

Nevada's prisons chief on a mission of change

By Sandra Chereb, Las Vegas Review-Journal

CARSON CITY — James Dzurenda is on a mission to sell change behind bars.

As director of Nevada's beleaguered Department of Corrections, Dzurenda has been traveling the state to meet with staff and legislators. He has scrutinized Nevada laws and the department's antiquated records system.

From his perspective, Nevada is way behind the curve in inmate management. Fixing the problem will require overcoming decades of a lock-'em-up culture. And money.

Since arriving, Dzurenda made a U-turn on the agency's mission, shifting the emphasis to rehabilitating inmates instead of keeping them contained. Now he has to convince state lawmakers and the public that changes will benefit public safety and save money in the long run.

Read the whole story

Mulder wins second straight celeb golf tourney



Mark Mulder had plenty to smile about throughout this year's American Century Championship. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

Putting was the talk of the three-day American Century Championship, so it comes as no surprise it was Mark Mulder's short game that helped propel him to a second straight title.

The former Major League pitcher topped the leader board with a total of 74 points. Mardy Fish, who retired from tennis nearly one year ago, was second with 69 points and actor-singer Jack Wagner came in third with 67 points.

The 27-year-old celebrity golf tournament at Edgewood Tahoe uses a Stableford scoring system instead of how the pros do it.

Mulder will take home \$125,000 for his win, Fish \$60,000 and Wagner \$35,000. The total prize pool was \$600,000.

Mulder had four birdies on the last four holes on the front nine Sunday.

"I knew going into today I needed to make a bunch of birdies, and I didn't make many putts the last few days. Today is one of those days I knew I had to. Luckily they started rolling in, and you start getting that – there's kind of a vibe out there. It's kind of a feeling at times," Mulder said at the press conference.

Like last year, Mulder came into the final round five points behind the leader.

Being confident, he said, is the key. He couldn't say his experience as a pitcher coming from behind had much to with his success on the links.

"Pitching and golf are about the only two things in sports – and maybe serving a tennis ball, where nothing can happen until you do it," Mulder said. "You still have to hit the golf shot."

He was four points shy of tying the tournament record of 33 for a single round on July 24.

The Harrah's and Harveys Race & Sports Book odds makers were spot on with Mulder and Fish favored 3-1 to win the tournament.

"The greens were fantastic. I asked Notah Begay today, he said they have probably 20 percent of their tournaments as fast as that, otherwise the PGA Tour has the rest of them are a bit slower," Fish said.

Many of players throughout the week commented about how fast and firm the greens were, instead of being spongy like years past.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- Neurosurgeon Christopher Demers will talk about diagnosis and treatment options for neck pain, lower back pain, head trauma, and pinched nerves on Aug. 3 from 6-7pm. The free lecture will be at Lake Tahoe Community College's board room.

- Placer County has added a 700 horsepower patrol boat to Lake Tahoe.

- The Reno Chamber Orchestra is putting on a special concert event celebrating the upcoming Nevada Chamber Music Festival. The concert will feature performances by guest violinist, Solomiya Ivakhiv, Theodore Kuchar (viola), Ruth Lenz (violin) and James Winn (piano). It is Aug. 21 at 3pm at South Reno United Methodist Church, 200 De Spain Lane. Cost is \$25.

- All Lake Tahoe high school, middle school, and Pop Warner athletes can participate in a free pre-participation physical on Aug. 10 from 9am-noon at Barton Urgent Care and Family Practice, 155 Highway 50, Stateline. Pick up a medical form at the school's front office, a Pop Warner football coach, or at Barton Urgent Care and Family Practice. For more info, call 775.589.8900.

- The free Tahoe Fit Family Beach Night will be Aug. 11 from 5-8pm at Baldwin Beach on the South Shore. Pack a picnic and the water toys.

Camp all about getting kids outdoors

Lake Tahoe Community College and Tahoe Center for Orthopedics are offering a weeklong summer camp for youth ages 10 to 15.

Youth will be exploring the mountains around Lake Tahoe. Each day will be at a different location.

The camp is Aug. 8-12, from 9am-4pm each day.

The days will be filled with activities encouraging trust and cooperation as kids venture in nature's playground. Day hikes will range from 3 to 5 miles and end with a swim in a stream or lake.

For more info and to sign up, go **online**. Cost is \$225.

McGraw connects with fans on a deeper level



Tim McGraw on July 23 entertains a full house at Harveys in Stateline. Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – With an arsenal of hit songs to draw from, Tim McGraw wouldn't ever have to put out another album. But that's not how he does things.

His 14th studio album "Damn Country Music" came out last year and it's still getting a ton of airtime. It's hard to listen to country radio and not hear "Humble and Kind" at least once a day. For many, that is not often enough.

But it's even better in person, though the video is even more compelling.

The song is simple – it's about what it means to be humble and kind; and asks us all to be a little more of each. Perhaps it hits a cord more now because of the cacophony heard on the

campaign trail – and even in our local city hall.

Or maybe it's that his words are re-emphasizing the good my parents tried to instill me.

McGraw is a veteran of this venue, having been a part of the Harvey's Outdoor Concert Series in 2002, 2010 and 2013. Mom and I saw him here three years ago – a great memory.



He wasn't needed for many of the songs as the audience knew the words well beyond the chorus.

Good music has a way of connecting the listener on an emotional level. McGraw is a master at this.

He joked Friday night, saying how he was supposed to be done by 10pm (such are the noise regulations), but that wasn't going to be enough time to get through 27 years' worth of hits. And he was right.

Tim McGraw stats:

- Sold more than 40 million records worldwide
- 36 No. 1 singles
- 3 Grammy's
- 16 Academy of Country Music Awards
- 14 Country Music Association Awards
- 10 American Music Awards
- 3 People's Choice Awards

In the 16-song set, plus three encores on July 23, McGraw was able to touch on several of his albums such as:

- 1995 "I Like It, I Love It" from the album "All I Want"
- 1997 "Just to See You Smile" – album "Everywhere"
- 2002 "Red Rag Top" – album "Tim McGraw and the Dancehall Doctors"
- 2014 "Shotgun Rider" – album "Sundown Heaven Town".

The night came to a close with “Live Like You are Dyin” from his 2004 album by the same name. Twelve years later and the words still resonate:

*“I loved deeper,
“And I spoke sweeter,
“And I gave forgiveness I’ve been denying,
“And he said someday I hope you get the chance,
“To live like you were dyin’.”*

Even legal target shooting starts fires

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

Even after two men admitted their roles in starting a nine-acre fire during a July 2 target shooting session on the northern outskirts of Reno, Bureau of Land Management Ranger Scott Fischer didn’t issue any citations.

That’s because the men, who Fischer said even stated they had read a recent *Reno Gazette-Journal* article about how bullets can ignite vegetation, weren’t breaking any rules.

Fischer, a certified wildland fire origin and cause investigator for six seasons, said the shooters were using a 9mm handgun to fire lead-core bullets into a paper target.

Read the whole story

Hugh Thomas – 1929-2016



Hugh Thomas

Former Lake Valley Fire Protection District Chief Hugh Evan Thomas died July 17, 2016. He was 86.

Thomas was born Dec. 4, 1929, in Prentice, Wisc., to Ivan and Lillie Thomas. He graduated from Prentice High School and immediately entered the Merchant Marine Academy in New York. After two year he then joined the Army. He spent a tour in Europe doing post-war cleanup and reconnaissance.

After leaving the Army, he moved to Northern California and worked as a logger. His logging career was cut short by a major accident. Soon thereafter, he met Janet.

After getting married and having kids, the couple decided to leave Smith River for an opportunity to raise their children in Tahoe. Thomas started a job with the state of California as an agricultural inspector. When the "bug station" closed, he started his favorite career as a firefighter, where he rose through the ranks to retire as fire chief of Lake Valley.

After retirement, the couple moved to Grass Valley, spending most winters in Arizona in their fifth-wheel.

Thomas was an honest, principled man who was proud of his Scottish/Welsh heritage. He was a member of two clans and attended Scottish Games anywhere within driving distance. He was a train enthusiast and would find the nearest train tracks and sit for hours watching them pass.

When his wife became ill with Alzheimer's disease, he lovingly cared for her almost single-handedly for 10 years until her passing. He was also preceded in death by two brothers, Raymond and James.

Thomas is survived by his children, Randy Thomas (Andrea), Scott Thomas (Cathie), and Shelley Muller (Tom); brother, Griffith (Shirley); several grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces and nephews.

Services will be July 29 at 11am at the United Methodist Church, 620 North St., Woodland. A reception will follow at the home of his daughter and son-in-law.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Mayo Clinic, Designation: Alzheimer's Disease Research; or St. Jude's Children's Hospital.

SLT gas station's fuel tank woes continue



A tank at Tahoe Tom's in South Lake Tahoe failed a recent inspection. Photo/LTN

Crews are working at Tahoe Tom's gas station in South Lake Tahoe to determine if a tank that failed a recent test is leaking fuel.

The station has been a source of contaminated groundwater dating to at least 1991.

Still to be determined is if the tank can be repaired or needs replacing.

"Since the excavation is occurring and a lot of earth is being exposed that was previously under a tank or under pavement, there is an opportunity for additional soil testing and potential removal of contaminated soil from past spills below the underground tanks and the gas station," Lauri Kemper, assistant executive officer of Lahontan Regional Water Control Board, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "Source removal can expedite the overall groundwater cleanup occurring at the site."

The water board is the lead agency for the soil and groundwater cleanup, while the El Dorado County Environmental Health Department is handling the failed tank test. No one from the county responded to *Lake Tahoe News*.

It has not been determined if the failed test has further impacted the soil and/or groundwater.

It is not known when the station will be able to sell fuel again.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Women descend upon Northstar's bike park



Instructor Kristen Martin Del Campo leads riders down Northstar's bike park. Photo Copyright 2016 Carolyn E. Wright

By Kathryn Reed

TRUCKEE – Take another look, that gnarly dude on the mountain bike might just be a dudette. It's hard to tell with all that

gear that makes riders look like Ninja warriors.

It's not just the hardcore riders who are decked out in this garb. So are newbies and the less experienced cyclists. It's all about safety.

Northstar's mountain bike park is attracting more women these days, and all levels of riders. The added enthusiasm has a lot to do with a weekly program called Pumps on Pedals. It's all about getting women to feel comfortable downhill mountain bike riding.

"You progress on the terrain you are comfortable on," Kristen Martin Del Campo told *Lake Tahoe News*.



Lift access speeds up the learning curve by not having to

pedal up the mountain. Photo Copyright 2016 Carolyn E. Wright

She is one of the instructors for the Friday night rides. Del Campo has been certified by the International Mountain Biking Association to teach.

Her style is laid back and encouraging, making it comfortable to get outside your comfort zone.

First-timers go through a skills clinic that includes taking the gondola to the Zephyr Express and riding down to the village. It sounds simple until Del Campo has us leaning one way and the bike the other as we turn. It's all about keeping as much tread on the ground as possible. Skidding, we're told, is more dangerous than going fast.

Then people are divvied up in groups based on skill level. The mountain's routes are divided into green (easy), blue (intermediate) and black (advanced) just like ski runs.



Northstar has a variety of terrain – easy to double black diamond. Photo Copyright 2016 Carolyn E. Wright

“Mountain biking is relative to where you live,” Del Campo said. “Here it’s dry and loose. People’s mountain biking definition is different.”

That’s why they like to see what a rider is comfortable with before assigning her to a group for the free ride experience.

Standing is the norm. Getting used to riding over natural

features – aka rocks embedded in the ground – is part of the experience.

While the fire road intuitively seems easier and safer than the single track with banked turns, Del Campo is quick to dispel that belief.

“The flat, loose corner is more technical than the berm,” Del Campo said. “On the flat you have to be more active and balanced on the bike.”



Instructor Kristen Martin Del Campo is

also a mountain bike racer. Photo
Copyright 2016 Carolyn E. Wright

There are bikes designed just for downhill. Others are good for climbing. Some are all around. Tires are getting fatter. Components more light weight. Hydraulic brakes allow for one-finger breaking – also meaning more fingers are on the handlebars to control the bike. It's easy to spend \$5,000 on a new mountain bike.

This is the first year for Northstar's Specialized Academy. The bikes are in the village, whereas in the past they were mid-mountain. The thinking behind the academy approach is to brand the program much like they've done with the Burton Snowboard Academy. People will know what to expect and have a consistent experience.

A great thing about Specialized is that it is one of the few companies making mountain bikes specifically for women. The frames and other components are better designed for a women's physique.

Riders, though, may use their own equipment for the Friday rides – or anytime at Northstar. It's about the camaraderie and the riding.

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Kristen Martin Del Campo demonstrates how to lean when turning. Photo Copyright 2016 Carolyn E. Wright

Notes:

- Aug. 6-7, women's only mountain bike weekend at Northstar. Details are **online**.
- Pumps on Pedals – Every Friday through Sept. 2. Check-in by 4:45pm in front of the Big Springs Gondola. Lift tickets are \$28. Bikes and all necessary equipment are available to

rent for \$28.

Opinion: Tahoe doesn't have to be dangerous

By Cate Neal

A plunge into Lake Tahoe can literally take your breath away. It may be hot outside, but the lake can be dangerously cold. Lake Tahoe's average surface temperature in July is 63 degrees, and can drop to 53 degrees just 18 inches below the surface.



Cate Neal

One of the most dangerous consequences of submerging suddenly into cold water is a “cold-shock response.” This response is an uncontrollable gasp for air followed by a prolonged period of rapid breathing. Taking a couple gasps of air underwater is all it takes to drown. Another “cold-shock response” is a heart attack. When temperature of the blood cools down and returns the heart, it can cause congestive heart failure.

So what can we learn from others who take a dangerous plunge?

Here are few tips for a fun and safe day at the lake:

- Ease in slowly. Take your time getting in the water. Give your body time to adjust to the cooler temperature.
- Follow the rules. Swimmers should stay in designated areas. If you are paddling, wear a personal flotation device. Non-motorized crafts have the right away, but be aware of power boats.
- Watch for obstacles. If you are going to jump into the water, scout out any obstacles and jump in feet first. When paddling, know how to look for and avoid obstacles.
- Be weather aware. On Lake Tahoe, weather varies by the hour. Don't wait for the weather to change. Be aware of your surroundings and know the easiest way to shore.
- Skip swimming and drinking. Alcohol impairs judgment and increases risk-taking, a dangerous combination. Even experienced swimmers may venture out farther than they should. A leg cramp can make it challenging to get back to shore and even a chill can develop into hypothermia.
- Bring a buddy. Never swim alone. If you haven't seen your buddy for a couple of minutes, he or she may need your help.
- Supervise your children. Keep an eye on your children, especially if they are inexperienced swimmers. If possible, teach your little ones to swim at a young age.

Tahoe summers are a treasurable time with family and friends. You don't want to have children on an inflatable flamingo drag you to shore. Swim with caution and enjoy this magnificent lake.

Cate Neal is a registered nurse and the trauma program coordinator at Barton Memorial Hospital.