Ski report: Isolated showers



Temps are dropping, so add a layer of clothing.

Here is the ski report from Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.

Mancuso snags silver in super G on tough course

By Ski Racing News Service

GARMISCH-PARTENKIRCHEN, Germany – Elisabeth Goergl makes sweet high speed turns as well as anyone, which she displayed in taking the World super G Championship at Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany this morning in opening the title meet before an enthusiastic crowd of spectators and a bright sunny day.

It is her first championship after gaining bronze medals at the 2009 title meet in combined and at last season's Olympics in downhill and GS. It is also her first win of the season, and it was a good time to pull that one out of the bag.

Picking up the silver with a run that seemed to get better as it progressed was the amazing Julia Mancuso, tacking one more batch of sand into cementing her reputation as a big event skier. The American title ace (three Olympic medals and now

four World Championship medallions) displayed magnificent control over a difficult, dappled and icy Kandahar course to come with five hundredths of her first championship.

Even though it is bronze and not gold, expect a huge celebration throughout Garmisch with the epicenter on Wildenauer Strabe, the home base of Germany's great Maria Riesch. She skied immediately after Goergl and, like Mancuso, just missed the top prize finishing 0.21 of a second off the Austrian's time.

Young skiers made strong bids but could not manage the prize winning slots. Swiss Lara Gut finished fourth, Austrian Anna Fenninger fifth and Italian World Jr. Champ Elena Curtoni sixth.

In seventh was defending all-world queen Lindsey Vonn, looking, perhaps, just a touch tentative after having railed on organizers the day before the event for offering a course too dangerous for female skiers. Though the course seemed ideally suited for her strength and tactical skill, Vonn did not attack as we have grown accustomed to seeing.

There were DNF's and it was a tough course, but the lion's share of those DNF's came from skiers starting outside the first seed.

Mancuso said her run definitely improved as she moved down course. "I didn't start off the greatest, but as I started to pick up momentum down the course I started to get a good feeling and started to ski better and better."

She said she thought she'd be lucky to get the bronze, so was more than pleased with silver. "Of course I wanted to do my best and get a meal, so I'm stoked."

"I'm still chasing the win," she said. "I'll just remember that I need those five hundredths. You have to have everything here."

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Nice write up about Homewood in the February issue of *Ski* magazine. It mentions the awesome views, but fails to provide a photo. Same issue touts Northsar for being kid friendly.

• Reno is on the list of top 10 cities with the worst drinking water, according to the AOL Daily Finance report published last month.

• The 35th annual Great Ski Race, the Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue fundraiser cross country ski race, is March 6 at 9am. It starts at the Tahoe Cross Country Center in Tahoe City and finishes at the Cottonwood Restaurant in Truckee. Information is online.

• Dee Byrne is now Squaw Valley's director of Snowsports School and Race Programs. She spent the last eight years as the director of Vail Snowsports School.

• El Dorado County Air Quality Management District has released a request for proposal for fiscal year 2011-12 motor vehicle emission reduction projects.

Martin Hollay's life deserves

a better book

By Kathryn Reed

I never doubted Martin Hollay's life would be worthy of a book. From the little I know about him, he is someone I could sit with for hours. He is captivating and engaging every time I'm around him.

I wasn't able to make it to his 90th birthday party last fall, where I could have picked up his autobiography. I just got the copy I had ordered last month. I read "I was so Lucky: The Life of Martin Hollay, As Told to Tom McGowan" in two days.



Martin Hollay/2009

It's the "as told to" part that is so unfortunate. I don't know McGowan other than from the book that says he's an investment advisor and this is his first foray into the book world. The men are friends.

I haven't asked Hollay why he wanted the book published. I could come up with enough good reasons. But I can't come up with any for having it written the way it was.

And that's the problem.

As interesting as this Hungarian skier who probably knows as much about Heavenly Mountain Resort and the 1960 Squaw Valley Olympics as anyone alive does, the book falls a bit flat.

If I didn’t know Hollay and much of his story, I would have stopped reading – and the book is only 94 pages. It’s written in Q&A format. This doesn’t work for a book.

Clearly from the book McGowan and Hollay are old friends. That allows McGowan some insight some interviewers wouldn’t have. But not being an interviewer by trade showed because of the lack of follow up questions, the original questions and the flow of the book.

The editor in me wants to know if there are tapes of the interviews, to flush out the holes in the story, to add depth to this human being who is that rare gem of a gentleman, athlete, lady’s man, family man, immigrant, war hero – oh, and one heck of a cross country and downhill skier to this day. Hollay deserves a more comprehensive book to be written about him.

Yes, I learned some things about Hollay that I didn’t know. But the book left me wanting to know more.

Still, for anyone who wants a glimpse into the early days of skiing at Lake Tahoe, especially at Heavenly, this book is worth reading. And for anyone who wants to delve into the human interest aspect of man born in Hungary, who fights in World War II, is a POW, immigrates to the United States with a wife and young daughter, and then becomes an architect of sorts of Heavenly resort, then this is a must read.

Books may be ordered by sending $23 to Tom McGowan, P.O. Box 1489, Zephyr Cove, NV 89448.

Conference connects farmers and consumers

Connecting farmers and consumers to the food we eat is the goal of the 2011 Nevada Small Farm Conference on March 10-12 at Western Nevada College Fallon campus and Fallon Convention Center.

A diverse program will explore topics from bees to beef through the two-day conference, pre-conference workshops, Friday evening reception and Community Education Day on Saturday.

Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food is the conference theme as it builds upon the U.S. Department of Agriculture initiative to connect rural farmers and urban consumers. The vision: to improve the economic and physical health of Nevada's communities. Sessions will focus on small fruit production, viticulture and wine making, marketing local beef, soil fertility and composting, hoop houses, beekeeping and more.

Consumer Education Day on Saturday will feature sessions on urban farming, school and community gardens, farm-to-institution sales and smart water use.

Invited speakers include regional and local experts from across the Western states including Utah, New Mexico, California and Nevada.

Local food and spirits will be served during a casual Friday evening reception at Lattin Farms in Fallon. Beef and lamb from local producers Albaugh Ranch and Churchill Vineyards, plus wine and local seasonal produce will all be featured.

For conference details, registration information and fees, visit WNC's website, or contact Ann Louhela, (775) 351/2551, or louhelaa@wnc.edu.

Landscaping rebates offered by watershed council

The River Friendly Landscaping program operated by the Truckee River Watershed Council is offering free site evaluations and a $400 rebate for improvements.

Andy Otto, program manager for the River Friendly Landscaping Program, said the three main problem areas on most properties are roof runoff, the type of plants being selected for landscaping, and driveways.

It takes only 1 inch of rain falling on a typical 1,500 square foot roof to generate approximately 1,000 gallons of runoff.

Native plants are critical.

Water that drains from driveways carries contaminates to the nearest river or stream.

The average yard costs $400 to $2,200 to retrofit depending on the size, according to Otto.

For more information about River Friendly Landscaping or to sign up for a site evaluation, contact Andy Otto at aotto@truckeeriverwc.org or (530) 550. 8760, ext. 3.

Opinion: Glimmers of hope in Tahoe real estate market

By Joe Salcedo

2010 gave us a steady progress for the Lake Tahoe real estate market as units and volume increased significantly, 28 percent and 37 percent, respectively. It was a breath of fresh air from the suffocating 2009, where median home prices went down 24 percent.

So what do we make of this? Continue to proceed with caution. Units and volume are up, but home prices are still going down. If you hear us Realtors unrolling the red carpet and shooting glowing press releases – please don't mock – know that the last time we saw anything positive, Bear Sterns and Lehman Brothers were still listed in the stock exchange.

"The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function" – you will need this dear reader; as news media and real estate people will frustrate the daylights out of you (as you probably know by now), for they're peaceful when it's calm out to sea and bicker when the storm comes.



Joe Salcedo

But you can't depend on perpetual cynics either; those who seem to believe that they are smarter than the market. When it comes to the market, the curious observer wins. And don't

worry, unlike the stock exchange where 10 percent weekly price fluctuations occur, in real estate you rarely get left behind; if you pay attention.

Historically, home prices increase at an average of 5 percent per year, and that doesn't happen overnight. Real estate markets fluctuate in a shape of an elongated "W" not a "V", so even if you miss the exact market bottom, consistent stronger home prices (two to three years) will nudge you that it's a good time to buy.

Any market recovery is led by an increased demand, because the number of buyers influences how seller's asking price is met. If buyers significantly outnumber sellers, they begin to offer full asking price, sometimes higher, as they bid against each other. This in effect gives other future seller's a guide, or as they call it, "comparable" on how to price their home. Also, the number of sellers or the lack of plays a great part in influencing what prices buyers are willing to settle for, so keep the listing inventory in check as well.

On the other hand, increasing home sales doesn't mean that prices won't go down any further. Take for example Washoe County; Reno has seen an increased demand since 2007 but home prices continue to go down. There are many reasons for this; mainly the number of foreclosures keeps pulling "comparables" down.

In Lake Tahoe, foreclosures are nowhere near as rampant compared to its neighboring cities in Northern Nevada; I hope it continues to be that way. In any case, the number of Lake Tahoe single-family homes improved 28 percent from 2009 and 62 percent for condos. This is a good start.

If you're thinking of buying or putting your home in the market; the best advice I can give you is to use market facts to furnish your intuition. Research and intuition are the best tools to help you make the best decision. Our job is to show

you what’s happening out there, because at the end of the day only you know what’s best for you and your family.

Joe Salcedo regularly writes about the lake’s short sale market and has recently launched Lake Tahoe Real Estate that focuses on Incline, Zephyr Cove and Glenbrook.

Mount Tallac High coping with physical disrepair

By Kathryn Reed

Reusing portables isn’t possible.

That’s the message the state Department of Education has delivered to Lake Tahoe Unified School District officials. This is because the overcrowded relief grant money is designed to rid campuses of portables, not move them around to be used in a different manner.

South Tahoe High and South Tahoe Middle schools each received these types of grants, that with matching money from the voter approved Measure G bond brings new buildings to the schools. For STHS it’s the completed Stadium View Building. Construction at STMS will begin this summer.



Neglected

portable sitting in Mount Tallac's parking lot must be removed. Photos/Kathryn Reed

The news, that has yet to be widely disseminated among school officials, will come as a blow to Mount Tallac High staff and students.

Just last Thursday the belief was the portable sitting in the parking lot of the continuation school still might become an extension of the school for outside agencies like Tahoe Youth & Family Services, probation and others to meet with students.

Susan Baker, who runs Mount Tallac, told *Lake Tahoe News* on Feb. 3, “It definitely feels like we’re being neglected when we’re told time and time again these things are going to be taken care of and they aren’t. For me, we could do so much for kids if these things were in place.”

“These things” being the dilapidated portable that has been sitting in the parking lot since August. She said Principal Ivone Larson, school facilities Director Steve Morales and Superintendent Jim Tarwater told her that portable would be converted into a usable facility.

Instead, it has sat all winter becoming a moldy, smelly mess. A leaky roof was repaired long after the problem was reported. Stepping in the dank building one does not want to linger.

It’s possible even if the state didn’t tell the district it can’t keep these portables on campus (Tallac and STHS are considered one campus), the portable in the parking lot would no longer pass muster because of mold issues.

Morales said converting that particular portable into a usable facility was talked about, but was never guaranteed. “They weren’t interested in hearing that it might not happen,” Morales told *Lake Tahoe News* on Feb. 7.

He said the district is going to look into whether portables from other campuses that did not receive the overcrowding grant could be moved to Mount Tallac in the future, which could be as early as this summer. But it would still have to go through the permitting process.

What will happen to these portables remains an unknown. A couple have been given to Lake Valley Fire Department in exchange for defensible space work.

While STHS reaps the bulk of the benefits of the $65 million bond that with matches from state grants is closer to $100 million, Mount Tallac will not receive a dime. That’s how the bond measure was written.

Instead, teachers this year have listened to the ping of water dripping inside a classroom before the roof was finally repaired.



The boys' bathroom at Mount Tallac.

Students must use bathrooms that make some port-a-potties look more appealing.

Larson and Morales said they have not seen the bathrooms in

question.

The irony is board meeting after board meeting the elected officials and administrators tout the importance of facilities, how creating a learning environment that is vibrant allows students to learn better.

“I think a lot of times there is a misnomer out there these kids don’t care about education as much a AP students,” Baker said.

She said all she wants is a clean, safe environment.

“Everything is triage and Band-Aids,” Baker said.

Harry Segal, a volunteer at Mount Tallac, questioned whether the neglect that is happening at Mount Tallac would be allowed to happen at the district office or the environmental school.

Soroptimist breakfast speakers

Soroptimist International of Tahoe Sierra meets every Thursday at 7:30am at the South Lake Tahoe Senior Center, 3050 Lake Tahoe Blvd.

All are invited, with breakfast and coffee served.

Speakers begin their presentation at 8am.

Call (530) 409.2791 for more information.

Speakers:

Feb. 10: Joan McColgan from Napa award winning tapestries.

Feb. 17: Ret. Admiral Carl Moor from the U.S. Coast Guard.

Feb 24: Sugar Pine Foundation on their mission and up-coming events.

Mount Tallac graduation

Mount Tallac High School graduation is June 10 at 11am at the football field of South Tahoe High School.