

Pilot dies in S. Tahoe plane crash; 1 person survives



One person died, one survived after this plane crashed July 22 near South Lake Tahoe. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Updated 4:25pm:

By Kathryn Reed

The 67-year-old pilot of a single-engine plane crashed moments after taking off Monday from Lake Tahoe Airport.

Steven Lefton's wife, Karen Lefton, was the lone passenger of the 1963 Mooney. She was conscious when Calstar airlifted her from the meadow near Golden Bear to Renown Medical Center in Reno. She is expected to recover from her injuries.

The Palo Alto couple arrived at the South Lake Tahoe airport on July 18. They were taking off about 11:15am July 22 when

the plane banked to the right, lost altitude and crashed in a wooded area about three-quarters of a mile to the east of the airport.

"It's a fairly powerful plane, but on a hot day like this it's fairly easy to lose density altitude and have problems," El Dorado County sheriff's Lt. Pete Van Arnum told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Another plane in the area saw the four-seater flying low and heard the crash. Then the jet picked up the emergency beacon signal of the downed plane. From there Calstar was able to locate the crash site from the air.

The plane crashed into trees and flipped. It was resting upside down in a crumpled heap.

Beth Frisby, a flight nurse with Calstar, was the first person on the scene because she was on a walk in the area. She called her husband, EDSO Deputy Damian Frisby, who was able to track her location via GPS on the phones.

The plane was still running when Frisby came upon the crash site.

She was assessing the occupants of the plane as crews arrived.

"A lot of fuel was leaking, so we were concerned when we got here," Van Arnum said.

He said it was lucky the plane did not explode or cause much of a fire.

Investigators from the Federal Aviation Administration arrived within hours from Reno and National Transportation Safety board are expected Tuesday from Seattle. Guards will be onsite until investigators are done and the plane can be hauled away.

Parents expect to spend less on school supplies

By Megan Kowalski, USA Today

Despite higher prices for back-to-school needs, students and parents will spend nearly 8 percent less this season than in 2012, according to a survey out Thursday from the National Retail Federation.

Parents will save by shopping earlier for sales, shopping online and by having children re-use items bought in last year's booming back-to-school season, the NRF says.

Average back-to-school spending will be \$635, down from last year's average of \$689, the NRF says. Back-to-college spending also will shrink this year, the NRF says, to an average of \$837 for supplies – including apparel, electronics and dorm furnishings – down from \$907 last year. It estimates total U.S. spending will be \$26.7 billion.

The back-to-school drop comes despite a 7.3 percent increase in the cost of school supplies, fees and activities estimated by Columbus, Ohio-based Huntington Bank's annual "Backpack Index," also out Thursday.

The cost of back-to-school shopping could increase 36 percent from last year if students add a midprice \$300 tablet to purchases, according to the Backpack Index.

A new study from educational services company CourseSmart found 35 percent of college students now own a tablet, up from 7 percent in its 2011 survey.

Squaw Valley man must pay to remove river cable

By George Warren, News 10

A federal court judge has ordered a Squaw Valley daredevil to pay \$4,000 to cover the cost of removing a mile-long steel cable across the north fork of the American River.

Mike Wilson, 27, is described by some as an action sports superstar. In one popular YouTube video, he performs a quadruple back flip from a 99-foot cable swing over Lake Tahoe.

Although Wilson thrives on risky behavior, the federal government said his cable over the canyon could have killed somebody else. The quarter-inch cable is virtually invisible to a pilot.

"It could have ended tragically," said Jeff Horn of the Bureau of Land Management. "What if a helicopter had flown into this. What if a plane had flown into this. It would have been bad. Most helicopter crashes don't end well."

Another YouTube video, posted by one of Wilson's friends, shows how the cable works. Wilson and his friends would "zipline" out to the middle, and then drop by parachute to the river 2,000 feet below.

Four days after the Bureau of Land Management discovered the cable in February 2012, the agency ordered Wilson to cut it down.

Since then, the cable has remained draped over trees and rocks in the canyon below.

In a one-day federal court trial in April 2013, Wilson was convicted of a single misdemeanor for an unauthorized improvement on public land and ordered to pay \$4,000 to the BLM to remove the cable.

"It is still a hazard," Horn said. "It's about 250 feet maybe, give or take a few, above the canyon."

Helicopters capable of lifting the cable out of the canyon won't be available until after fire season so the cable will likely remain there until then.

Study: Wages vary based on history with smoking

By Khadeeja Safdar, Wall Street Journal

Former smokers earn higher wages than smokers and people who have never smoked, according to new research.

In a working paper published by the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, research economists Julie L. Hotchkiss and M. Melinda Pitts studied the relationship between smoking and wages. Using data from the Tobacco Use Supplement to the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey over the period of 1992 to 2011, the economists found that people who had quit smoking for at least a year earned higher wages than smokers and people who had never smoked. The data shows that nonsmokers, which include never smokers and former smokers, bring in about 95 percent of the hourly wages of former smokers.

Smokers, on the other hand, are not rewarded as much in the workplace. They earned about 80 percent of nonsmokers' wages.

Even one cigarette a day triggers a wage gap between smokers and nonsmokers, the economists write. "Smoking erodes the value of your human capital in the labor market," said Pitts.

Are tobacco users earning less because smoking reduces their productivity? Hotchkiss and Pitts didn't find evidence for this. The two economists tested the relationship between wages and smoking intensity and found that the frequency at which people smoke doesn't significantly affect their earnings. "The idea is that if the productivity was affected by smoking, then heavier smokers would have a much larger wage gap. We didn't find support for this hypothesis," said Pitts.

They determined that differences in the characteristics of smokers and nonsmokers, such as educational attainment, as well as unmeasured factors such as an employer's tolerance to smoking behavior, are mostly driving the wage gap. They noted that education level was the largest contributing variable. Nonsmokers tend to be more educated, are less likely to have spouses who smoke and live in states where cigarette prices are higher than smokers.

The findings suggest that the characteristics of former smokers are more highly rewarded in the labor market than those of smokers and people who have never smoked. "It takes a special person to quit an addictive behavior, and there is a higher reward for smoking cessation than not ever starting it," said Pitts. "I think the qualities of persistence, patience and everything else that goes along with being able to quit are valuable to employers."

Red Hawk on the road to financial recovery

By Dale Kasler, Sacramento Bee

Red Hawk Casino's debts are so crushing, its tribal owner once warned the venue might close and the Legislature had to provide a bailout plan.

Now the Shingle Springs casino could be on the verge of completing a state-assisted financial makeover that would remove many of the doubts about its viability.

If costs are reduced as expected, Red Hawk's "prospects are pretty good," said Ken Adams, a gambling industry consultant in Reno.

But even if it stabilizes its finances, Adams said Red Hawk will never approach the profitability of the area's most successful casino, Thunder Valley in Lincoln. Red Hawk's Highway 50 location is too far from Sacramento to draw the volume of business seen at Thunder Valley.

Read the whole story

Suspected drunken driver takes out utility pole

A former South Lake Tahoe man who now lives in Colfax was taken to Barton Memorial Hospital on Sunday night after the vehicle he was driving crashed into a utility pole at Al Tahoe Boulevard and Pioneer Trail.

"I followed him from Rite-Aid and could not believe this person would drive a vehicle under his condition," a witness told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Justin Hartinger, 38, was the driver of the Toyota SUV. At about 7:30pm July 21 he was taken to the hospital and issued a citation for driving under the influence.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

1 hurt, 1 arrested at fight at Lakeview Commons

An altercation at Lakeview Commons late Sunday afternoon sent one person to jail and another to the hospital.

Zachariah Libby of South Lake Tahoe was arrested July 21 on assault with a deadly weapon charges and child endangerment.

Police told Lake Tahoe News the initial investigation shows that Libby punched another man for "entirely unprovoked reasons."

The victim was holding a 4-year-old child when he was hit. The child was not injured. The adult, whose name has not been released, was taken to Barton Memorial Hospital. The extent of his injuries is not known.

The deadly weapon charge is for Libby's fist, "which has caused some potential for inflicting great bodily injury," police said.

The investigation is ongoing.

Reid, Heller working together on online poker

By Karoun Demirjian, Las Vegas Sun

Just a year ago, Nevada Sen. Harry Reid was busy making it his mission to prove that Nevada Sen. Dean Heller was inept at the delicate art of culling votes for Internet poker legislation.

Now that there's no Shelley Berkley candidacy to defend, though, Reid can't stop singing praises for Heller's prowess in reviving the online gaming debate.

"This was a very, very good hearing," Reid said of a meeting Heller ran this morning in the Commerce Committee's Subcommittee on Consumer Protection.

"I helped him prepare for this," Reid said.

But just because Reid and Heller are all smiles doesn't mean online poker has a clear path through Congress.

While there is near-universal concern about the security of online gambling, not everyone believes that online poker should get a special carve-out if Congress tries to walk back the Obama administration's 2011 interpretation of the 1961 Wire Act.

[Read the whole story](#)

El Dorado Savings posts quarterly gains

El Dorado Savings Bank posted second quarter gains last week.

The Placerville-based company's profits ending June 30 of nearly \$2.17 is an increase of about 2 percent from the same period in 2012.

An increase in interest rates on new investments and more loans being written what the company attributes the gains to.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

S. Lake Tahoe man stabbed to death

A 28-year-old South Lake Tahoe man was stabbed to death early Saturday morning and the suspect is at-large.

The name of the deceased is being withheld pending notification of family.

The confrontation occurred about 3:30am July 20 near the Americana Village on Pioneer Trail. By the time officers arrived, the victim had been transported to Barton Memorial Hospital by family. He died from multiple stab wounds to his torso.

Police said the suspect was walking west on Pioneer Trail when he encountered a group of three men, including the victim, near the Americana. A confrontation occurred between the suspect and this group of men, which turned into a physical fight. During the fight the suspect used an edged weapon to stab the victim in the side.

The suspect fled the area without being identified other than being a white male in his 20s.

Police say this is not gang related.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*