# Mancuso 9th in GS; one spot ahead of Vonn

**By USSA**

OFTERSCHWANG, Germany – Torino Olympic gold medalist Julia Mancuso of Squaw Valley was ninth and Lindsey Vonn of Vail 10th Friday at an Audi FIS Alpine World Cup giant slalom held on incredibly soft snow conditions in bluebird southern Bavaria.

Temperatures soared into the high 40s as local Viktoria Rebensburg clocked the wire-to-wire victory and reclaimed the World Cup giant slalom points lead.

Vonn's overall lead slipped slightly from 528 to 474 as Slovenia's Tina Maze, her closest competitor for the highest World Cup honor, finished second.

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# Thomas the Tank Engine Party

The South Lake Tahoe library is hosting a Thomas the Tank Engine Party on March 10 at 2pm.

Celebrate Thomas with games, crafts, stories and other fun.

The library is at 1000 Rufus Allen Blvd.

For more information, call (530) 573.3185.

# S. Tahoe neighborhood meeting

South Lake Tahoe officials will be meeting with residents and business owners in the neighborhoods of South Y Industrial, Bonanza, Barton, airport and Winnemucca on March 20.

The 6pm meeting is in the City Council Chambers located at 1901 Airport Road.

South Lake Tahoe is broken into 20 neighborhoods. They have been combined into six “super” neighborhoods when it came to creating Neighborhood Service Team Areas.

For more information, click on the flyer.

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# North Shore man dies from injuries sustained in avalanche

A 29-year-old Olympic Valley man caught in an avalanche Thursday near Alpine Meadows has died from his injuries at Tahoe Forest Hospital in Truckee.

Benjamin Brackett was skiing with two friends March 1 when they triggered the slide. They were climbing with skins on their skis about 500 vertical feet below Stanford Rock when the avalanche occurred.

This video from KTVU Channel 2 explains the difficulty rescue

teams have in getting people out of the backcountry in a timely manner.

The area the trio was skiing in is considered extremely rugged. It is on the backside of Alpine, but not in the ski resort's boundaries.

The Sierra Avalanche Center on March 1 called the avalanche danger "considerable".

*– Kathryn Reed*

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# S. Lake Tahoe keeps parking free at city beaches

**By Kathryn Reed**

Anti-parking meter advocates have won. At least for now.

"I don't think parking is off the table, but it is off the table for the moment," South Lake Tahoe Mayor Claire Fortier told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The City Council was expected to vote on the issue March 6. Now it won't be on the agenda.

"Why bother have it go to a vote if there is no real resonance with the council and the community?" Fortier asked.

But it had resonated with this five-member council for the past year. They approved the parking plan last spring via the strategic plan, business plan and five-year budget. They reinforced the decision last fall with the approval of the current budget.

Now they and city staff are backpedaling.

At a Feb. 22 meeting, residents, second homeowners and business people spoke out against installing meters in various places in town, saying it will change the complexion of the town, hurt businesses and put vehicles in neighborhoods that normally wouldn't be there.

While the city has $300,000 in revenue in the current budget from parking, that amount is not wiped off the books by this decision. That is because money is still coming in from the meters near Heavenly Village and parking citations.

To make up the shortfall the city is counting on the business license tax passing in June to bring in about $200,000. That is not in the 2011-12 budget.

"Ninety-eight percent of the businesses would see a reduction and the automatic CPI goes away. The increase comes from large businesses paying their fair share," Nancy Kerry, de facto assistant city manager, said.

What happens if that $200,000 doesn't come in is an unknown.

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**Next City Council meeting info:**

• March 6, 9am

• Lake Tahoe Airport

• Council will be discussing how to improve the roads.

• Here is the agenda.

# Flu season just arrived – are you ready?

**By Mandy Kendall**

It seems that our unusually mild winter may have had at least one benefit, in the guise of a late flu season. Officials for the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention announced last Friday that the number of flu cases reported had just reached the tipping point used to declare the start of the flu season. This is only the second time the season, which often starts around Christmas in California, has waited until February.

I had begun to think that I might have survived another winter without succumbing to the flu, but have decided that I'm going to make sure I keep up the "flu survival tactics" for just a bit longer. I also decided to do some more research to make sure I wasn't missing out on any other immune boosting tactics.



Mandy
Kendall

**Here are my top five favorite flu fighting *Qwik-e* (quick and easy) tips:**

**Rest –** If you don't feel well and you just want to crawl into bed, then try and do just that. It might not seem convenient (or even possible) with a busy schedule but, if you can, chances are a day of absolute rest will markedly shorten the time you are unwell. The body does most of its repair when you are sleeping, so try and get as much sleep as possible. It will also help prevent spreading it around to all those you come into contact with.

**Hydration –** Two of the main functions of water is to carry nutrients to the cells of your body and carry toxins out of the body. Sounds like a disease fighting strategy to me.

**Contact –** A hug is better than a handshake. We all naturally touch our faces many times during the day, so if you've shaken hands with someone who may have flu germs on their hands, chances are you are going to put those germs on your face. If you hug someone, there is much less chance of germ transference. However, if hugging isn't your thing, or it's not appropriate, just be conscientious about hand washing throughout the day. Also try and be kind to others and sneeze or cough into a tissue (or the crook of your elbow if a tissue is not to hand) rather than expelling germs into mid air or into your hands.

Don't forget to remind kids too on the importance of hand washing and coughing and sneezing best practice.

**Boost your natural defenses —–** Eat plenty of colorful fresh food as it's loaded with lots of immune boosting antioxidants and vitamins. Your body needs a wide range of nutrients, especially when fighting off disease.

**Sugar –** Sugar significantly lowers the functioning of your immune system so limit, or avoid, sugar intake as much as possible. Also, fruit juices have high levels of sugar, so try eating the whole fruit instead for a good source of vitamin C.

As for the often-controversial topic of flu shots I shall leave that up to you. However, as I believe in information from all sides when making any decision, I found to be a useful review of the pros and cons of flu shots.

Until next time.

*Mandy Kendall operates Health Connective in South Lake Tahoe. If you have any questions, feel free to drop me an email at healthconnective@gmail.com, visit us on Facebook, or keep an eye out on Lake Tahoe News for regular Qwik-e tips on how to make healthy changes one Quick and Easy step at a time.*

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# Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Lake Tahoe is the No. 3 spot to travel for spring deals – especially discounted skiing and lodging rates in March-April – according to Travel-Ticker website.

• What do Johnny Cash and ski resorts have to do with one

another? This video by First Track Productions will answer that question.

• The financial pie of lake clarity funding is explained in this video by Tahoe Pipe Club.

• Helen Bansen of Truckee High School won the local Poetry Out Loud contest, and will go to the state Poetry Out Loud Competition later this month.

• South Lake Tahoe Parks and Recreation Commission is in need of a member with Jennifer Scanio no longer on it because she never attended meetings.

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# Opinion: Congress needs to get out of the way to save USPS

**By Tad DeHaven**

The U.S. Postal Service has released a new five-year plan for congressional consideration that it says would get the beleaguered government mail monopoly on sounder financial footing and thus avoid a taxpayer bailout. The plan repeats previous suggestions (i.e., workforce reductions, postal network consolidations, elimination of Saturday delivery, elimination of the retiree healthcare benefit funding requirement) and proposes an increase in the price of a first-class stamp from 45 to 50 cents.

Whether or not it would achieve what the USPS hopes, it

probably doesn't matter given that asking Congress for greater operational flexibility is like asking a 2 year old to stop playing with their food. That's why the focus should be on completely transitioning the USPS from a government-run business to a privately-run business (or perhaps businesses).



Tad DeHaven

Over at the Courier Express and Postal Observer blog, Alan Robinson says that "just like all plans that came before, [the new USPS plan] started with the assumption that the Postal Service remains a quasi-governmental entity." As a result, Robinson notes that the plan is missing two key ingredients for success that foreign posts have utilized: private capital and an expanded range of products and services.

In an essay on the U.S. Postal Service, I discuss how liberalization in other countries has enabled foreign mailers to diversify into non-postal activities:

*Consultants at Accenture have found that diversification not only has a measurable impact on the performance of international posts, but that it is what ultimately distinguishes high performers from low performers. America's relatively dynamic economy is particularly suited for the diversification opportunities that would arise under postal liberalization.*

*Germany's former postal monopoly, Deutsche Post, illustrates the type of transformation possible by liberalization. Today, the private Deutsche Post World Net has changed its compensation structure, imported managers from other*

*industries, modernized the mail and parcels network within Germany, and developed new products such as hybrid mail and e-commerce. The company now has interests in not only the traditional mail and parcels business but also express mail logistics, banking, and more.*

Given that the USPS's plan is going to be unpopular with various postal stakeholders (i.e., special interests), Alan says that they should consider the advantages of privatization:

*It is clear that the business plan that the Postal Service has chosen is not the one that has worked in other countries. The plan avoids talking about either private capital or expanding the breadth of service offerings as neither is on the legislative table. Introducing thinking about how private capital could be introduced and the product offerings could be expanded forces stakeholders to think about privatization, an idea that is nearly as unpopular as the changes that the proposed business model introduced. However, as this brief post notes, privatization offers significant financial advantages that could reduce the operating and price changes envisions by the Postal Service's business plan. Therefore, those who see the greatest harm from this plan need to see if the advantages of privatization could benefit their interests sufficiently to overcome long-held objections to the idea.*

I think Robinson is right, but I suspect that the "stakeholders" believe there's a good chance that Congress will ultimately come to their aid with some sort of taxpayer bailout. Therefore, it's possible that they believe that it is in their best interest to continue fighting for the status quo. Unfortunately, the recent bipartisan federal bailouts of the financial industry and the automakers suggest that they could be correct.

*Tad DeHaven is a budget analyst at the Cato Institute. Previously he was a deputy director of the Indiana Office of*

*Management and Budget.*

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# Buoy battle at Tahoe escalates despite TRPA court victory

**By Kathryn Reed**

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency must use better science and environmental analysis to prove increasing the number of buoys and piers in Lake Tahoe will not harm the alpine waters.

Although it was the TRPA that essentially was on the winning side of a decision that came out of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals on Feb. 29, it is not a clear-cut victory.



Some believe more buoys on Lake Tahoe will bring more boats and more pollution. Photo/LTN file

In some ways, the League to Save Lake Tahoe won, too.

It was the League that filed the original lawsuit. The conservation group took issue with TRPA's plan that would have allowed an additional 128 private piers and 1,822 buoys to the already existing 768 piers and nearly 4,500 buoys.

It is estimated this would create an additional 62,000 boat trips each year on Lake Tahoe.

"The amount of pollution you get out of a boat is dramatically more than you get out of a car," Carl Young, program manager for the League, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "The reality of it is when you put a buoy on the lake, it's not just a buoy. It's the boat connected to it. When boats are used on the lake, they have certain impacts."

TRPA is tasked with improving lake clarity. The irony is this court decision came out the same day the lake clarity report was released. While a dinner plate of sorts can be seen to a greater depth than in 2010, the clarity has stayed essentially the same in the last decade despite more than $1.5 billion being spent on clarity efforts.

While Tahoe led the charge a decade ago in banning the old polluting two-stroke engines, TRPA staff and board members don't routinely talk about how boats pollute Lake Tahoe. But the League contends boats pollute the lake more dramatically than cars do through air pollution. Car emissions, what comes out of woodstoves – those are topics TRPA is vocal about.

The shorezone issue has been contentious for nearly 24 years and became even more so after the Governing Board of the TRPA adopted a shorezone plan in October 2008. That month the League and Sierra Club filed suit in U.S. District Court in Sacramento.

The bi-state regulatory agency appealed the September 2010 decision by U.S. District Judge Lawrence Karlton that struck

down the TRPA’s shorezone ordinance.

The San Francisco-based appellate court on Wednesday did not overturn the entire District Court decision, but instead ruled on a segment of it.

TRPA must provide better, thorough environmental documentation as to why illegal buoys should be allowed in the baseline analysis.

“What we have with this ruling is a process for moving a shorezone policy forward with a more thorough analysis and we will be reviewing our options,” Kristi Boosman, spokeswoman for TRPA, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

But with the focus of the agency being on the Regional Plan update, in particular the draft environmental impact statement coming out at the end of the month, it’s not likely the TRPA will address the shorezone in the immediate future.

The League will wait to see what the TRPA comes up with before it makes a move. According to Young, his group from the get-go wanted better analysis and is happy the court is mandating TRPA provide it.

“What the Ninth Circuit did was overturn that portion of Judge Karlton’s ruling saying the agency basically could use potentially illegal buoys, but it needs to justify why it would be included and analyze the impacts,” Young said.

# House passes water bill favoring California farmers

**By Michael Doyle, McClatchy**

WASHINGTON – The House on Wednesday approved an ambitious California water bill that favors farmers, splits the state and pressures the U.S. Senate.

In a highly partisan vote, the Republican-controlled House approved the legislation that would lengthen irrigation contracts, override state law and boost deliveries to farms south of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. Most dramatically, the bill replaces one San Joaquin River restoration plan with something far less ambitious.

“Flushing water into San Francisco Bay is not helping to recover species, and people are suffering needlessly,” said bill author Rep. Devin Nunes, R-Visalia, adding later that his bill “gives (water) reliability, not only to farms but to the environment.”

Approved 246-175, the bill marked one of the few times the full House has confronted California’s water woes. The nearly five-hour debate, though, also underscored how the bill has magnified rather than ameliorated regional and personal differences.

“This is a power grab,” said Rep. John Garamendi, D-Walnut Grove. “It’s a water grab, and it’s an imposition of the federal government over the state.”

The bill faces an uncertain future. Democratic Sens. Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer both oppose the legislation, as does the Brown administration in Sacramento, and the Obama administration has threatened a presidential veto.

**Read the whole story**