

Presidential candidates rated for stances on gaming

By Megan Messerly, Las Vegas Sun

The American Gaming Association gave only two presidential candidates, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and retired neurosurgeon Ben Carson, a “green light” for their stances on gaming in its voter guide released last week.

Clinton received high marks for saying casinos spur economic development and praising Las Vegas gaming employees for their hard work – despite having opposed bringing casinos to Arkansas when she was the state’s first lady.

Carson was commended for saying that gaming issues should be left up to the states, his only apparent stance on gaming.

Read the whole story

2 earthquakes rattle Mammoth Lakes

A little bit of shaking has been going on in Mammoth today.

A magnitude 3.8 earthquake was reported Feb. 15 at 7:42am and at 10:47am a 3.2 temblor was felt, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

They were located about eight miles southeast of Mammoth Lakes.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Shiffrin back in top form after knee injury

By USSA

CRANS-MONTANA, Switzerland – Mikaela Shiffrin (Eagle-Vail, Colo.) returned from injury to dominate the Audi FIS Ski World Cup slalom Monday, taking her 18th World Cup victory.

“That was a pretty incredible race,” said Shiffrin, who suffered a knee injury warming up for a race in December. “I’m glad it’s over, but I enjoyed skiing that last run, it was really rough and a challenge at every single gate. It was just bumpy and a wild ride – tough, but a good fight, and that’s the way it should be.”

Proving that her rehab and training over the past couple of weeks had prepared her to return to top form, Shiffrin soaked up the first run sunshine and support from an enthusiastic crowd cheering her to the finish. She cruised into the first-run lead by 0.27 seconds.

“I was really nervous for the first run,” she said. “So nervous that I thought I left my legs at the start. But the second run was better, I felt like I was back in the groove.”

And indeed she was. Starting as the final racer in the second run, Shiffrin watched as racer after racer battled deteriorating course conditions and visibility issues as clouds shrouded the upper portion of the course. In dominating fashion though, she extended her first-run advantage through

the rutted course and cruised to victory by 0.45 over France's Nastasia Noens. Marie-Michele Gagnon of Canada finished third.

"There were some scrappy turns ... none of the girls skied their best, and I didn't ski my best," Shiffrin said of the challenging course conditions. "It was just one of those things where you had to be really mentally tough, and I'm glad my mental side is there, because that component is tough to get back."

Resi Stiegler (Jackson Hole, Wyo.) skied to her best slalom result of the season in eighth.

"I feel awesome," Stiegler said. "But I'm still hungry for more. I wasn't totally satisfied with today, but I'm very, very happy. Starting the second run with a better position for getting toward the podium is huge for me."

Lila Lapanja (Incline Village) showed significant promise starting 43rd in the first run, skiing to a 17th place first run finish. However, she got caught in a rut on the top section of the course, straddled, and failed to finish.

"I didn't want to ski to finish for just points," Lapanja said. "I just wanted to go, and go and go. I went a little too direct tactically where I needed to give a little bit. So, it didn't work out, but the mental approach is getting pretty strong and I definitely can't wait until Jasna (Slovakia, March 5-6)."

Collection of outdoor movies

coming to Tahoe City

The annual Winter Wildlands Alliance Backcountry Film Festival is renowned for its collaboration with filmmakers from all corners of the globe, ranging from grassroots to professional. The festival provides a fresh line-up of cutting-edge films.

Created in 2004 to highlight Winter Wildlands Alliance's efforts to preserve and promote winter landscapes for human-powered users, the festival begins in Boise and includes showings in locations throughout the United States and Canada and now in Antarctica, Europe, Australia and Asia. Funds raised stay in local communities to support like-minded, human-powered recreation and conservation efforts and to raise awareness of winter management issues, avalanche training/safety and winter education programs.

For the Tahoe this is part of the Alpenglou Mountain Festival, a nine-day celebration of human-powered mountain sports. The screening benefits the Sierra Watershed Education Partnership, better known as SWEP. SWEP promotes environmental stewardship by connecting students to their community and local environment through comprehensive watershed education and service learning through the Tahoe-Truckee Unified School District.

This year's program includes:

- Winner of Best of Festival: "Japan by Van", immerses viewers in the head-deep powder of the Shirakawa backcountry. A Sweetgrass Productions film.
- Winner of Best of Grassroots Award, "Shared Lines": The story of the Vermont Backcountry Alliance and their community. A short film by T-Bar Films.
- Winner of Best Environmental Message Award, from

filmmaker Kt Miller, “Shifting Ice”: An all-women team on a journey at the intersection of scientific exploration and, of course, grueling fun.

- “The Weight of Winter”: Filmmaker Ben Sturgulewski brings us a ride to tune into, sit back, and enjoy.

- “I Love Splitboarding”: A fresh way to play in the backcountry along with a fresh way of living. A film by Right on Brother opens up the world of splitboarding.

- “55 Hours in Mexico”: In tribute to true weekend warriors, Joey, Karl, Thomas, and filmmaker Max Lowe take viewers on an adventure of 55 Hours, home to Mexico and back.

- “Always Above Us:” A glimpse of the tremendous amount of sacrifice and hardship involved in the life of a climber. Sherpas Cinema follows Kris Erickson and Conrad Anker in a memoir for David Bridges and Alex Lowe.

- “Connections”: The Dynafit team shares the story of the simple “low tech” design that changed the face of backcountry skiing.

- “The Forecaster”: Expert Avalanche Forecaster Drew Hardesty leads by example, paying respect to the responsibility that comes with our backcountry freedom. From Spindle Productions.

The \$10 tickets are available **online**.

Doors open at 6:30pm and the show begins at 7pm on Feb. 23 at Tahoe City’s Tahoe Art Haus Cinema.

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Alan

Alan is a 3-year-old border collie mix who has loads of personality. He is smart, playful, and full of energy, and would love a family who will take him for lots of walks and maybe help him learn about agility.

Alan likes to play with toys and some dogs, but he's a little too interested in cats.

Alan is neutered, microchipped, tested for heart worm, and vaccinated. He is at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many other dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes. Go to the Tahoe animal shelter's Facebook page to see photos and descriptions of all pets at the shelter.

Call 530.573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet. For spay-neuter assistance for South Tahoe residents, go **online**.

– Karen Kuentz

Geological composition has Nev. on the move



Blue Mountain geothermal taps Nevada's underground energy.
Photo/Jack Hursh

By Linda Fine Conaboy

RENO – Nevada is the third most earthquake-prone state and is the fastest growing state, tectonically speaking, annually adding more area than the size of two basketball courts because of tectonic activity.

James Faulds, the state geologist for Nevada and director of the Nevada Bureaus of Mines and Geology at UNR, explained that Nevada has a greater number of mountain ranges, produces more

gold, is volcanically active and has a vast supply of geothermal resources—more than any other state except for maybe Alaska.

According to Faulds, many of the state's geothermal resources have yet to be discovered let alone mapped. This may explain, he said, why Nevada is always in hot water.

Earthquake faults, he said, allow hot water sitting deep in the earth to migrate to shallow levels, perhaps explaining why there are now close to 15 geothermal power plants in the state.

While their website states that Truckee Meadows Parks Foundation is in the business of transforming and maintaining the parks in Washoe County, the program they hosted in Reno last week went way beyond parks.

Three speakers covered all anyone needs to know about earthquakes, geothermal energy and volcanoes in Nevada. Though billed as a local event, all three speakers acknowledged that the Lake Tahoe Basin should be included in this mix, especially when the talk turns to earthquakes and volcanoes.

Although their intention was to inform and not to scare, many in the audience went away muttering about getting ahold of their agents pronto to chat about earthquake insurance. It was apparent that more than a handful were not aware that the Reno and Tahoe areas are seismically active and in fact, lie on some fairly large faults.



The Genoa fault is one of many near Lake Tahoe.
Photo/Provided

Geothermal energy is the only renewable energy that's available 24/7, and the potential for large amounts of energy production in Nevada is eclipsed only by California's generation rates, according to the Natural Resources Defense Council.

Annie Kell is the coordinator of education and outreach and a professor of seismology, among other duties, at UNR's Mackay School of Earth Sciences and Engineering.

She said Reno averages at least six earthquakes of significant size about every 12 years.

"There are thousands of structures in Reno that would be damaged in an earthquake," she said.

Generally, Kell said, anything built prior to 1974 is vulnerable. The average cost to upgrade the deficits in these buildings she estimates at less than \$5,000.

Kell said there's a significant fault in Incline Village, which about 500 years ago produced close to a magnitude 7 quake. She also mentioned the West Tahoe fault zone running from Meyers to Dollar Point and submerged from Emerald Bay to McKinney Bay. Another fault, she said, lies near Stateline

Point laying below the Club Cal Neva, and the Genoa fault, one of the most active, could threaten the Reno-Carson urban corridor.

Most people have heard stories of a potential tsunami able to inflict huge amounts of destruction to the Lake Tahoe Basin—Kell doesn't totally rule out the likelihood, nor does Faulds.

"A tsunami is definitely a possibility," Faulds said. "Research shows that in the past there have been tsunami events at Lake Tahoe—probably within the last 10,000-12,000 years, which is fairly young in terms of scientific research."

Kell strongly urged the audience to prepare now for the chance of some major earthquake damage to the entire region, saying earthquake insurance in this area of the country is definitely worth it.

She's a proponent of being ready even though there is no evidence that an earthquake is imminent. "An emergency survival kit can be a lifesaver," she said, suggesting it should include:

- Food for three days
- Pet food
- Medical supplies
- A power supply
- Plan for evacuating the family
- Securing tall and heavy items.

In case of an earthquake, Kell advised, you should always protect your head and neck. "Drop, cover and hold on," she said. "Do not run outside, stand near windows, get on top of furniture, get out of bed, drive over bridges, light a flame

or run to a doorway.”

She added that during an earthquake event, aftershocks are a real possibility.

While he’s a professional geologist, volcanoes are an area of expertise for Christopher Henry, a research geologist at the Nevada Bureau of Mines and Geology.

Henry suggested that geology doesn’t follow state boundaries, but he said good volcano sites that are not too far away and easily viewed are Lassen Peak, Sutter Buttes (on private property) and Long Valley, adjacent to Mammoth Mountain.

In addition, he said there are numerous volcano sites between Reno and Lake Tahoe, particularly north of Tahoe near Truckee. These include Mt. Disney, Squaw Peak, Martis Peak and Mt. Pluto. He added that at Dollar Point, if you look hard enough, you can find layered and ashy areas that might include volcanic bombs.

Going south, to Mammoth and Long Valley, there are huge volcanoes, what Henry called super volcanoes that created a caldera 20 miles across. He surmised this event happened about 760,000 years ago, leaving today’s Mammoth Mountain.

In the last 600,000 years, smaller eruptions have taken place and in their wake, various craters can be seen, one of which is Mono Crater. “There are all kinds of volcanic pieces to be found at the sites. But then, all rocks are pretty to me,” he grinned.

Despite what may be construed as continuous danger, scientists predict that the chance of a magnitude 7 quake under Lake Tahoe are slim—about 3 to 4 percent in the next 50 years, and actually posing less of a threat than the potential danger from forest fires or floods. However, all the experts advise to be prepared.

Opinion: Should we name the animals we raise to eat?

By Laura Jean Schneider, High Country News

There's a taboo about naming the creatures you eat, but I'm guilty. "Twisty" was one of the first calves born last year, a red Angus heifer whose spine curved to the left. "Della" was one of our Gap 4 Natural Beeves who'd somehow severed a tendon in one of her front legs in the weaning pasture.

Twisty lived most of her life out on the range, walking a little to the left. Her growth was so stunted I knew she'd be destined for early slaughter. When Sam brought the calf that became Della into the corral, maggots had already taken over the wound. We walked her up to the squeeze chute where I could get a better look: Her left leg hung useless. After excavating the maggots, I cleaned the wound out and wrapped it.

I gave it my best shot. Several times a week I walked Della into the squeeze to doctor her leg. Soon, I had just to open the gates and she'd go in on her own. She would eat cottonseed cake from my fingertips after I finished wrapping her up, and come when I called. While she became more mobile, and the wound closed remarkably well for a tendon injury, it was clear that as she got larger, she would have a harder time navigating.

This fall, when we sorted and shipped the calves, Twisty stayed behind with Della. They had a big pen to themselves and all the alfalfa they could eat. I knew where this was headed.

Read the whole story

Record number of Americans dump U.S. passports

By Jethro Mullen, CNNMoney

More Americans than ever before are turning their backs on the United States.

The number of citizens and long-term residents cutting their official ties to Uncle Sam jumped more than 20% last year to 4,279, according to a CNNMoney analysis of the latest government data.

It's a trend that's been increasing in recent years. Many of those severing links are Americans living overseas who are tired of dealing with complicated tax paperwork, a headache that has worsened since new regulations came into effect.

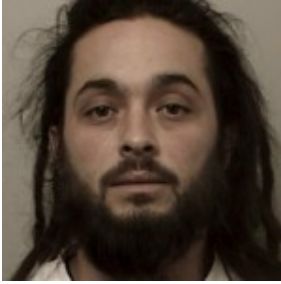
Eighteen times as many Americans renounced their citizenship or long-term residency in 2015 compared with 2008. Last year was the third record-breaking year in a row.

Read the whole story

Officers: Drug arrest linked to S. Tahoe homicide

A West Slope man may be involved with a drug deal in South Lake Tahoe that ended with an Amador County man being shot to

death.



Tevarez Lopez

Tevarez Lopez, 33, of Georgetown was arrested earlier this month on drug and weapons charges.

While he is not being implicated in the murder of Dennis Wright, 40, the drugs involved may be tied to Wright, according to El Dorado County sheriff's deputies. Wright was **killed Jan. 30** in the parking lot of the Beverly Lodge in South Lake Tahoe.

Officials are not releasing specifics about what might tie Lopez to the Wright case.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Congress gives final OK to ban local Internet taxes

By Alan Fram, AP

WASHINGTON – Congress voted Thursday to permanently bar state and local governments from taxing access to the Internet, as lawmakers leapt at an election-year chance to demonstrate their opposition to imposing levies on online service.

On a vote of 75-20, the Senate gave final congressional approval to the wide-ranging bill, which would also revamp trade laws. President Obama is expected to sign it.

“The Internet is a resource used daily by Americans of all ages,” said Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., who brokered an agreement with a Democratic leader earlier this week that helped clear the way for passage. “It’s important that they be able to do all of this without the worry of their Internet access being taxed.”

The ban on local Internet access taxes had broad support. Even so, some lawmakers remained unhappy over its trade provisions and because the measure omitted a separate, more controversial proposal to let states force online retailers to collect sales taxes for their transactions.

Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., said the bill was full of “missed opportunities and half-measures.”

Since 1998 in the Internet’s early days, Congress has passed a series of bills temporarily prohibiting state and local governments from imposing the types of monthly levies for online access that are common for telephone service. Such legislation has been inspired by a popular sentiment that the Internet should be free, along with Republican opposition to most tax proposals.

Until now, states that imposed Internet access taxes have been allowed to continue. Under the approved bill, those states would have to phase out their taxes by the summer of 2020.

Seven states – Hawaii, New Mexico, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Texas and Wisconsin – have been collecting a combined \$563 million yearly from Internet access taxes, according to information gathered by the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service.

Forty-nine Republican and 26 Democratic senators backed the

legislation Thursday while 17 Democrats and three Republicans voted "no."

The House approved the compromise in December with the backing of nearly all Republicans but just 24 Democrats.

The White House did not immediately provide a statement on whether Obama would sign the measure despite lawmakers' widespread expectations that he would. That seemed to reflect the difficult political balancing act Democrats faced between a popular ban on Internet access taxes and trade provisions many of them considered insufficient or harmful.

The legislation, especially its trade provisions, has pitted the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and other business groups supporting the bill against opponents including the AFL-CIO and other labor organizations.

Supporters say the measure would strengthen U.S. trading by improving protections for American intellectual property like copyrights and trademarks and upgrading trade law enforcement at the country's borders.

They also cite provisions reinforcing the government's ability to head off China and other countries from manipulating their currency to make their exports more affordable, cracking down on imported products made with child labor and accelerating investigations into companies accused of evading the payment of duties.

Democratic critics complained that its trade protections were insufficient and said negotiators who wrote the compromise weakened it significantly, including the currency manipulation language.

Democrats also disliked provisions barring trade agreements that would curb some efforts to restrict greenhouse gas emissions, a major contributor to climate change, or would force the U.S. to revamp its immigration laws.

For years, the drive in Congress to permanently bar taxes on Internet service has languished alongside another effort to empower states to require online retailers to collect state and local sales taxes for online purchases. Supporters of enhancing the collection of online sales taxes say without that, brick-and-mortar stores face a competitive disadvantage.

In hopes of gaining leverage, senators backing the collection of online state sales taxes have long linked the two efforts.

A breakthrough came this week when McConnell agreed to hold a vote this year on the online state sales tax proposal. He reached that deal with No. 2 Senate Democratic leader Dick Durbin of Illinois, a strong advocate of the separate Internet sales tax measure.

Even so, some lawmakers were upset that the sales tax measure would be considered later, with no guarantee of success.