Leader Harry Reid and Republican Sens. Dean Heller and Jon Kyl.

But on Monday evening, Heller broke rank, informing Reid in a letter that “as discussed, it would be beneficial for the House of Representatives to first address this issue.”

His direction might sound like a simple scheduling switcheroo. But for the controversial poker bill, it is a potentially devastating change with ramifications that could undermine the Nevada economy – and, top Democrats charge, a clear indication that Heller dropped the ball.

“Several months ago Sen. Reid asked Sen. Heller to secure Republican votes to help pass an Internet poker bill and to date, Sen. Heller has not been able to secure any support,” said Reid spokeswoman Kristen Orthman. “Rather than standing to fight for this important issue for Nevada, Sen. Heller has decided to run for cover and attempt to lay blame on others.”

Reid leaned on Heller and Kyl, of Arizona, to come up with 15 Republican senators, according to Democrats, to complement the approximately 45 Democrats Reid has lined up to vote in favor of legislation to legalize playing poker online. It takes 60 votes in the Senate to supersede the threat of a filibuster.

Read the whole story

Truckee receives chunk of cash for bike trail projects

The town of Truckee has receive $654,750 in funding from the Bicycle Transportation Account for the Brockway Road Trail.

The Brockway Road Trail would connect two existing Class 1 trail segments which currently terminate at the Truckee River

Regional Park (Brockway Road/Estates Drive intersection) and at The Rock (approximately 250 feet northwest of the Martis Valley Road/Brockway Road roundabout).



This trail segment would traverse lands owned by the Truckee Tahoe Airport District (specifically the Ponderosa Golf Course Property) and the Truckee-Donner Public Utility District.

Construction is planned for 2013.