Placer County man reported missing

The Placer County Sheriff’s Office is asking the public’s help in finding a Clipper Gap man who has medical problems and who was reported missing Sunday night.

Gary Howe, 71, was last seen about 5pm Aug. 26.

He suffers from dementia and has vision problems. He was last seen wearing a blue shirt and blue slacks. He is 5 feet, 11 inches and weighs about 160 pounds. He has shoulder-length gray hair and a gray beard.



Gary Howe

The sheriff’s office has launched a search and rescue operation in the area of Clipper Gap, near Meadow Vista. Anyone who has information on Howe’s whereabouts or anyone who finds him should call 911 or (530) 886.5375.

Learn how to write a novel

Ready to write a novel?

Author Tim Hauserman will instruct you how to in a month. The

goal is to have the first draft of a novel written in November during National Novel Writing Month.

The classes are through Sierra College at the Truckee campus on Tuesdays from 6:30-8pm Oct. 30-Dec. 4.

To register, go online.

‘Miserable Champion’ – the Shaun Palmer story

By Sal Ruibal, Bike

In 1998, I wrote a front-page cover story for *USA Today* that posed the question: “Is this man the world’s greatest athlete?” That man was mountain bike-snowboard-motocross-punk rocker Shaun Palmer of South Lake Tahoe, and that story shocked the sports world.

The traditional sports establishment wet their seersucker trousers in anger: USA Track and Field cried that only the current world-record holder in the decathlon could wear that crown. Major League sports fans cried in their Lite Beer because Bo Jackson was a pro football-baseball star. The Earth moved.

Fast-forward to 2012 and the idea that an action sports athlete could be the best in the world isn’t shocking, it seems normal. Shaun White, who trains at Northstar in Truckee, lights it up at Winter and Summer X Games while snatching a bunch of Olympic gold medals. He’s looking beyond little wheels and half-pipes these days.

Travis Pastrana? If it has wheels and he has bones, give him

something to break. One of the scariest rides I've ever been on was in a U-Haul truck with Travis at the wheel.

But neither of those guys were true punk rockers in the heyday of that genre. If the only thing The Palm ever did was scream and shout with Fungus, he would still have a spot in the Crazy MoFo Hall of Fame.

Finally, after many years of frustration and cinematic near death, the Shaun Palmer movie is out there for your viewing pleasure. Brad Holmes' film, "Shaun Palmer: The Miserable Champion", is a horror show and a Saturday morning Superman cartoon blended with a Sex Pistols live show and a donkey demolition derby. The flick won Best Biography at the 2012 X-Dance Action Sports Film Festival.

Read the whole story

Sample ballots available by email in El Dorado County

El Dorado County voters have the option to not receive a paper sample ballot.

Go online and click on the sample ballot opt out link next to the green leaf, and follow the directions.

This allows voters to begin receiving the sample ballot via email.

Youths switching from full sugar drinks to diet

By Allison Aubrey, NPR

Diet soda, once the soft drink of choice for adults watching their calories, isn't just for grown ups anymore. Increasingly, kids are getting their fix, too.

In fact, consumption of diet drinks has doubled among U.S. children over a decade. About 1 in 4 of adults drink low-calorie or no-calorie sweetened drinks and foods. And for children: Six percent were consuming diet drinks in 1999-2000. This increased to 12.5 percent in 2007-08. The findings were recently published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition.

So, if parents are helping kids cut calories and sugar by offering diet drinks, is this good for kids' health?

"This is the $64,000 question," researcher Barry Popkin tells the Salt. Popkin is the author of "The World is Fat: The Fads, Trends, Policies,and Products That Are Fattening the Human Race", and a professor at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

On one hand, there's some evidence that replacing soda and juices with calorie-free beverages can help teenagers control their weight. There's also a study that found diet soda drinkers were less likely to develop metabolic syndrome, as long as they were eating a prudent diet.

But on the other hand? Popkin says some people seem to use diet sodas to rationalize a very unhealthy diet – the "I'll have a Diet Coke With That Big Mac" crowd.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Do you want to win two tickets to the Signature Cocktail fundraising event for Barton Health Foundation? If yes, then check out this story.

• To win those tickets, you must be part of *Lake Tahoe News'* special NEWS team. You do so by becoming a paid subscriber.

• The Heavenly Mountain Run will challenge trail runners with a 5.8-mile run ascending from the 6,565-foot California Base Lodge to the Tamarack Lodge at 9,150-feet on Sept. 2. Register online.

• The Sierra Club is staging a publicity event Aug. 29 at noon when more than 5,000 petitions, letters and public comments will be delivered to the U.S. Forest Service's South Lake Tahoe office "in support of strong protections for the forests and watersheds of the Lake Tahoe Basin".

• Here is the Caltrans roadwork schedule for this week in El Dorado-Tahoe and the Sierra.

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe

Honey is the perfect dog for someone who wants a well-behaved, small, mature companion. She is about 9 years old, a Welsh corgi mixed with probably a few other things.



She is house trained, loves to play with other dogs, and didn't chase the cats that didn't run from her. She is very happy and affectionate, and enjoys going for walks. She was found as a stray and her people never looked for her.

Honey is spayed, microchipped, and vaccinated. She is at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many other dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes. Go online to see photos and description of all pets at the shelter.

Call (530) 573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet.

For spay-neuter assistance for South Tahoe residents, go online.

– Karen Kuentz

Opinion: Wall Street abuses

cannot continue

By Phil Angelides

Money laundering. Price fixing. Bid rigging. Securities fraud. Talking about the mob? No, unfortunately. Wall Street.

These days, the business sections of newspapers read like rap sheets. GE Capital, JPMorgan Chase, UBS, Wells Fargo and Bank of America tied to a bid-rigging scheme to bilk cities and towns out of interest earnings. ING Direct, HSBC and Standard Chartered Bank facing charges of money laundering. Barclays caught manipulating a key interest rate, costing savers and investors dearly, with a raft of other big banks also under investigation. Not to speak of the unprecedented wrongdoing that precipitated the financial crisis of 2008.

Evidence gathered by the Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission clearly demonstrated that the financial crisis was avoidable and due, in no small part, to recklessness and ethical breaches on Wall Street. Yet, it’s clear that the unrepentant and the unreformed are still all too present within our banking system.

A June survey of 500 senior financial services executives in the United States and Britain turned up stunning results. Some 24 percent said that they believed that financial services professionals may need to engage in illegal or unethical conduct to succeed, 26 percent said that they had observed or had firsthand knowledge of wrongdoing in the workplace, and 16 percent said they would engage in insider trading if they could get away with it.

That too much of Wall Street remains unchanged is not surprising. Simply stated, the banks and their leaders have paid no real economic, legal or political price for their wrongdoing and thus have not felt compelled to change.

Phil Angelides, former state treasurer of California, was the chairman of the Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission, which conducted the nation's official inquiry into the financial crisis.

Read the whole story

Remodel, additions create sophisticated STMS campus

By Kathryn Reed

Summer is over – at least for students in Lake Tahoe Unified School District. Today is the first day of the 2012-13 school year.

Three days ago, the principal, teachers and students were giddy. They were ready for classes to begin. A buzz permeated South Tahoe Middle School. It had everything to do with the remodel of the campus and the new two-story Mountain Vista building being complete.

Well, it wasn't really completed. Workers were still caulking, painting and planting. All was to be ready for today's first bell.



Changes at South Tahoe Middle School are dramatic. Photos/Kathryn Reed

But the views, well, they weren't there before. Freel Peak, Jobs, Jobs Sister – are visible from the second floor. Looking down is what is now called Timberwolf Plaza. This is where students may eat on the grass or one of the several tables.

"It feels like a campus finally," Principal Beth Delacour said as she proudly walked the halls and out to what she calls the "back yard".

She knew students by name, and those who were incoming were introduced by their siblings or parents. Kids were smiling as they perused the new facility in search of their classrooms and teachers.

J.J. Clause and Linda Kurek, the two music instructors, were all smiles. They can't believe how the band room has been transformed.

"We won't get slivers off the storage cabinets. There is room for all the kids' and school's instruments. We have windows that open and are not painted black," Clause said.

Clause and Kurek had been talking about what they wanted the band room to be like for the last dozen years. They had even drawn up the plans – most of which became a reality.

Not only does it feel like a campus, but a high school campus.

Technological upgrades in classrooms mean circuit breakers should no longer be tripped when teachers try to plug more than two things in at once. Some of the classrooms were so old they only had two electrical outlets.

The revamping of STMS, which included the removal of 10 portables that became classrooms in the two-story building, was paid for by the voter-approved $64.5 million Measure G facilities bond. Matching grants brought the total the district will spend to $98 million.

New flooring, paint and some new windows are touches throughout the school.

Also new this school year is the student union at South Tahoe High School. It finally allows the kids to eat indoors in one place. This is a joint use facility with South Lake Tahoe, so it is really a community building.

Officials envision being able to rent out that center to organizations, especially during the summer when school is not in session.

Plenty of dust is flying at the high school, as workers build the sports medicine complex. Also under way are the improvements to Bijou Community School.

Next year the magnet school in Meyers will receive some upgrades. When those are done, all the money will have been spent.

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Lawsuit alleges online price fixing by hotel chains

By Nick Brown, Reuters

Expedia Inc, Hilton Worldwide Inc. and other large hotel retailers and operators were accused in a federal lawsuit in California of conspiring to fix hotel room prices as they battled small online retailers who sold rooms more cheaply.

Two consumers are seeking class action status for the suit filed on Monday in California federal court, which alleges the hotels teamed with online room sellers to set minimum rates on rooms and is seeking unspecified money damages.

Plaintiffs Nikita Turik and Eric Balk say the companies broke federal and California state antitrust laws with agreements whereby hotel operators ceased doing business with online retailers that sold rooms below certain prices.

The agreements, drawn up in meetings and during industry conferences, were designed to combat mounting competition from smaller online retailers that sold rooms more cheaply, according to the complaint.

The hotel operators played along because they could not afford to lose access to business from the big online retailers, with the online market now accounting for about half of all U.S. hotel room sales, the lawsuit contends. If not for the scheme, consumers would have paid less for rooms, the plaintiffs say.

In Britain, regulators announced provisional findings of a breach of UK competition laws following an investigation of price-fixing for hotel rooms involving online travel

companies, British media reported in July.

Among the roughly 15 defendants of the California lawsuit are online retailers Orbitz Worldwide Inc., Travelocity.com LP and its parent, Sabre Holdings Corp. TSG.UL. Also included are big-name hotel operators Marriott International Inc. and Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide Inc., which runs the Sheraton, W and Westin hotel chains.

Travel sites “created the illusion” that consumers could seek out the best deals, Steve Berman, an attorney for the plaintiffs, said in a statement on Monday.

“The reality is that these illegal price-parity agreements mean consumers see nothing but cosmetic differences and the same prices on every site,” Berman said.

Representatives for Travelocity and Orbitz declined to comment. Press contacts for Starwood, Hilton BLKSHW.UL, Marriott, Expedia and Sabre did not respond to requests for comment.

Online retailers profit either by buying hotel rooms and reselling them to the public at a higher price, or by charging hotels a fee for the service of booking rooms. The lawsuit alleges that the retailers’ profits were eroded when smaller, price-cutting online retailers, such as Skoosh.com, gained access to the market.

The lawsuit paints price-fixing practices as common, citing numerous accounts of companies admitting and sometimes defending it.

The five-count complaint seeks money damages with interest.

The case is Turik et al v. Expedia Inc et al, U.S. District Court, Northern District of California, No. 12-4365.