Emergencies come in all sizes – are you ready?

By Mandy Kendall

Be prepared.

I was involved in a small accident the other day, nothing serious, just a fender bender. No one was hurt, but what struck me most (other than a rather large truck) was that life is unpredictable and things can go wrong just when you least expect it.

Both drivers were properly insured and, for once, I had all the right documents to hand. In no time at all my car was being towed to the body shop and I had a rental car. I had been as prepared as possible and things went as well as possible.



Mandy Kendall

However, the unexpected could end up being far more serious and, if you are not properly prepared, a lack of emergency preparedness could prove life threatening.

So this week's focus is on tips for emergency preparedness – or 'How to get ready for the unexpected".

Plan routes – Imagine you have to evacuate your house quickly. Find two ways to get out of each room. If an exit is dangerous in its current state, try and work out how to make it safe (a

rope ladder maybe needed for a second floor window or obstacles need to be cleared out of the way). You can make a game of it if there are kids in the house. Get the kids to draw pictures of the escape route from the house and show where they would meet you if you can't leave together. Pick a place near your house and another outside your neighborhood in case it's not safe to return.

Check other emergency plans – Check on your kids' school website and with your workplace to find out about their emergency plan. If they don't have one, maybe offer to help organize one.

Neighborhood – Check with your neighbors, share emergency plans and decide how you might all work together in a crisis. Decide who will check on elderly or disabled neighbors in the event of a local disaster. Find out who has expertise (like medical experience) or specialized equipment that might be helpful during an emergency.

Emergency kit – Other than the usual supplies found in an emergency kit (you can go here for a suggested list) it is also a good idea to have a list of prescription medications needed regularly, a spare pair of eye glasses, photo copies of important documents (driver's license, insurance, etc.) or anything else you might need urgently for a few days after leaving your house without a chance to take anything with you. Also include at least one pair of shoes per person in the household as well as a change of clothes. Have all these items ready to carry out at short notice in strong packs or bags.

Contacts – Decide on an emergency contact outside your area for family to call to check on each other (with a mobile and a landline preferably), as it may be easier to call long distance following a local disaster. Share this contact with all family members.

Emergency numbers – Make a list of local and state emergency

numbers and have a copy for the house and one for the emergency kit.

Pets – Find out in advance who would be prepared to take your pets should there be a household emergency. During a local disaster neighbors may be in the same predicament as you so make sure you know where the local animal shelters are. Visit Humane Society website or the Animal Safety segment on the Red Cross site.

Calendar – Set a date every six months to review emergency packs and stores to replace spoiled or expired supplies. You can use this time to revisit evacuation plans (to make sure someone hasn't blocked that exit again) and check numbers and contacts are still correct.

Shut off valves – Make sure that all the adults in the house know where the electricity, gas and water shut off valves are. Just remember if you turn off the gas, you must get a professional to turn it back on.

First aid kit – One for the house and one of the car preferably.

First aid training – At least one member of the regular household should be trained in first aid. However, it's a good idea to get everyone trained and local emergency services or service associations will often offer courses in your area. If you sign up to volunteer at an association like the Red Cross, you will often get training for free.

I know this can seem like a lot of planning and preparation, but that is precisely the point – when an emergency happens we don't have the time.

Until next time. Stay safe.

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.

Opinion: Olympics inspire a need for Team Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

I wanted to be an Olympian.

I could swim pretty well by age 4, was competing by age 6. I still love the backstroke most, and can do a lap of fly when I test myself.

A few problems arose, though, on my way to gold.

(OK, I really never was on the road to gold … only in my heart.)



Wimbledon will be home of the Olympics for the first time. Photo/Kathryn Reed

I don’t have what it takes to put in the hours of practice to be the best at any sport. I’m not that focused, not that disciplined. And, honestly, I was never that good even if I had the tenacity.

But something about the Summer Olympics grabs me every four years. I remember as a kid my friend Darla and I would have contests in our back yards. We made up a few sports – but we also “competed” in gymnastics and swimming.

I was in college in San Diego when the 1984 Games came to Los Angeles. My parents came down and took me to see volleyball and soccer. Just being at the Olympics, no matter the sport, was an incredible experience.

Through my travels I have had the opportunity to visit a few Olympic cities pre- and post-the events. Most recently it was the Olympic park in London.

The grandeur of the buildings even from the outside is worth touring.

More impressive for me was walking around the grounds of Wimbledon. Oh, to just be able to go hit a few balls. Would I even see Serena’s serve? This incredible tennis venue that each year mandates players dress in all whites will allow contestants to wear whatever colors they like during the Olympics.

Having been to London, Beijing and Vancouver in the past 2½ years, I can’t help but think what it would be like for Lake Tahoe to host the Games. With 2022 out of the question, the soonest would be 2026.

I like how London built some of the facilities so the seating

will be dismantled because those large venues would not be needed for “normal” competitions.

Train tracks go right behind the swimming pool, with a train station nearby. The Lee River will have water taxis.

Tahoe, with a little help from those who’ve done it, could figure out the transportation issue. Heck, the residents of Los Angeles figured out how to make it work – couldn’t we?

We need better lodging. We need restaurants that understand the world is not full of meat eaters. We need shopping.

We need government and regulatory agencies to get out of the way of entrepreneurs and companies who want to invest in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

The one area we are so lacking in is guest services. Managers need to leave Tahoe to see how friendly-responsive-accommodating other places are and then train their employees to be nice, to smile, to know what is going on in town.

We don’t need a prosperity center or chambers plotting our future, we need common sense. We need to be a “we” and to stop asking, “How will ***I*** benefit? How will ***my*** business benefit?” It’s time we got on the same team and asked, “What can ***I*** do to help ***my*** community so in turn ***my*** business benefits and ***I*** have money in my bank account?” It will definitely mean compromising for the greater good.

Team Tahoe can prosper. But first we need to be a team and stop acting like we are in an individual sport – even if Tahoe never hosts the Olympics.

As for the Olympics, well, the Prosecco is chilled in anticipation of tonight’s Opening Ceremony. I will toast all those Olympians who have given their all for this one moment. I will have special interest in watching diving as Kristian Ipsen competes because I went to high school with his parents.

For the next two weeks I will live my Olympic dream through those men and women who are gathered in England. To me they are all winners, not matter if they medal.

Nevada not a sure bet for Obama

By Mitchell Landsberg, Los Angeles Times

RENO – Women are bowling in the middle of a downtown street. Men are climbing the sides of a high-rise hotel. As necks crane and bowling balls skitter into pins, a loudspeaker blares Bruce Springsteen's "Glory Days."

There is, it would seem, almost nothing this town wouldn't do to revive a moribund gambling economy and bring back its glory days. For decades, casinos were the golden key to prosperity, luring in tourists, cranking out jobs around the clock and flooding the state treasury with a perpetual stream of cash.

Those days are over, and all the outdoor bowling championships and climbing walls installed to attract visitors probably won't change that. The local economy is in shambles, done in by the double whammy of the national recession and the rise of Indian casinos in California. Unemployment is rampant.

That presents a serious challenge to President Obama as he tries to repeat his 2008 victory in Nevada, a key swing state then and now.

Read the whole story

Dreaming Tree hikes with local artists in September

Trails and Vistas announces The Dreaming Tree art hikes with views of the Sierra Nevada on Sept. 8 and 9 at Donner Ski Ranch, 19320 Donner Pass Road in Norden.

More than thirty artists including world musicians, dancers, storytellers and visual artists will present the signature two-mile art hikes. In addition to local creative talent, artists come from the San Francisco Bay Area, Santa Cruz, Chico, Davis and Utah.

Tickets in advance are $30 for adults and $10 for ages 5 to 12. If tickets are still available on the day of the hike, the cost is $40. Go online to buy tickets.

Opinion: Parks officials insulted public with buyout shenanigans

Publisher's note: ***This editorial is from the July 18, 2012, Sacramento Bee.***

The California state parks system – as state government itself – is in deep budget trouble.

Yet that did not stop the head of one division within the state parks system – administrative services, which handles accounting and personnel functions – from hatching a scheme to give himself and 55 managers immediate cash payouts for their unused vacation time.

This gaming of the system, by the very people who handle money transactions, came at a time when the state parks system was announcing the closure of 70 state parks and nonprofit organizations were striving to raise private funds to keep parks open. That $271,000 could have helped keep parks running.

This betrayal, detailed in a November 2011 internal audit and an April state attorney general's investigation – and reported by the *Bee's* Matt Weiser – is despicable. While names have been redacted, details make it clear that the ringleader was Manuel Thomas Lopez, who was deputy director of administrative services. But he was not alone. Others were complicit in the outrage.

These people deserve public censure – not redacted names in a report. They should be terminated, with letters in their files so they can't return as "retired annuitants" to state service. Those who falsified documents should be prosecuted.

Let us be clear. This scandal reveals not just corruption by individuals but problems with the state's vacation leave system.

Read the whole story

Class about lead paint renovation to be taught in Spanish

South Lake Tahoe and Lake Tahoe Community College Connect Community Education are sponsoring the Renovator, Repair, Painter Training for local contractors.

The Lead Safe Worker eight-hour training for Renovators, Repair and Painters is being offered at LTCC in Spanish on July 28. The cost to attend the training is $50 and up to two workers from each company are welcome to participate.

The reduced cost of the workshop fees are being paid for by the South Lake Tahoe grant funding. The Lead Safe Tahoe program has been able to control potential lead-based paint hazards and renovate nearly 60 homes so far through this federally funded grant program.

Common renovation activities like sanding, cutting, and demolition can create hazardous lead dust and chips by disturbing lead-based paint, which can be harmful to adults and children. To protect against this risk, on April 22, 2008, EPA issued the Renovation, Repair and Painting Rule. It requires that firms performing renovation, repair, and painting projects that disturb lead-based paint in pre-1978 homes, child care facilities and schools be certified by EPA and that they use certified renovators who are trained by EPA-approved training providers to follow lead-safe work practices.

Contact Janine Green at (530) 542.6196 or Lydia Zuniga at (530) 542.7417 or register online.

Squaw’s village to turn into brew-jazz fest

Cold beers and hot music will come together at Squaw Valley at the 11th annual Brews, Jazz and Funk Fest that supports the Humane Society of Truckee-Tahoe.

Some of the nation’s most recognized jazz and funk legends will perform under the peaks of Squaw Valley, including headlining acts Orgone and Ivan Neville’s Dumpstaphunk. The Brews, Jazz and Funk Fest will take place Aug. 11-12 from 2-8pm in the Village at Squaw Valley.

Festival-goers can listen to continuous live jazz and funk music on two stages while sampling beers from more than 20 breweries including Deschutes, Lagunitas, Sierra Nevada and many more. Beers are $4 each, limited to ages 21 and older. A $5 entry donation to the festival is also requested. All proceeds benefit the Humane Society of Truckee-Tahoe.

The festival is open to all ages with well behaved dogs welcome on leashes.

Low interest rates affect El Dorado Savings’ bottom line

By Mark Glover, Sacramento Bee

Placerville-based El Dorado Savings Bank reported a profit of

$2.1 million for the second quarter ended June 30, down nearly 10 percent from last year's second quarter.

"The drop in earnings was due to the continued record-low interest rates available on new loans and investments," said Thomas Meuser, chairman and CEO. "As older loans, bonds and securities continue to prepay, the funds are reinvested at shorter terms and lower yields.

"Loan volume is steady, but not sufficient to absorb the excess cash flow."

Through six months this year, the bank had a profit of nearly $4.3 million, down slightly from $4.4 million in the first half of 2011.

El Dorado reported total assets of $1.77 billion and savings deposits of $1.58 billion as of June 30.

The bank operates 32 branches in California and three in Nevada.

Vacations no longer mean time completely away from work

By Jayne Clark, USA Today

If it seems like vacations aren't as rejuvenating as they used to be, maybe it's because more people are spending more time working when they're off the clock. Or so say a couple of new polls.

Almost 60 percent of respondents to a survey out this week say taking a vacation doesn't relieve their stress. And more than

a quarter say they’re even more stressed when they return to work after taking time off.

The survey of 1,000 workers (both bosses and underlings) in a range of professions was conducted by Fierce, Inc., a leadership development and training company.

The findings are in line with a related survey reported in *Talent Management* magazine earlier this month that says more than half of U.S. employees say they will work during their summer vacation.

Read the whole story

BMX state qualifier to be staged in South Tahoe

South Lake Tahoe BMX track hosts the USA BMX State Championship Qualifier on July 28.

Sign ups for the event begin at 10am and last one hour. Racing begins at noon.

Race fee is $25 per rider.

Plaques will be awarded to the top three riders in each class.

Spectators are free. The track is located at 1100 Lyons Ave. For more information, call (530) 542.9337.