Gay man, ex-skin head to be on same stage on West Slope

By Carlos Alcalá, Sacramento Bee

Matthew Boger, Tim Zaal and Davida Wills Hurwin will make a rare joint appearance in Placerville Jan. 29.

Boger and Zaal are the nationally known anti-hate speakers whose bizarre and inspiring story began when Zaal participated in a punk group that nearly beat Boger to death.

The two men later became friends at the L.A. Museum of Tolerance after Zaal abandoned his violent life. Hurwin turned their stories into a novel for young adults that was featured on Oprah.

Read the whole story

Report: Nevada faces long-term deficit issues

By Jason Hidalgo, Reno Gazette-Journal

Nevada is on track to developing a serious long-term deficit with its budget unless key changes are made to add balance to the state’s revenue and tax structure, a new report found.

The report, released this month by Brookings Mountain West and the Morrison Institute for Public Policy in Arizona State University, analyzed the public budget crises in four states: Nevada, California, Arizona and Colorado.

The report recommended diversification of the tax systems across the entire four-state area, adding that “the region’s massive budget gaps cannot responsibly be closed with only spending reductions.”

Nevada was singled out for having “one of the least diversified tax systems in the country.” The state’s addition of tax provisions into the Constitution coupled with a heavy reliance on formula mandates that dedicate revenue to several spending programs also makes it one of the least flexible tax systems in the nation, the report found.

“Nevada relies heavily on sales tax and gaming revenue and has no personal and corporate income tax, so you have one of the most narrow state revenue systems found in the country,” wrote lead researcher Matthew Murray, a professor of economics at the University of Tennessee. “With property and sales tax revenue suffering, it is not at all clear where Nevada will find the revenue to fund services, including those that support economic development moving forward.”

Read the whole story

South Lake Tahoe native trains for first trip to X Games

By Kathryn Reed

Only in his fourth year competing in skier cross, South Lake Tahoe native Trevor Ricioli is headed for the X Games later this month.

“I grew up racing motocross. This is the most similar thing to it on snow,” Ricioli told *Lake Tahoe News*. “There are times when it’s scary, but that’s what makes it fun.”



Trevor Ricioli is ready for any obstacle. Photos/Provided

The 25-year-old has been skiing since he was 5, mostly at Sierra-at-Tahoe. He is competing now for Sugar Bowl – home resort of Olympian Daron Rahlves.

“I’ve skied a few time with Daron. He is a busy guy,” Ricioli said.

Most of Ricioli’s training is with Errol Kerr, who skied in the Vancouver Olympics last year for Jamaica. He placed ninth in skier cross. Ricioli was in Canada last January to watch his friend.

The friends trade off between Sugar Bowl and Kerr’s home resort of Alpine Meadows. This week they are concentrating on giant slalom training so they are ready for the turns.

In the terrain parks is where they practice going over jumps side-by-side.

Skier cross is all about a group of athletes headed down the hill at the same time going fast, flying over jumps and rounding corners – a race against man and clock.

Although the Jan. 27-30 competition in Aspen will be the biggest stage Ricioli will have been on, he is a top contender in his sport. He has been crowned national champion in skier cross the last three years.

Last fall he was in Australia competing in the Continental Cup where he placed fifth.



Trevor Ricioli

Over the holidays he got word via telephone the X Games committee was inviting him to the competition.

“Part of me is nervous, but I’ve wanted to ski in the X Games since I was little. I’ve been wanting this and waiting for this,” the 2004 South Tahoe High School grad said.

He’s been getting advice about this level of competition from Kerr as well as fellow South Lake Tahoe resident Shaun Palmer, another friend. Palmer is a veteran snowboarder.

One of the things Ricioli likes is traveling. He hopes in 2014 his passport has a Russian stamp in it – meaning he’s on the Olympic team.

“My focus is to get a lot of FIS (International Ski Federation) points so when the U.S. team is formed, I get on it,” Ricioli said.

He is also concentrating on getting sponsors so he has money to travel to events that will get him to the next level.

Ricioli expects skiing will always be part of his life – but

what lies beyond the slopes remains uncertain. He has dabbled in several things. He's into photography and fashion, having started the Donovan Smyth Clothing company out of high school. Ricioli, his mom and sister opened the Donovan Denim Bar after that, which closed after a couple years because of the sour economy.

He recently started an electronic band called Thunderwolf with his friend Austin Ellis.

The qualifying round for skier cross at the X Games is Jan. 28, with the competition Jan. 30. Here is the ESPN TV schedule.

"I really want to bring some hardware to South Lake Tahoe," Ricioli said.

Giants World Series trophy skips Tahoe this week

The San Francisco Giants have decided to cut Lake Tahoe-Reno off the list of places for the World Series trophy to visit this weekend.

Instead, the website says the trophy will be in the area sometime in March.



Giants opening day 2010. Photo/Kathryn Reed

The good news about the Giants is the champs will open the season at against the Dodgers on March 31 at 5pm in Los Angeles.

Northstar to host improv performers

Empire Comedy has its first show at Northstar this week.

When: Jan. 12, 8pm

What: “Police Cops!” and “Hostel Greetings”

Where: TC’s Pub Village at Northstar, 100 Northstar Drive, Truckee.

Who: All ages show recommended for 17 and up.

Cost: $10, online

SLTPD adds member to its

ranks

Brian Hannink became the newest officer with the South Lake Tahoe Police Department on Jan. 10.

Hannink joins the force after serving as an officer in Manteca for 1½ years.



South Tahoe Police Chief Brian Uhler, right, on Jan. 10 swear in Officer Brain Hannink. Photo/Provided

A highlight of the ceremony included Hannink's father, Bruce, "pinning on" his son's badge.

Hannink graduated in 2005 with a bachelor's degree in history from Dordt College in Iowa. Despite living in relatively flat places, Hannink is a snowboarder.

Hannink's first week includes a variety of administrative tasks. Next week he'll begin working the streets with field training Officer Ric Martinez.

Seminar focuses on California labor law

The North Lake Tahoe Chamber of Commerce and the Truckee Donner Chamber of Commerce in partnership with the Sierra Human Resources Association are offering 2011 Labor Law Update and Wide-Open Q&A on Jan. 20 from 8:30am to noon at Cedar House Sports Hotel, 10918 Brockway Road in Truckee.

This employment law seminar includes updated information, new laws and best employment practices managers and business professionals need to know for 2011. Also covered will be medical conditions, including FMLA and ADA obligations; wage and hour update, as well as exemptions for meal and rest breaks; social media and related technology; medical marijuana, organ donation leaves and other trends; 2011 notice and posting requirements; and recommended 2011 handbook updates. Attendees may submit specific questions confidentially in advance to laura@tahoetrainingpartners.com so they can be addressed at the seminar.

The seminar speaker is Julie A. Vogelzang, an employment law attorney and partner at Duane Morris LLP in San Diego. She has successfully defended large, medium and small companies sued in cases including those alleging wage and hour, wrongful termination, sexual harassment, discrimination, retaliation and breach of contract claims.

Registration is $55 for North Lake Tahoe Chamber of Commerce and SHRA members and $65 for non-members if registered before Jan. 13. Last-minute registration runs $60 for North Lake Tahoe Chamber of Commerce and SHRA members and $70 for non-members. Seating is limited.

To register and for more information about the workshop, call Laura Moriarty, of SHRA, at (530) 573.0224 or North Lake Tahoe

Chamber of Commerce Manager Kym Fabel at (530) 581.8764. Attendees can also register online at www.sierrahra.com.

Skiers flocking to Vail Resorts' properties boost revenues

Vail Resorts is reporting revenue being up this season compared to a year ago at its six ski resorts based on data through Jan. 6.

Highlights for the two California and four Colorado resorts adjusted as if Northstar-at-Tahoe that was acquired in October 2010 was owned in both periods include:

• Season-to-date total lift ticket revenue up approximately 7.4 percent.

• Season-to-date total skier visits up approximately 10.1, including higher utilization by season pass holders.

• Season-to-date ancillary spending increased significantly, with revenue from ski school up 11.5 percent, dining up 13.3 percent, and retail/rental up 17.5 percent.



Lots of snow

in Colorado this season is helping Vail Resorts' bottom line. Photo/Kathryn Reed

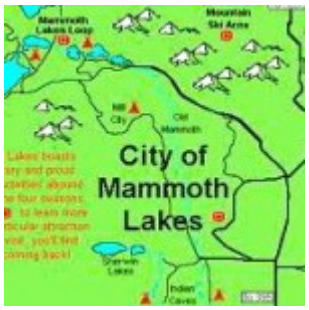
CEO Rob Katz, in a prepared statement on Jan. 10, said, “Our early season visitation was strong, especially as our growing season pass holder base enjoyed the outstanding snow conditions across all of our mountain resorts. While the Christmas to New Year’s week was negatively impacted by storm related challenges in the Northeast that kept some of our guests at home, as well as two days of unusually cold temperatures in Colorado, we feel great about results to date and the momentum we have going into the remainder of the season. Importantly, we observed strong ancillary spending, yielding gains in all categories that outpaced lift ticket revenue growth and marked a continuation of the improving consumer spending trends we first reported in the spring of 2010. Furthermore, in our first season of operation, we are pleased with the performance of Northstar-at-Tahoe, as it is showing improved results to date over the prior year. Northstar is proving to be a great addition to our family of premier resort properties and Tahoe area skiers have embraced the opportunity to ski our two Tahoe resorts on one pass product, which contributed to the strong growth in visitation by season pass holders. We also saw strong revenue growth across our lodging division and are seeing a continued strong booking pace at all of our resorts.”

The publicly traded company, which also owns Heavenly Mountain Resort in Tahoe, closed up 0.45 to $51.95 on Monday.

Mammoth Lakes on brink of financial ruin

By Louis Sahagun, Los Angeles Times

MAMMOTH LAKES — An appellate court decision upholding a $30-million judgment against this High Sierra ski resort has left civic leaders scrambling to avoid financial catastrophe.



Residents reacted bitterly to the breach-of-contract judgment, blaming the town of Mammoth Lake's five-member council and its staffers for the fiscal dilemma that has overshadowed the snowiest winter in memory in the scenic Mono County community of 7,500 year-round residents, situated about 300 miles north of Los Angeles on Highway 395.

Facing a judgment roughly twice the size of the town's annual operating budget, the Town Council last week retained a law firm that specializes in appellate litigation and also is developing settlement negotiation options, seeking legal advice on municipal bankruptcy and studying controversial proposals to raise taxes and make cuts in basic services to pay off the judgment, which bears a 7 percent annual interest rate.

Read the whole story

Lecture about Lake Tahoe

Explore Tahoe Winter Speaker Series continues with “Fibs, Fakes, and Falsehoods ~ Mistaken Tahoe.” Learn what is fact and what is fiction when David Antonucci, author and speaker, presents the answers to many myths and questions about Lake Tahoe.

The presentation will be Jan. 13 at 6pm at Explore Tahoe Vistor Center located in the Heavenly Village at 4114 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe.

Special rate in the parking garage $5 flat rate after 4pm. Refreshments will be provided and a $5 donation is requested. Call (530) 542.4637 for more information.