

Identities of 11 Reno Air Races victims released

By Reno Gazette-Journal

5:04pm update: The 11th person killed in the Reno Air Races crash has been identified by his mother in an interview with the Associated Press.

James McMichael, 47, of Graham, Wash., was at the show because he "loved planes," his mother, Darlene McMichael, said. "That's why most people go to those things."

She said her son was survived by his wife and an extensive family.

"Our family has a great faith," she said. "And we feel like things happen for a reason. It doesn't make it easier."

3:45pm update: The Washoe County Medical Examiner's Office on Tuesday confirmed the names of five victims of Friday's crash at the National Championship Air Races, bringing the total of those officially identified to 10.

Eleven people, including pilot Jimmy Leeward, died in the crash Friday afternoon, when Leeward's modified P-51 Mustang, The Galloping Ghost, crashed into the front two rows of VIP boxes at Reno-Stead Airport.

The victims confirmed by the medical examiner's office on Tuesday were: John Craik, 45, of Gardnerville; Sheryl Elvin, 71, Lenexa, Kan.; Wendy Hewitt, 56, of Fort Mohave, Ariz.; Craig Salerno, 50, of Friendswood, Texas and Michael Wogan, 22, Scottsdale, Ariz.

It had previously identified victims George Hewitt, 60, of Fort Mohave, Ariz.; Regina Bynun, 53, of San Angelo, Texas; Sharon Stewart, 47, of Reno; Greg Morcom, 47, of Stanwood,

Wash., and the pilot Leeward, 74, of Ocala, Fla.

Read the whole story

Officials still not positive what was dumped in Taylor Creek

Results of the water samples taken from Taylor Creek will not be available today.

Some are expected back from the lab on Sept. 21, others likely the following day.

Lahontan Water Quality Control Board officials said that even though a rush was put on this, the analysis they asked for takes longer than 24 hours.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Owners of Alpine and Homewood part of 49er stadium deal

By Lisa Fernandez and Howard Mintz, Contra Costa Times

The San Francisco 49ers are going into the theme park business, investing in a \$70 million deal to buy the Great America theme park – and bumping out of the way one of their

biggest opponents to building their new stadium in Santa Clara: the park's current owner.

While the team already provides its share of ups and downs on the field, taking control of the roller coasters next door to the planned \$1 billion stadium gives the Niners a chance to blend football and thrill rides into one of the Bay Area's biggest attractions.

Jed York, the 49ers president, cheered the deal in a statement Monday, saying it creates "great synergy and collaboration between two of the largest family entertainment destinations in the region."

The team wouldn't reveal whether it plans to integrate Jim Harbaugh with Planet Snoopy – but teaming up with a San Francisco real estate firm to buy Great America will pay off immediately on one front: eliminating the park's owner, Cedar Fair Entertainment, and its lingering lawsuit to hold up the \$1 billion stadium deal.

Santa Clara stadium backers have sparred with the park owners ever since the 49ers and city officials began negotiating a South Bay stadium deal five years ago.

In a statement, JMA Ventures, the real estate firm heading the Great America purchase, praised the prospect of pairing Great America with the 49ers stadium, a stark departure from public comments by Cedar Fair officials who've expressed concern an NFL stadium could damage the park's business and create parking headaches for park patrons.

Read the whole story

NTSB leaves Reno; public memorial planned for Sunday

By Reno Gazette-Journal

Update 7:50pm: While the death toll from Friday's air races crash rose to 10, federal investigators left the region Monday to begin the process of figuring out what caused a vintage World War II plane to slam into the tarmac near a group of VIP box seats during the National Championship Air Races.

The crash left dozens more injured with 17 people still being treated in area hospitals. Two people are still missing.

What's left of pilot Jimmy Leeward's P-51 Mustang will be hauled to an off site facility for analysis while photo and video evidence from spectators was sent to Washington.

Gov. Brian Sandoval and local officials met with a representative from the NTSB Monday morning for a briefing. Afterwards, the governor said it's important to wait for the NTSB to conduct its investigation.

"The Reno community has risen up in the face of extreme challenges, a fact highlighted today when the NTSB described the response from first responders as 'tremendous,' " Sandoval said in a statement. "I could not be more proud of the outstanding response from the Nevada family."

The date has been changed for a public memorial service for victims, families and others affected by the deadly crash at the National Championship Air Races in Reno.

The service is now planned for 6pm Sunday in the Idlewild Park arboretum, between the pond on Idlewild Drive at the east end of the park and the Truckee River.

The city said in a statement that it plans to dedicate a tree

in the arboretum of Idlewild Park to all the victims.

Members of the local clergy will conduct the memorial service.

Read the whole story

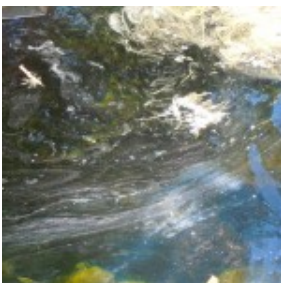
Source of Taylor Creek spill unknown; samples taken

By Kathryn Reed

What exactly was dumped into Taylor Creek should be known late Tuesday afternoon when results from water samples taken Monday are delivered to South Shore officials.

While the substance appears to be petroleum, that still needs to be confirmed.

The U.S. Forest Service is recanting its earlier statement when officials said it was definitively astro turf soaked in petroleum that was the root of the problem.



A sheen of what appears to be oil floats on Taylor Creek

Sept. 18.
Photo/Kathryn
Reed

"They have not identified the cause," Cheva Heck, USFS spokeswoman, told *Lake Tahoe News* on Monday.

She said the estimate is 1 to 2 gallons was put into the creek that goes directly to Lake Tahoe. However, if petroleum is only one component of what was dumped, that amount could grow.

The spill was first discovered Sept. 17 by a Forest Service employee when he arrived at work at the Taylor Creek Visitors Center.

But Heck emphasized as of now everyone is calling this a tiny spill.

At this time biologists have not seen any evidence of harm to the waterway or animals. With the first school of about 20 kokanee salmon arriving Sept. 19, the health of the creek is critical. This is one of their prime spawning areas each fall in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

"We were checking to see if this material is just staying on the surface of the water, which appears to be the case," said Scott Ferguson, senior water resources control engineer with Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board. "We moved some sediment and some rocks under the water to see if anything had gone down to the creek bed."

With the substance staying on the surface, this will be better for the ecosystem.

"It looks like what I call a dump and run," Ferguson told *Lake Tahoe News*. "It looks like we are down to an isolated area where we have some material trapped on the vegetation. That's why when you disturb it you see the sheen."

All indications are someone dumped the unknown substance into the creek. Where the contaminate is coming from is a vegetated area, that when rustled oozes more of the material so it flows downstream. If not disturbed, nothing more flows into the creek.

Because of how dense the vegetation is and not knowing what the product is, it won't be removed until more is known. Authorities don't want to drag out vegetation without knowing what is on it.

Booms and absorbent sheets will also remain in the creek until officials know what they are dealing with.

Forest Service officials say this will not impede the salmons' quest to swim upstream even though the booms cross the creek in multiple locations.

Jim Harris, Forest Service spill coordinator, reported late Monday the substance was found 30 feet upstream from the foot bridge along the Rainbow Trail, that it was not expanding and nothing new was appearing.

Lahontan ordered the water samples; it's El Dorado County Department of Environmental Services that is overseeing the cleanup; and the Forest Service that is investigating the spill.

A cleanup plan beyond the booms will be determined once officials know what they are dealing with.

Names of confirmed dead from

Reno Air Races released

By Reno Gazette-Journal

These are the known victims of Friday's crash at the National Championship Air Races that have been confirmed by family members or the Washoe County Medical Examiner's Office:

Jimmy Leeward, 74, pilot, Ocala, Fla.

Greg Morcum, 47, Marysville, Wash.

Michael Wogan, 22, Phoenix

George Hewitt, 60, Fort Mohave, Ariz.

John Craik, 47, Gardnerville

Regina Bynum, 53, San Angelo, Texas

Sharon Stewart, 47, Reno

Confirmed Missing

Wendy Hewitt, Fort Mohave, Ariz.

Cherie Elvin, Lenexa, Kansas

Confusion about fundraising for Placer County SAR team

By Kim Minugh, Sacramento Bee

A charity organization appears to be looking for money at the same time the Placer County Sheriff's Search and Rescue team

is seeking donations, causing some confusion among residents, according to authorities.

As part of the Search and Rescue team's annual fundraising efforts, a telemarketing company is calling Placer County residents to ask for donations. At the same time, a group calling itself "Search and Rescue Charities," which has no affiliation with the county Sheriff's Search and Rescue team, also is calling residents for money, according to a news release from the Placer County Sheriff's Department.

County officials are advising residents that the Search and Rescue Charities group is not raising money for the local Search and Rescue team.

Read the whole story

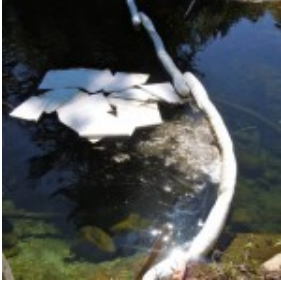
USFS: Astro turf soaked in oil tossed into Taylor Creek

Updated Sept. 19 at 8:10am.

By Kathryn Reed

CAMP RICHARDSON – Water samples are expected to be taken today from Taylor Creek after an oil slick was discovered by a U.S. Forest Service employee during the weekend.

"After a thorough investigation it appears that a passing motorist threw a piece of petroleum-soaked astro turf into Taylor Creek off the bridge," according to John Washington with the U.S. Forest Service.



A sheen of oil is stopped Sept. 18 by a boom in Taylor Creek.

Photos/Kathryn Reed

Four white oil absorbing booms are draped across the South Shore creek that feeds into Lake Tahoe. Sheets designed to pick up hydrocarbons and not water are strewn about the edges of the creek, looking more like garbage than something to help the environment.



Booms and absorbant sheets pick up the oil in Taylor Creek.

A major concern is what the pollutant will do to the kokanee salmon run this fall. This tributary is a major spawning area for the fish – with events conducted just to witness their migration, making it also an economic concern on top of an environmental issue.

The fish have not started to spawn.

Forest Service officials who could answer questions about the environmental affects of the spill were not available this weekend, nor were California Department of Fish & Game, Lahontan Water Quality Control Board and El Dorado County Department of Environmental Health workers. The latter agency is now responsible for the site.

While a posse of officials descended on the site Sept. 17, no one was patrolling the water Sunday.

Signs, though, on the Rainbow Bridge have been posted saying, "Warning: Fire hazard No smoking on or near Taylor Creek."

While the booms say, "Oil only sponge" – it would take getting up close to them to know that. The booms were put out by Lake Valley firefighters, with Fallen Leaf Lake firefighters arriving later Saturday.

A sheen about 2-square-feet in area could be seen Sunday near one of the booms. It was not possible to see how much the apparatuses had absorbed.

"The original reported sheen was 10 feet by 20 feet. Our spill coordinator observed that it appeared to be limited to between the street bridge and the walking bridge at Taylor Creek," USFS spokeswoman Cheva Heck told *Lake Tahoe News*.

An original possible source of the contaminant was thought to be from a boat at Fallen Leaf, with the water coming over the dam into Taylor Creek. Billy Reif with the Forest Service on Sunday told *Lake Tahoe News* he does not believe the source is upstream because there is no evidence of the oil there.

He discovered the oil when he arrived at work at the Taylor Creek Visitors Center on Saturday about 7am.

Looking at the creek from the bridge at Highway 89 there is no evidence of oil or of the booms farther down the waterway.

This is the second incident this summer involving oil potentially affecting Lake Tahoe, though neither has done so. The other was at Zephyr Cove Resorts.

Man injured at Reno Air Races relives crash events

By Reno Gazette-Journal

1pm update: Ed Larson said he simply appreciates being alive after Friday's crash at the National Championship Air Races that killed at least 9 people, including pilot Jimmy Leeward, whose plane slammed into the tarmac adjacent to VIP boxes.

Larson, 59, who splits time between Reno and San Diego, was sitting in Box 50 and talking to a friend with his back to his scene when they heard a sound from the crowd that indicated something was going wrong.

He saw the plane, the Galloping Ghost, a modified P-51 Mustang, coming down and started to run.

He said he was struck from behind with debris and temporarily knocked unconscious.

"A whole bunch of things hit me in the back," said Larson during a press conference at Renown Regional Medical Center, from which he was being released on Sunday.

He suffered injuries to his head, and shrapnel also tore through his Achilles tendon and calf muscle.

"It was just meat hanging out and muscle," he said.

He also suffered a dislocated shoulder.

He was transported to Renown via a helicopter.

Larson underwent successful surgery and was released on Sunday. He said his rehabilitation is expected to last two months.

“It just makes you appreciate to be alive,” he said of the experience.

Read the whole story

Murillo intends to increase LTCC's presence in community, state

By Kathryn Reed

No tuition, manual typewriters, and classes in a motel – that was then. Computers in nearly every classroom, multiple buildings on a real campus, and a fee for all of that – this is now.

A video showcasing Lake Tahoe Community College from 1974-2011 was part of the Sept. 15 inauguration of the two-year institution's fourth president, Kindred Murillo.



LTCC President
Kindred
Murillo is
ready to make
the college a
leader.
Photo/Kathryn
Reed

“With Dr. Kindred Murillo, we are filled with hope,” LTCC board President Fritz Wenck told those gathered in Duke Theatre.

Jim Duke, who the theater is named after and the college’s first president, spoke, as did his successor, Guy Lease. Paul Killpatrick, the school’s third leader, was not in attendance.

Murillo acknowledged the large shoes she has to fill, but said she is up to the commitment. She has been at the helm since July. Fall quarter begins Monday.

“We need to honor our past to move forward,” Murillo said. “The community is ready to move forward and they want us to be a leader.”

She said each decision she makes is done so with first asking how it will impact students. She also assured the group of mostly college employees that she did not take the job as a steppingstone to be president of a larger college.

Murillo’s intent is to make LTCC the college of choice in California.