Eat and ski to raise money

Experience the exhilaration of gliding through the forest on cross country ski trails working up a hearty appetite, and then enjoying gourmet grazing right on the trail.

Outdoor enthusiasts and foodies can ski or snowshoe from one food station to the next during the 11th annual Gourmet Ski Tour, a fundraiser for the Tahoe Cross Country Ski Education Association at the Tahoe Cross Country Center on March 11 starting at 1pm.

Dress in your favorite dance costume: this year's theme is "snow dance" with such costume suggestions as disco, hip hop, or ballet. Winner of the costume contest wins a Tahoe XC ski season pass.

Beginners may rent skis or snowshoes at the Tahoe Cross Country Center and move around at their leisure tasting everything from soup to nuts. The afternoon ends with margaritas and live music by The Drunken Neighbors from 2:30-5pm.

Tickets are $32 for adults (includes a half-day trail pass), $27 for juniors ages 13-17, children 12 and under can feast on complimentary hot dogs. A limited number of tickets are available. Call (530) 583.5475 or go online for tickets.

Calif. AG not afraid to fight

for the state

By Katrina Heron, Newsweek

Kamala Harris is known for her entrances. A political crusader and cultural-barrier breaker, she was until recently famous for a trifecta of firsts: first African-American, first Indian-American, first female attorney general of California.

But then Harris did something that took many by surprise: she made a grand exit.



Kamala Harris

After multiple trips to Washington for heated closed-door sessions, Harris walked away last September from a deal highly coveted by President Obama and shepherded by a score of federal agencies, a proposed settlement between the 50 states' attorneys general and the five biggest banks involved in the home-mortgage crisis. "I have concluded that this is not the deal California homeowners have been waiting for," Harris wrote to the settlement's committee chairs, just nine months into her job, noting that more than half a million more homes in her state had fallen into the foreclosure process since discussions had begun in late 2010.

Harris's abrupt departure helped derail that agreement, and response to her move was swift. Some critics, including members of the financial community, spoke of a newcomer making an irresponsible gamble to enhance her own political stature. Those who approved saw a savvy bluff-caller doing her job for

a state that leads the nation in homeowner woes, with 2.2 million borrowers currently underwater on their mortgages and seven of the 10 cities in America hardest hit by foreclosure. Still others believed Harris would never agree to a deal.

That last theory, at least, was put to rest on Thursday with the announcement that 49 states, including California, have agreed to a three-year, $26 billion settlement with Bank of America, JPMorgan Chase, Citigroup, Wells Fargo, and Ally Financial. A formidable negotiator, Harris had pushed up her state's take from somewhere between $2 billion and $4 billion to $12 billion, with an estimated $6 billion more in value to owners coming from banks acknowledging the diminished value of homes. She also extracted special concessions on how the relief will be guaranteed and distributed. Along with other, equally intransigent AGs, Harris also prevailed against the banks' bid for across-the-board immunity, preserving for states the right to pursue their own investigations into how loans were made to borrowers and how they were then packaged and resold in financial markets.

Still, some critics branded the deal a sell-out (after all, bank shares rose), pointing out that it offers scant relief for those who have already lost their homes to foreclosure. Harris herself—for whom the settlement is arguably a huge political coup and a boost for any future gubernatorial run—did not crow. "We brought an $18 billion life preserver to homeowners who need relief right now," she told Newsweek in an interview after the deal was announced. "It's a good thing, but we have a lot more work to do. By no means are we done."

Harris, 47, has never shied from a central role in the long-running negotiations. Sitting in her office under a portrait of Martin Luther King Jr., she was roused easily from professional calm to righteous fervor, revealing shades of the career prosecutor who first made her name battling the grittiest of crimes, including child sexual abuse. Her customary uniform of dark pantsuit, high heels, and pearls

suggests a rather glamorous CEO, but the bursts of intensity are that of a courtroom dynamo, by turns compelling outrage and inviting empathy, disarmingly folksy and clearly comfortable under pressure.

Read the whole story

‘Warrior Breathing’ could change your life

By Kym McNichola, Forbes

Breathing right can change your life. Reading that, you might wonder, can you do it wrong? Yes. Not on purpose, of course. But if you’re constantly in a state of stress, your breathing is key to helping your body and mind manage it. When I attended this year’s Summit Series event at Squaw Valley, which is a gathering of some of the most amazing entrepreneurs and investors in the world, I made a promise to myself that I was going to have some sort of breakthrough in my life. Since my editor Steve Bertoni, who also attended the event, said I should give myself a break after interviewing quite a few executives, including X Prize Chairman Peter Diamandis and Sim City/Spore Creator Will Wright, I knew that breakthrough had to be a personal one versus professional.

That next morning I decided to sit in on a seminar on breathing. Having been in broadcasting most of my life I thought I truly knew how to breathe the “right” way, and figured it was simply a one-hour meditation session. To my surprise, it wasn’t. Turns out there’s something called, “Warrior Breathing,” which, if done right, truly clears your heart, your soul and your mind. That’s according to the

founders of Do As One, which is a non-profit dedicated to teaching people how to breathe. I must've done something right because during the last exercise I started having a panic attack, which I'd never experienced before. At first it scared me as my eyes suddenly filled up with tears. But then I took a deep breathe in and a big smile erupted on my face.

To which co-founder, Eric Stotz said, "You just opened your heart for the first time.

Read the whole story

Boarding for Breast Cancer

Sugar Bowl Resort is teaming up with Boarding for Breast Cancer for the fourth annual Shred the Love benefit March 3.

The resort will have a rail jam contest in the Switching Yard Terrain Park, with all entry fees from the event benefiting B4BC and their mission to provide breast cancer education, prevention and support programs for young people and the action sports community at large.

Adding awareness to the cause and contributing additional funds, pink Sugar Bowl pass lanyards will be on sale for $4, and $1 from every Coors Light poured that day will go to benefit B4BC's efforts. The resort will also host a silent auction from 10am-2pm.

Entry is $25 and registration is from 8:30-10am for the boarding contest. Competition is form 11am-1pm in Coldstream Terrain Park.

For more information, call (530) 426.9000.

Vonn’s win puts her in record books; Mancuso doesn’t make podium

By USSA

BANSKO, Bulgaria – Lindsey Vonn of Vail made up an astounding 0.61 deficit on the bottom half of a bumpy Bansko speed track to notch a historic 18th career super G win Sunday and pass Austrian Renate Goetschl in the women’s Audi FIS Alpine World Cup tour record books.

The victory, her 10th this season, rocketed Vonn to a 94 point discipline lead going into the season’s last race at World Cup Finals and boosted her overall World Cup lead total to 528 with nine races left on the calendar.

Tina Weirather of Lichtenstein was second, a mere 0.05 behind Vonn.

Julia Mancuso of Squaw Valley was eighth, Leanne Smith of North Conway, N.H., 18th, Laurenne Ross of Bend, Ore., 24th and Stacey Cook of Mammoth Mountain 29th.

Vonn, Mancuso and Smith have qualified in super G for for the March 11-18 World Cup Finals in Schladming, Austria.

Jitloff in 22nd in GS as soft snow slows racers

BY USSA

CRANS MONTANA, Switzerland – Fighting through incredibly soft snow conditions, Ted Ligety of Park City was slowed to ninth place in the Audi FIS Alpine World Cup giant slalom at Crans Montana won by Italian Massimiliano Blardone on Sunday.

As the course deteriorated under warm temperatures, the first run leaders struggled to maintain speed in the final run. After leading the giant slalom standings for the first half of the season, Ligety is now 132 points behind Austrian Marcel Hirscher with two giant slalom races left in the season. Hirscher, who was second in the race, also leads the World Cup overall standings by 92 points.

Tommy Ford of Bend, Ore., was 19th and Tim Jitloff of Reno 22nd.

Head coach Sasha Rearick said, “I am stoked with the skiing of Tommy Ford. Today he went out and free skied a lot and found some better movement for his skis, but on the bottom he skied a too-aggressive line and it was just too costly for both him and Tim [Jitloff], which is a bummer. Qualifying for World Cup Finals for Tommy and Tim is going to come down to the last race. There’s about seven guys between 21 and 29 that could make top 25.”

Learn the ins and outs about living with diabetes

Join registered dietitian Jen Trew to learn about the basics of healthy eating and diabetic diet planning on March 8 from 6:30-7:30pm.

Discover the important role of macronutrients and blood sugar control. Lab glucose goals, A1C, lipids and blood pressure also will be discussed.

The first class is free.

Other lecture topics include:

- Target glucose levels
- Recommended daily protein
- Healthy and unhealthy dietary fats

Register by contacting Lynn Norton at (530) 543.5824 or email lnorton@bartonhealth.org.

The class is at Barton University, 1113 Emerald Bay Road, No. 1, South Lake Tahoe.

Nevada moving toward letting private labs test new casino

games

By Richard N. Velotta, Las Vegas Sun

In a bid to stay ahead of the rapidly increasing pace of technological advancement, the state Gaming Control Board on Wednesday conducted its first public workshop to amend regulations to allow independent laboratories to test new casino games and wagering systems for licensing in the state.

About 30 gaming industry representatives attended the first public hearing on amendments to Regulation 14, which sets rules for manufacturers, distributors and operators of inter-casino linked systems, gaming devices, new games, slot metering systems and cashless wagering systems.

Enabling independent laboratories to test games and systems will allow the state's gaming technology experts to focus on establishing policy, certifying the labs and better understanding the technology, as well as preventing licensing approval bottlenecks that could occur with the anticipated increase in applications from Internet gambling companies.

The first round of public hearings yielded no complaints or concerns about 10 new sections of regulations listing registration and reporting requirements for prospective labs, the registration process and how regulators will determine the suitability of owners and operators of lab companies.

Currently, companies wanting to introduce a new game or system would go directly to the state, which has maintained its own gaming lab for years.

Under the system that would be established once the new regulation takes effect, the state would certify and license labs that would conduct the testing and forward certification documents to the state, which would still have final approval over whether a game is acceptable or not.

The Gaming Control Board and the Nevada Gaming Commission are expected to conduct public hearings on the new regulations in March. The commission could consider approval in March or April. A bill signed into law by the Legislature last year mandates that independent testing begin by the end of May.

Read the whole story

Bloom to speak in Squaw

The Squaw Valley Institute on March 23 at 5pm hosts Jeremy Bloom, three-time world champion, two-time Olympian and 11-time World Cup gold medalist in freestyle moguls skiing, and NFL player.

Bloom is also the founder of the Wish of a Lifetime Charity, which grants lifelong wishes to 80, 90, and 100-plus-year-old people.

In April 2010, Bloom co-founded the Internet company Integrate.com, and he has just been recognized by *Forbes* magazine as one of the 30 under 30 list in Technology. He is 29.

For more information and tickets, go online.

Opinion: Well-being of

livestock is worth worrying about

By Steve Chapman

Factory farming and its abuses were once the province of an eccentric minority that invited ridicule and scorn. Agribusiness corporations could afford to ignore them. In the real America, nobody wasted time worrying about the well-being of livestock.

But the real America has changed. On Monday, the biggest restaurant chain on the planet, McDonald's, lined up on the same side as the Humane Society of the United States on a major issue of animal welfare. It informed its pork suppliers that they will have to stop confining pregnant sows in "gestation crates" that are too small to let the animals turn around.



Steve Chapman

McDonald's buys 1 percent of the pork sold in this country. When it tells pork producers to jump, they ask, "How high?"

Most Americans may not rank animal welfare high on the list of their chief concerns. But given the choice of food produced more humanely or less humanely, enough people will choose the latter to make continued indifference a bad business strategy.

McDonald's was preceded by such mainstays of American consumer

culture as Burger King, Wendy's, Sonic and Winn-Dixie stores, which have moved against gestation crates. Smithfield Foods – the world's largest pork producer and one of the most reviled – has also promised to eliminate these cages by 2017. These are not companies whose customer base consists of vegans in plastic shoes who regard meat as murder.

It's no surprise that Whole Foods Market has built an empire partly by making animal welfare part of its identity. The chain is also known for rarefied offerings and high prices. But retailers like Wal-Mart and Costco, which specialize in mass-market products at bargain prices, are on board as well. Their private label eggs all come from uncaged hens.

In the past seven years, cage-free eggs have increased their share of sales to 8 percent up from 2 percent. A substantial number of Americans are willing to pay a bit more to avoid a conflict between stomach and conscience.

They may not have to. A 2007 study conducted at an Iowa State University research farm found that "group housing may produce pigs at a lower cost than individual gestation stalls in confinement facilities."

The egg industry is likewise adapting to changing norms. The United Egg Producers recently reached agreement with the Humane Society to support federal legislation mandating better conditions for laying hens.

Most of these birds spend their lives with just 67 square inches of space – smaller than the size of a standard sheet of paper. The bill would increase it to at least 124.

It would also afford them "enriched" environments where they can scratch, perch, nest and generally behave in a chicken-like manner. Egg cartons would have to carry labels to specify if the hens were caged, cage-free or free-range.

Two states have already banned the notorious "battery cages,"

where multiple birds are crammed into small spaces. Given that eight states have banned gestation crates, more protections for hens are very likely.

This may sound like a radical development, but it’s only a natural expansion of normal human sympathies for our fellow creatures. You don’t have to be an animal rights zealot to believe humans are not entitled to inflict needless misery on pigs or other livestock. If dogs and cats are protected from cruelty, why not the animals we eat?

Defenders of the status quo may dismiss their critics as insular urbanites who know nothing about farming. But some of the critics are just a generation removed from rural life and know there used to be better ways to produce food from animals.

Producers are not really to blame for the dismal conditions in factory farms. They are merely responding to the relentless competitive pressure to eliminate every unnecessary expense.

Mandates from major corporations – or from governments – allow them to adopt new methods without being undercut by less scrupulous suppliers. They provide a space within which humane impulses can assert themselves.

Americans have a strong attachment to the freedom to live their lives with a minimum of interference. But they understand there is no human right to abuse animals.

Before he ascended to the papacy, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger decried battery cages for the “degrading of living creatures to a commodity,” a lament that applies to other factory methods as well. When the Pope and McDonald’s are both against something, odds are high its time is past.

Steve Chapman is a columnist and editorial writer for the Chicago Tribune.