

CalSTAR, ski workers prep for winter transports



CalSTAR on Oct. 21 explains to Heavenly employees how to work around a helicopter. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

A helicopter ride isn't anyone's idea of a good way to end the ski day. But when minutes matter an air ambulance can be the difference between life and death.

It's a group effort to ensure injured skiers and riders get to a hospital as quickly as possible.

"Our goal is skids down to skids up of 10 minutes or less," CalSTAR flight nurse Beth Frisby said.

Kip McCarthy, Kirkwood Mountain Resort's health and safety manager, told *Lake Tahoe News* an air ambulance is an integral part for that resort as well at Heavenly Mountain Resort.

“What would have been over an hour is now 20 minutes,” McCarthy said of driving vs. air time to get a patient to a hospital.

Every year CalSTAR trains with employees of the local mountains so they are ready when the helicopter arrives. On Friday it was a group from Heavenly learning about the loading procedures and the necessary respect to have for the H235, P3 Airbus.

“We need to get this right 100 percent of the time,” flight nurse Ted Langevin told the group huddled around the landing zone at the California Lodge parking lot. “If you are not sure what to do, stop.”

Because accidents happen at all times of the day, even to workers, it’s not just the patrollers who train with CalSTAR.



Sky Meadows is the busiest on-mountain landing zone for

CalSTAR at Heavenly. Photo/Kathryn Reed

The blades on the helicopter are not visible at night and the back of the bird is a dangerous place to be. Ironically, though, the back is where patients are loaded.

With this being the first year for the new helicopter, it will mean some training for the CalSTAR crew, too. The back end is lower to ground, which will make a difference in snowy conditions.

Bear paws are put on the skids in the winter for traction in the snow.

In a mock situation, with blades not rotating and no snow on the ground, the Heavenly gang got to see what it would be like to carry a backboard (sans patient) to the rear of the helicopter and then lift the patient in.

Those on the ground are responsible for telling the flight crew – which consists of a pilot and two nurses – the wind and landing conditions. If they don't know the direction of the wind, saying they are facing a certain way and then if the wind is to their front or back, or if it's swirling will help the pilot.

Dusty snow on the ground will kick up and blind the pilot. Stomping the snow to make it more solid might be needed. Putting a sack with chains in it (so it doesn't blow away) can be a good marker for where the nose of the helicopter should be.

Don't be afraid to call for helicopter was repeated multiple times on Oct. 21.

"If you are thinking about it more than one time, call the helicopter," Frisby told the workers. "We'd rather be called and there's no patient than to be called too late."

It doesn't cost anyone anything if it turns out the person should be transported via regular ambulance.

Langevin added, "Weather will always be an issue, but don't let that be a determining factor for you."



Patients are loaded from the back into the CalSTAR helicopter. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Wind can be an issue, not so much for the helicopter, but for the people inside of it. Sudden gusts are the worst for the nurses.

"We can fly in a lot of wind. But if we can't help the patient, it does us no good," pilot Mark Davis told *Lake Tahoe News*.

It's the CalSTAR team that decides where the patient will go

and the type of care needed. Most ski patrollers have an extremely limited medical background.

Trauma and stroke patients go to Renown Medical Center in Reno, burn patients to UC Davis in Sacramento, cardiac cases to Carson-Tahoe in Carson City and fractures to Barton Memorial Hospital in South Lake.

CalSTAR, which has eight nurses, four pilots and a base mechanic, is like a flying hospital.

It's not just injured skiers CalSTAR is lifting from area resorts. Babies have been delivered and sometimes the person has already died.

Of the 72 ski resort calls CalSTAR received in 2015-16, 35 percent were from Heavenly. Crews also went to Kirkwood, Sierra, Squaw Valley and Bear Valley. The No. 1 reason is for falls – which includes terrain park injuries, then hitting a fixed object like a tree, third is skier vs. rider (or some combination), and fourth is cardiac.

Hard conditions and busy times, like holidays, are when the call volume goes up.

Most resorts have designated landing zones for CalSTAR, though it is possible to land at other locations. Besides the Cal Lodge at Heavenly, Sky Meadows is the next busiest landing location. The Galaxy location near East Peak, Stagecoach and Boulder lodges are also landing sites.

Internet the salvation for

small bookstores

By Amy Haimerl, New York Times

TRAVERSE CITY, Mich. — When Peter Makin opened Brilliant Books five years ago, he quickly realized his business wouldn't survive in this remote locale if his only customers were local buyers.

In the summer, this small town five hours north of Detroit is a haven for tourists and summer residents who are drawn to the state's wine country. But after the fall colors fade and the sapphire waters of Lake Michigan chill, the region's population slumps by as much as 40 percent for much of the other nine months of the year.

But even as the summer visitors disappear, Brilliant Books is still thriving as a result of robust online sales.

A decade ago, independent bookstores were viewed as an industry on the decline. Crushed on price by Amazon and by the wide selection of national retailers like Barnes & Noble, thousands of mom-and-pop outlets had closed up shop.

But after years of losses, they are emerging from the decimation, with the number of independent bookstores rising 21 percent from 2010 to 2015.

Read the whole story

Second home owners offer first-hand advice

By Marni Jameson, Orland Sentinel

Is owning a second home all it's cracked up to be? That's the question I cast to my experience-wizened readers. And their resounding answer? A definitive sometimes.

I am giving the reins over to my readers, who have shared their first-hand knowledge of second-home ownership. Here are their lessons from the trenches, beaches, mountains and golf communities:

"Just think!"

"There we were, stretched out on the beach – in January!" begins Bonnie Wilkes, explaining how she and her husband, then Chicago residents, came to own a second home in Sarasota, Fla. "The temperature was in the mid-80s. Wow! We thought – just think if we could have this all the time! We should buy a second home here."

And they did. That was 34 years ago. "Never again did we feel that same level of relaxation while on vacation at that same beach," she continued. "Some days we didn't even make it to the beach because we were waiting for the refrigerator repair guy. Instead of strolling the gift shops in the village, we were at a big box store looking for a TV for the guest room."

Waiting until the kids were grown made a second-home investment pay off for Jane Gold, of Saratoga. After their three children were out of the house, she and her husband bought a second home in Lake Tahoe.

"Our family always vacationed there, and we have fond memories of those times." Five years ago, they bought a house close to

the lake and just a four-and-a-half-hour by car from their main home, so they can take their dogs. “We don’t regret buying one bit.”

Read the whole story

Tips for a safe Halloween

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

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. The use of masks which obstruct vision should be avoided. Costumes should incorporate reflective tape in their design so children can be easily seen at night.

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 that long or full costumes and young trick-or-treaters’ hands cannot come in contact with the flames.

Trick or treat while it’s still light outside, and stay in

your neighborhood, visiting only the homes you know.

South Shore also has fun and safe events going on for other trick-or-treat options.

Finally, always check your children's candy before allowing them to eat any of it.

Have a fun and safe Halloween.

– Sallie Ross-Filgo, South Lake Tahoe Fire Department

Truckee arts group raising money via 'non-event'



Eva Stramer Nichols' watercolor "Sunset at the Cabin."

Tickets are on sale now for the anti-social event of the season – the Truckee Public Arts Commission's No-Go Gala.

Each ticket, which raises funds for public art and education in Truckee, enters purchasers in a raffle to win prizes. The ticket itself is a limited edition piece of art. The ticket

for the inaugural event is a signed and numbered print of “Sunset at the Cabin” – a watercolor by local artist Eva Stramer Nichols.

What makes this fundraiser different is there isn’t actually any event to go to.

Each ticket sells for a minimum \$25 donation. Only 300 tickets will be sold.

Tickets may be purchased through Nov. 25 at the Truckee Donner Community Recreation Center, Gallery 5830’, Backstreet Framers and **online**. Tickets will also be available at the opening reception of Truckee Summer Snapshots, a community photography exhibit on Oct. 21 from 5-7pm at the Truckee Community Recreation Center.

The Truckee Public Arts Commission builds community through collaboration, promotion and advocacy for public art. To date, the Truckee Public Arts Commission has put on tri-annual art shows at the Truckee Community Recreation Center and installed five art bike racks in Truckee.

Message in Vonn’s book not as powerful today

By Blair Braverman, Outside

Champion skier Lindsey Vonn’s new book, “Strong Is the New Beautiful”, is all about healthy body image, but you wouldn’t know it from the trailer, which features a mostly naked Lindsey wrapping herself in cloth, posing with ski poles, and smiling coyly in black heels under bright studio lights.



It seems more like a behind-the-scenes promo for a magazine shoot than an ad for a book about nutrition and strength training. But in the age of the ESPN Body Issue—an age where shiny, nude, athletic bodies have become nearly cliché and a sexy woman in a sports bra seems nearly chaste—the trailer straddles a fine line between pinup and power, one that warrants the headline “Vonn Takes It All Off” while at the same time burnishing Vonn’s image as a female role model.

This is “athlete nude,” and Vonn has executed it masterfully.

Vonn can put her strength on display without much backlash, in part, because she still fits into conventional beauty standards.

[Read the whole story](#)

Halloween bash at The Loft in SLT

The Loft Lounge’s inaugural Halloween Bash and Costume Contest is Oct. 29.

Resident DJ Roger That will be spinning music until 2am.

In addition to the party, The Loft will be giving away more than \$1,000 in prizes for the top three costumes that night.

The South Lake Tahoe restaurant-bar opens at 5pm for dinner

and cocktails, and music for the party will start at 9pm. There is no cover charge. Bar-lounge guests must be 21.

Magic Fusion performs two shows that night, 7pm and 9pm.

Valhalla to be taken over by literary festival

“Death and the Psychiatrist” by Calgary, Alberta, playwright James Hutchison is one of three winning plays to be presented at the second annual WordWave Festival this weekend.

WordWave runs from Oct. 21-23 at Valhalla on the South Shore. The festival features writers, musicians, and performers from around the country, along with oral storytelling, workshops, panels, open mics, guided hikes, and staged readings of the winning plays.

“Death and the Psychiatrist” along with “Joint Chiefs” by Peter McDonough and “In the Garden” by Matthew Widman will be presented at the historic Boathouse Theatre on Oct. 22.

For details and to purchase tickets, go **online**. Some events are free.

Con artists have snowbirds in their sights

By Sid Kirchheimer, AARP Bulletin

Snowbird season kicks off this month, as millions of retirees migrate to warm-temperature states like Florida and Arizona. But while escaping the cold, they also weather more risks—at both locales.

“There’s a definite increase in scams against snowbirds, many by organized outfits that specifically focus on older, seasonal residents,” says Joe Roubicek, who spent 30 years investigating scams as a Fort Lauderdale police detective and investigator for the Florida State Attorney’s Office.

Enlist a “what if” contact. Roubicek suggests making a list of what could possibly go wrong—and whom you would call when it does. “What if you’re in an accident, are robbed at a rest stop or need medication?” he asks.

“The biggest mistake made by snowbirds is not proactively arranging for a back-home contact to help in emergencies.” Share your designee’s contact information with the local police department, plus your doctors, pharmacy and family members. To reduce the chance that you’ll need to call on the person, pack copies of prescriptions, important medical records and financial account numbers (all personal data should be stored in a safe place).

Read the whole story

Hotels meet threat of bad reviews

By Julie Weed, New York Times

Pam and Larry Willis had recently purchased the Gables Wine Country Inn in California's Sonoma wine region four years ago when they received it: their first TripAdvisor threat.

"A guest pulled me aside and said he didn't get the level of concierge service he expected and was going to write a negative review online if he didn't get his money back," Larry Willis said. "It was pretty bold."

Willis told the guest he was sorry but the complaint did not warrant a refund. Ultimately, the guest took no action. But the episode put the Willises on guard.

The threat of a bad online review on TripAdvisor, Travelocity or other consumer-advisory sites has become an increasingly common form of guest leverage, lodging executives say.

Read the whole story