

Odds of stroke rise sharply for young people

By Anita Creamer, Sacramento Bee

At the barbershop on Florin Road where he works, Chris Matsumoto was trimming a customer's hair one day in 2006. He'd taken time off work a couple of weeks earlier after having dizzy spells. Suddenly, the severe dizziness returned.

"I got dizzy again, so dizzy," he said. "And then I passed out with a client in my chair."

As it turned out, he'd suffered an ischemic stroke: A clot had blocked blood flow to his brain, cutting off the flow of oxygen and damaging the tissue. He was left unable to speak. The months after that passed in a blur for him, from his diagnosis and hospitalization through his early therapy to relearn how to talk and read.

He was 26 years old.

"This has been an eye-opening experience for me," said barber Chris Matsumoto of the stroke he suffered in his 20s. "Everything is still coming back slowly. It took a lot of work."

From 1994 through 2007, CDC research shows, the rate of ischemic stroke jumped by 47 percent for men ages 35 to 44 and 36 percent for women in the same age group. For men in their early 20s, the number of stroke-related hospitalizations rose by more than 50 percent during that period.

Read the whole story

Safeway to pay nearly \$10 mil. in hazardous waste lawsuit

By KCRA-TV

OAKLAND – Safeway Inc. has agreed to pay nearly \$10 million in civil penalties to settle a environmental protection lawsuit filed in Oakland alleging that the grocery store chain failed to properly dispose of hazardous waste at more than 500 California facilities over seven years.

The San Francisco and Alameda County district attorney's offices said Alameda County Superior Court Judge Wynne Carvill approved the settlement this morning after 41 district attorneys and two city attorneys filed a complaint on Wednesday.

"This investigation touched nearly every county in California, and today's results could not have been reached without the collaborative work of the many offices involved," Alameda County District Attorney Nancy O'Malley said in a statement.

Prosecutors alleged that Safeway sent hazardous waste including medication, aerosol cans, flammable liquids, batteries, electronic devices and other toxic materials to landfills instead of properly disposing of them.

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18 bears killed by Nevada hunters

By Associated Press

Nevada hunters killed 18 black bears in 2014, the most in the hunt's four-year history.

The Nevada Department of Wildlife says 12 of the bruins were killed in the Pinenut Mountains near Carson City. Others were killed in the Carson Range, Pine Grove Mountains and Washoe Valley, all in Northern Nevada.

The *Reno Gazette-Journal* reports dogs were used in all but four successful hunts in 2014.

A total of 57 bears have been killed by hunters since the hunt began in 2011. A maximum of 20 bears can be killed each season.

The hunt has drawn strong opposition from the start, with critics saying there are not enough bears in arid Nevada to support it.

El Dorado County saddled with caring for 91 horses

By Richard Chang, Sacramento Bee

A longtime animal rescue group has run out of cash, leaving El Dorado County officials scrambling to provide care to an unprecedented 91 horses.

The nonprofit Grace Foundation was formally evicted Nov. 20 from a private ranch off Latrobe Road after losing its insurance, said the foundation's executive director, Beth DeCaprio. Since then, 91 horses, along with several goats, chickens and pigs, have been placed in the protective custody of El Dorado County Animal Services.

Local authorities are responsible for impounding animals that remain following an eviction in accordance with state law. But the case has tested the capabilities of the county's animal services agency.

"It's not cheap to feed that many animals," said El Dorado County Animal Services Chief Henry Brzezinski. "We're talking 91 horses and multiple miscellaneous livestock."

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Calif. drought: Early months of 2015 critical

By Miguel Llanos, NBC News

Drought? What drought?

Californians could be forgiven for asking that question after two big storms in December brought record rain to the north and mountain snow to Southern California that dusted palm

trees in some lower-elevation towns. The start of a new year, however, has the state back in a dry stretch, and experts wonder what's in store for the critical few weeks ahead.

"We must necessarily plan for the worst but hope for the best," said Jeanine Jones, deputy drought manager with the California Department of Water Resources. "We are only now entering the normally wettest part of our winter season, and what happens – or doesn't – in the next six weeks or so will tell us a lot about the likely outcome of the water year."

But the start to 2015 does not look promising for the Golden State. On New Year's Eve, the Los Angeles branch of the National Weather Service summarized the outlook on its Facebook page. "Rain for California to bring in the New Year?" it asked. Showing a map modeling precipitation over the next week, its answer was blunt: "Not very likely."

And with California's rainy season being defined by a short winter window, what happens in January and February will be critical.

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People won't stop texting and walking

By AJ Vicens, Mother Jones

Last year, it was reported that a small city in China had created a texting-only lane for pedestrians. The story went viral before it was somewhat debunked—turns out the lane is in a theme park, and it's just 100 feet long—but there's a reason

it got eyeballs: everybody's worried about "texting while walking," and no one knows what to do about it.

According to a 2012 Pew study, most grownups have bumped into stuff while looking at their phones, or been bumped by someone else on their phone. A Stony Brook University study in 2012 found that texting walkers were 61 percent more likely to veer off course than undistracted ones, a finding backed up by other researchers.

Greatest "hits" compilations abound on YouTube. One woman tumbled into a mall fountain, another off a pier. A man nearly collided with a roaming bear. While pride suffered most in those cases, more than 1,500 pedestrians landed in emergency rooms due to a cell-phone related distracted walking injury in 2010—a nearly 500 percent jump since 2005—according to a recent study from Ohio State University.

Jack Nasar, professor of urban planning at Ohio State University and one of the study's co-authors, said the real number of injuries could be much, much higher. "Not every pedestrian who gets injured while using a cell phone goes to an emergency room," he told Mother Jones. Some lack health insurance or (erroneously) decide their injuries aren't serious. Others will deny a phone had anything to do with their injury. "People who die from cell-phone distraction also don't show up in the emergency room numbers," says Nasar.

Of course, pedestrians aren't the only ones with their noses in their phones. According to a 2013 University of Nebraska Medical Center study, the rate of pedestrians getting hit by distracted drivers grew by about 45 percent between 2005 and 2010. The good news is that 44 states, Washington D.C., and Puerto Rico have banned texting and driving for all drivers, but the bad news is that texting and walking is potentially more dangerous and has proved harder to ban.

Read the whole story

Placerville standoff ends with fire in home

By Bill Lindelof, Sacramento Bee

A long standoff with sheriff's deputies at a home in Placerville ended after a fire caused a wanted man to exit his residence.

El Dorado County sheriff's deputies attempted to serve an arrest warrant on a man in the 2200 block of Cold Springs Road about 11:30am Thursday. The man was wanted on charges related to felony domestic violence.

However, the man refused to leave the home. At one point, he briefly came outside with a knife and claimed he was going to kill himself.

Over the next 12 hours, deputies tried to get the man to come out. At times, negotiators tried to speak with him by phone.

[Read the whole story](#)

Former senator to run marijuana company

By Matt Ferner, Huffington Post

Former Sen. Mike Gravel, D-Alaska, is the new CEO of a

marijuana company that produces cannabis-infused products for both recreational and medical use, the company announced this week.

The Alaskan Democrat and 2008 presidential contender will lead KUSH, a subsidiary owned by Cannabis Sativa, Inc. Former New Mexico Gov. Gary Johnson serves as CEO of Cannabis Sativa, and Gravel is on that company's board of directors.

KUSH will develop and market new marijuana-infused products under Gravel's leadership, the company said in a press release.

Steve Kubby of South Lake Tahoe and chairman of the board at Cannabis Sativa, called Gravel a "true American hero" who "brings invaluable perspective" to the company.

Gravel served two terms in the Senate from 1969 to 1981, and was a candidate in the 2008 presidential race. He also has been an outspoken supporter of marijuana legalization and a staunch critic of the decades-long war on drugs.

Read the whole story

CDC: Flu season at epidemic levels

By Cynthia H. Craft, Sacramento Bee

Flu is hitting hard, and even though vaccinations might not target the specific strain of the virus currently going around, experts still urge people to receive the shots.

The nation's top public health agency declared a flu epidemic

Tuesday, warning residents to exercise caution in public spaces and use good, basic sanitary habits. And even though it may miss the dominant flu strain this year, experts continued to urge people to get the flu shot, saying that it certainly can't hurt.

Infectious disease experts in the Sacramento region confirmed that influenza activity has been on an uptick here during the past two weeks.

But, as in past years, the flu has hit states east of the Rockies the hardest early on in the season, giving Californians advance notice of just how harsh an outcome to expect.

Read the whole story

New bank could save the pot industry

By Katie Lobosco, CNNMoney

Kristi Kelly owns legal marijuana stores in Colorado called Good Meds and has lost 23 bank accounts in five years.

Even though medical marijuana is legal in Colorado and 22 other states, it's still illegal on the federal level. And that means banks generally don't want anything to do with pot shops.

That creates a slew of headaches for these entrepreneurs, who are often forced to operate all-cash businesses. That is time consuming and costly – and can be dangerous.

But a new credit union formed specifically to serve the marijuana business could be a turning point for the fledgling pot industry.

Fourth Corner Credit Union is supported by a group of attorneys, business owners and legalization advocates who see an opportunity where traditional bankers see only potential legal problems. Pending final approval from the Federal Reserve, it could open in January.

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