

# Wine tasting benefits Sugar Pine Foundation

The Sugar Pine Foundation is putting on a wine tasting and fundraising at Ben's Fine Wines & Spirits in south Reno on March 8 from 5-10pm.

The event will feature wine from five El Dorado County vineyards: Madrona, Fenton Herriott, Boeger, Lava Cap and Holly's Hill.

There will also be hors d'oeuvres, a photography expose about the Sugar Pine Foundation, and a wine-centric live auction and raffle.

The cost is \$15.

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## Online guns sales thriving

**By Nick Leiber, Bloomberg Businessweek**

In October, Google joined other big online marketplaces including eBay, Craigslist and Amazon.com in banning weapons listings on its revamped shopping site. The move, which the company said was in keeping with its advertising policy, predated the Newtown, Conn., school massacre by about two months. Yet there is no evidence that Google's action has curbed online gun sales.

That's because sellers, incensed by the prohibition on gun listings, are finding new outlets for their wares. Cory Brown, a sporting goods merchant who runs several e-commerce sites in Rockville, Md., estimates that Google once helped drive 80

percent of the roughly \$5 million in annual sales of ammunition, shooting accessories and outdoor equipment at one of his online stores.



Rather than just complain to the search giant, he started FreeGunShow.com in December, an online classified ad service for guns and other gear. "I was like, look, I'm tired of these companies, whatever (their) motivations, prohibiting the sale of things that are legal," Brown said. "When Google pulled the plug on this kind of stuff, I knew something bad was happening." Another firearms marketplace, GunCycle.com, based in Princeton, Kan., is scheduled to go online this week.

#### Internet auction sites

In 2000, when the U.S. Department of Justice last did an official tally, there were about 80 online firearms auction sites and approximately 4,000 other sites offering guns for sale in the country. Today, as the national gun control debate intensifies in the wake of the Newtown tragedy, it's a safe bet that gun buyers have even more online options.

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives spokeswoman Ginger Colbrun says the federal agency is aware that there's been a boom in gun buying sites. Federal gun safety proposals circulating in Washington that would tighten background checks might take a bite out of sales if passed by Congress. Yet none are intended to put these digital weapons bazaars out of business.

New sites like Brown's and older ones such as GunBroker.com and Armslist function as marketplaces for buyers and sellers and make money through advertising or transaction charges. GunBroker.com, which bills itself as the world's largest gun

auction site, has brokered more than \$2 billion in sales since its founding in 1999, according to the site.

Online sales anger gun control advocates because shoppers can use them to exploit a long-standing loophole in federal law that allows unlicensed private gun sellers to skip background checks on prospective buyers in their home state. Also, while it's a felony to sell a firearm knowingly to an individual who would not pass a background check because of a criminal record or history of mental illness, many private sellers flout that rule.

Bob Ralph shuttered Express Police Supply, a brick-and-mortar store in Lenexa, Kan., that sold Smith & Wesson's M&P 15 semiautomatic rifles and Glock's 22 handguns, in 2011. Now he's gearing up for GunCycle.com. Ralph acknowledges that a private collector who auctioned a gun through his site could meet the buyer in a parking lot and hand over the weapon without a background check. "There would be no way for me to stop that or preclude that," he said. "And it would be legal for them to do it that way."

An undercover investigation by New York City of private firearms sales online in 2011 showed 62 percent of sellers agreed to sell a firearm to investigators posing as buyers who indicated they probably couldn't pass a background check.

"Buyers can buy and sellers can sell in almost complete anonymity. So if you're looking to avoid being seen – a paper trail or legal scrutiny – you're going to turn (to Internet sites) first," said Mark Glaze, director of Mayors Against Illegal Guns. The group, which includes more than 850 U.S. mayors, was co-founded by New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg.

Gun control advocates are trying to halt the proliferation of online marketplaces for firearms. Two days before the Dec. 14 Connecticut school shooting, Armslist was sued by relatives of

a woman who was murdered in suburban Chicago in 2011 by a man who shot her with a weapon advertised on the site.

The wrongful-death lawsuit, the first against an online weapons seller, was launched by the Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence on behalf of Jitka Vesel's family. Armslist didn't respond to requests for comment sent via its website; a telephone number wasn't available.

Others in the same line of business have not been cowed. "This lawsuit will die. You cannot sue a third party in this case. Been proven over and over in case law," Cory Brown wrote in an e-mail. He says his 2-month-old site has more than 1,000 registered users and would be doing even better if he had more merchandise. "A lot of our sellers own stores and inventory right now is real hard to get," he wrote in another email. "Anytime we see an in-demand gun come up, it doesn't last long."

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## **Sport-specific weather apps help with planning**

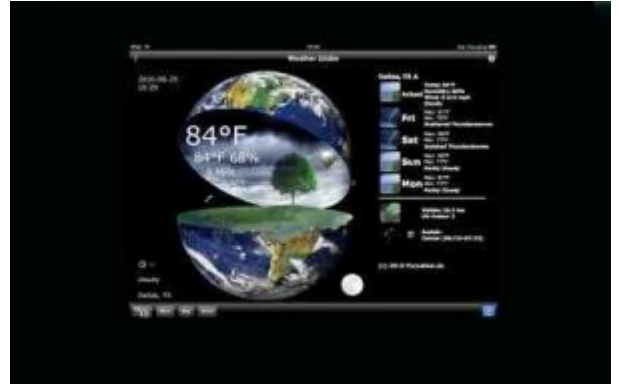
**By Bill Saporito, Time**

Skiers in Colorado know that the weather in Vail can differ wildly from that of Beaver Creek, just 13 miles west on Interstate 70. The National Weather Service may forecast snow for the Rockies, but the amount in ski areas can vary by an entire foot; it's tricky to gauge where and when the most snow will fall.

"People up here said it's just too unpredictable," says Joel Gratz, a Boulder-based meteorologist and skier. "But that's

not exactly true.”

How does he know? About five years ago, Gratz began to analyze microclimates in the Rockies – which are influenced by widely variable topography and wind flows—and e-mail his friends with predictions on where the most snow would fall so they could plan accordingly.



Those powder-pinpointing emails became so popular that Gratz eventually ditched his day job consulting for an insurance company to start OpenSnow.com. It's one of a number of travel weather sites such as BestSnow.net, BestSkiWeather.com, and SnowForecast.com that are aimed at skiers and snowboarders on the move.

This burgeoning category of sites not only serves skiers but is also a boon for surf, trail, rod and gun travelers, especially those who don't book far in advance. With a five-day window, travelers can point themselves toward optimal conditions for golf, tennis, fishing or hunting. Lodges and resorts benefit too, emailing powder alerts, for example, to attract last-minute bookings.

Surfers were first to take weather into their own hands.

“They were their own meteorologists,” says Jens Rasmussen, a co-founder of Solspot.com, a wave and weather site.

By retrieving data from ocean buoys and weather satellites, surfing-centered sites such as SurfLine.com, MagicSeaweed.com, BeachLive.com, and Solspot create algorithms to alert riders when an epic swell is due at, for example, Cortes Bank off the California coast or Jaws in Maui, Hawaii. (The surf sites have awesome videos too.)

Your average weather site probably wouldn't forecast the scent cone – the area downwind from hunters that might give them away to their prey. ScoutLookWeather.com does.

“ScoutLook’s mission is to tell them precisely where, when and how to maximize that time afield by being in the right place at the right time,” says Cy Weichert, a co-founder of the site.

ScoutLook includes sponsored apps that allow fishers to photograph their catch and upload it; the site also records location and weather conditions for future reference – “say, how many lake trout have I caught in northwest wind on a fly,” Weichert says.

Right now, he’s focused on developing more-detailed apps for the hunting and fishing markets in the next year.

Golfers too are getting focused weather. GolfWeatherNow.com also run by Rasmussen, says it has forecasts for 6,247 courses in the U.S., plus information on course conditions and amenities. Meanwhile, the U.K.’s Advanced Weather Applications is trying to flood the zone with information for a variety of sports on sites like LatestGolfWeather.com plus ones for hiking, motor sports and other activities around the world. Rasmussen plans a similarly comprehensive mountain-to-ocean approach, as does ScoutLook.

Only problem with all these sites: if you don’t catch the best waves or the biggest fish, you can’t blame the weather.

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# Resolution for some of Lane's troubled South Shore land deals

By Kathryn Reed

Randy Lane, the developer of the would-be convention center in South Lake Tahoe that is a pile of rebar and concrete after his Lake Tahoe Development Company filed for bankruptcy on that project, is making news on both sides of the state line.

Regarding the property in South Tahoe, Owens Financial has filed a foreclosure notice on the remaining properties that were owned by Lane. If the trustee sale goes through on March 20, then Owens Financial will own those properties and Lane will not have any interest in the 11-acre site, South Lake Tahoe City Attorney Patrick Enright told *Lake Tahoe News*.



Lake Vista Apartments in Stateline.

A portion of the project is going forward on land that Bill Owens already owns. His proposed retail development along six parcels that front Highway 50 is in the design review stage with the city. While he wants to start the project this building season, a performance bond and consolidation of the properties must be done first. He does not need a new building

permit, just to tweak what was approved to allow for the project to go forward in stages. The proposal should be before the city Planning Commission in April or May.

In Douglas County, officials have worked out a settlement with the now-defunct Falcon Capital LCC that Lane once owned and ran.

The county filed a claim against Falcon Capital for breach of contract and misrepresentation. Falcon Capital was supposed to maintain the water quality improvements at Kahle Drive in Stateline after the county put them in. The construction of these improvements was a condition of approval imposed by the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

“When Falcon Capital did not perform its obligations under its contract with the county, the county filed suit and obtained a judgment against Falcon Capital on the breach of contract claim in the amount of \$439,205.32,” County Manager Steve Mokrohisky told *Lake Tahoe News*. “Falcon Capital is now out-of-business and transferred its remaining assets, three parcels of undeveloped land located in Incline Village, to the county. The core claims against Meadow Brook Associates and Lake Vista Apartments are for unjust enrichment and equitable relief. Lake Vista is the managing partner for Meadow Brook Associates. These defendants were able to construct low-income housing on property formerly held by Falcon Capital.”

Douglas County commissioners at a meeting this month approved a 10-year settlement agreement that brings to a close the claims against Falcon Capital.

Mokrohisky said the only significant asset held by Meadow Brook and Lake Vista is the low-income housing project at 129 Market St. in Stateline. But, he added, it has been losing money for several years.

“The property is worth less than the amount due to the holder of the first deed of trust,” Mokrohisky said. “To settle the



case, these defendants have agreed to perform maintenance for the county at a cost of \$5,000 per year. Because the county wants to encourage affordable housing at Lake Tahoe, the county is willing to work to reach a settlement.”

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## **Name released of South Lake Tahoe pedestrian who was killed**

**Updated Feb. 18 1:30pm:**

The name of the man who was fatally struck by an alleged drunken driver Feb. 22 on Lake Tahoe Boulevard has been released.

John Carleton, 51, of South Lake Tahoe died at Barton Memorial Hospital.

The cause of the accident is still under investigation and autopsy results are pending.

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A South Lake Tahoe man died Friday night after being struck by a vehicle on Lake Tahoe Boulevard.



The vehicle involved in the fatal accident.  
Photo/Provided

The 51-year-old, whose name is not being released pending notification of next to kin, was near the Taco Bell when he was hit at 6:45pm Feb. 22.

Gregory Stearns, 49, of South Lake Tahoe was driving with a suspended driver's license from a prior DUI conviction. He was arrested on charges of driving under the influence of alcohol and driving on a suspended license.

"The cause of the collision is still under investigation, initial indications are that the pedestrian was crossing Lake Tahoe Boulevard outside of a crosswalk, was wearing dark clothing in an unlit portion of the highway, and failed to yield to the oncoming traffic," police Sgt. Shannon Laney said in a statement. "The pedestrian may also have been intoxicated and has a history with the South Lake Tahoe Police department for public intoxication."

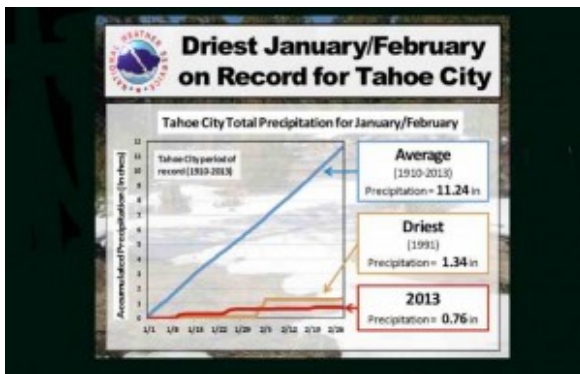
– Lake Tahoe News staff report

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# Dry January-February sets records

By Kathryn Reed

It's another record snow year in Lake Tahoe and the greater Sierra Nevada. It's just not the kind of record anyone wants to brag about.



Graphic/National Weather Service Reno

The National Weather Service in Reno has been collecting data from a station in Tahoe City since 1910. And with a matter of hours to go and no precipitation in sight for the rest of February, the first two months of 2013 will go down as the driest (0.76 inches) since stats have been collected there. The record was 1.34 inches in 1991, while the average is 11.24 inches. (See graphic to left.)

Snow surveyors across the Sierra found the same thing Feb. 28 as the water content was tabulated at various spots. Normally the reading this time of year builds on the totals from the previous two months. Not the case on Thursday.

Statewide, the snowpack water content is at 66 percent of

average. It's even worse at the Echo Summit location near Sierra-at-Tahoe where it came in at 54 percent of average. The snow measured 29 inches deep with 12.4 inches of water content at Phillips Station.

The Department of Water Resources, which conducts the snow surveys, has data dating to 1920. The driest January-February was in 1991, when 4 inches of precip fell from the mountainous area near Shasta Lake to the American River basin. For 2013, 2.2 inches of rain has fallen since December.

There is no substantial precipitation in the forecast to turn the tide. Reno weather officials say a small storm will move into the Lake Tahoe Basin on Saturday night, with another one rolling in Wednesday. But they said the snow totals are not expected to amount to much.

Despite the dismal snowpack, Lake Oroville in Butte County, the State Water Project's principal storage reservoir, is at 113 percent of average and Lake Shasta by Redding, the federal Central Valley Project's largest reservoir, is at 108 percent of its normal storage level.

The snow survey measurements by the Department of Water Resources determine how much water is released from Northern California reservoirs to irrigate crops and provide potable water for Southern California. Estimates by DWR are that it will be able to deliver 40 percent of the slightly more than 4 million acre-feet of State Water Project water requested for this calendar year by the 29 public agencies that supply more than 25 million Californians and nearly a million acres of irrigated farmland.

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# Out-of-bounds Heavenly skier found

It took search and rescue crews several hours Wednesday to find a Southern California man who had skied under the boundary ropes at Heavenly Mountain Resort.

Vahe Saradjian, 62, of Glendale told El Dorado County sheriff's search and rescue team members that he ducked under the resort boundary ropes near the Powder Bowl Express lift.

Saradjian called 911 saying he was disorientated, lost and unable to navigate the terrain because of the lack of snow. He was not prepared to stay overnight in the wilderness.

At about 6:20pm Feb. 27 a CHP helicopter located Saradjian next to a campfire in the Cold Creek drainage. This is below the resort boundary lines. Teams from El Dorado and Douglas counties reached him at about 7:15pm.

Heavenly won't be letting Saradjian ski at the resort the rest of the season.

*– Lake Tahoe News staff report*

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# Squaw athletes do well at Freeride World Tour

Current women's snowboard tour leader Margot Rozies from Pyrénées, France, managed her first top podium finish of the season Wednesday at the SWATCH Freeride World Tour on The Cirque at Kirkwood Mountain Resort.

Rozies had a fast and fluid run. The judges awarded her with a score of 64.00.



Kirkwood provides a challenging course for snowboarding and skiing competitors Feb. 27.  
Photo/Provided

“I felt a bit sick today actually, but think that removed some of the pressure,” said Rozies. “I woke up this morning and considered not competing actually. However, I managed to get myself pumped for competition. It couldn’t have gone any better.”

Continuing on the women’s snowboard podium in second place was another French snowboarder from Annecy, Elodie Mouthon. She narrowly missed the top spot on the podium taking second place with a score of 63.67. Shannan Yates from Snowbird, Utah, chose a unique line compared to the rest of the competitors, which landed her the third with a score of 61.33.

Next were the female skiers. Topping the field for women’s ski competitors was Squaw Valley’s Jackie Paaso. Paaso needed to earn a podium position to improve her overall ranking on the tour and potentially progress to Verbier. She skied a very smart and controlled run linking a number of airs through technical sections of the venue. Her performance was awarded with a score of 71.67.

“I have had a number of crashes this season and really needed a win. It feels great to come out on top,” exclaimed Paaso. “I took my run down a notch this time because I needed to stay on my feet. Making it to the finish line was the best part for me.”

Rounding out the women’s podium was Pia Nic Gundersen of Ånstadblåheia, Norway, in second with a score of 67.00. Ashley Maxfield of Jay Peak, Vt., was third with a 63.00.

At the end of the day, it was Lars Chickering-Ayers out of Mad River Glen, Vt., who claimed the Kirkwood men’s title. He was rewarded a winning score of 75.33.

Julien Lopez of La Plagne, France, took second with a 73.00. Representing the Southern Alps of New Zealand, Charlie Lyons landed the third podium position with a 72.00.

The male snowboarders faced the most difficult conditions of the day as the afternoon brought low light conditions and firmer, settled snow to the venue. Wild card recipient Ryland Bell out of Squaw Valley was happy he accepted the special invitation to compete at the event. Bell earned first place with a score of 87.67.

Also out of Squaw, Sammy Luebke finished in second place with an 80.00. The final podium spot went to Emilien Badoux of Valais Alpes, Switzerland, with a score of 73.67.

The SWATCH Freeride World Tour by The North Face continues in Fieberbrunn Pillerseetal, Austria, on March 9, and concludes in Verbier, Switzerland, on March 23.

– *Provided to LTN*

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# USFS Chief Tom Tidwell

U.S. Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell talks about restoration goals at the 2013 Pinchot Distinguished Lecture.

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## Letter: Wyndham gives time to Bread & Broth

To the community,

Bread & Broth would like to extend its appreciation to the Wyndham Vacation Ownership for their sponsorship of an Adopt A Day of Nourishment on Feb. 18 at St. Theresa Church parish hall. Their generous donation of \$250 provided the funds for the food, supplies and utilities needed to provide the hot, well balanced meal that was served to over 80 guests.



Sue Harley, Robert Trew,  
Jason Clarke and Jennie  
Asdal of Wyndham.

Photo/Provided

Bread & Broth was also pleased to have four enthusiastic



Wyndham Vacation Ownership associates working side by side with B&B volunteers. One Wyndham associate was Jason Clarke, marketing manager, who “thought it was a rewarding experience helping the less fortunate of our community and we plan to do it again.”

Joining Jason were his fellow associates Jennie Asdal, quality assurance rep; Sue Harley, recruiter; and Robert Trew, director of sales.

The sponsor volunteer crew did a great job packing give away bags and working on the dinner serving line.

As a nonprofit, non-denominational, all volunteer program, the efforts of B&B are contingent upon the generosity of individuals, organizations, churches and local businesses like Wyndham Vacation Ownership. Bread & Broth would like to thank Wyndham Vacation Ownership for their commitment to the South Lake Tahoe community and B&B’s goal of feeding the hungry.

For more information on Bread & Broth’s program, please contact me at (530) 542.2876 or carolsgerard@aol.com.

**Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth**