New breed of horse race betting

By Ari Levi, Bloomberg News

Betfair Group PLC, a British online-gambling company, is wagering that it can revitalize California's slumping horse-racing industry.

The London company, which has spent a decade bringing legal sports betting to the Web, set its sights on California after the state passed a bill in September allowing horse betting through online exchanges.

Betfair has opened an office in San Francisco, where it's likely to more than quadruple its workforce next year to about 100, said Stephen Burn, the company's global director of racing. California's law, the first in the nation to legalize so-called exchange wagering, takes effect in May 2012.

"There's potentially massive upside there for us," said Burn, 48, who moved to the state from England a year ago. "We don't share the doom and gloom that other people have been coming up with about U.S. horse racing."

Read the whole story

Reid embraces House version of DREAM Act

By Erin Kelly, Gannett News Service

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Senate on Thursday postponed until next week a vote on the DREAM Act, which would allow young immigrants brought to this country illegally as children to earn legal status if they attend college or serve in the U.S. military.

The Senate had been scheduled to vote on its version of the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act on Thursday morning. But U.S. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., announced that he wanted to scrap the Senate version in favor of a different version passed Wednesday night by the U.S. House.

Wednesday's vote was the first time the House has approved the DREAM Act in the 10 years since the legislation was first introduced in early 2001.

Now, if Reid manages to wrangle enough votes for the bill, it can go straight to Democratic President Barack Obama for his signature instead of having to go back to the House.

Reid won a 59-40 vote Thursday to table the Senate version of the bill.

Read the whole story

El Dorado County terminates another community service officer

By Carlos Alcalá, Sacramento Bee

Jona Scher, an El Dorado Sheriff's Office community services

officer, was served with a notice of intent to terminate employment on Thursday, tantamount to being fired.

Scher is the third employee of the Sheriff's Office served with a termination notice in a week. Each of them is a plaintiff in lawsuits against the department filed in summer.

Scher and her attorney were not available for comment, but one of her co-plaintiffs characterized the firing as a "form of harassment," designed to hurt the women before the holidays.

Read the whole story

Optimist tree lot in S. Tahoe turning into holiday mart

The community is invited to buy a tree and shop for goodies to go under the tree at the Christmas in Tahoe: the Christ Kindle Mart.

The Optimist Club of South Lake Tahoe and the South Tahoe Chamber of Commerce are partners in this project.

In addition to the Optimist tree lot, Santa, and music, many local businesses will be at the Christ Kindle Mart offering special gifts.

Visit the tents of the Boys & Girls Club of Lake Tahoe, Napa Auto Parts, The Sportsman, Overland Meat, Sugar Pine Bakery, Steamers, Free Bird, South Tahoe Chamber of Commerce, Business by Referral group, Tahoe Best Friends and more.

The Santa House will be available courtesy of the South Lake Tahoe Parks and Recreation Department.

The event is Dec. 10th from 3-9pm and Dec. 11 from 11am-9pm at the Optimist Tree Lot on Lake Tahoe Boulevard near El Dorado Beach.

The Optimist Club donates to youth groups on the South Shore. All proceeds will go to help the community.

For additional information, call (530) 544.7412.

Christmas in Tahoe: the Christ Kindle Mart

The community is invited to buy a tree and shop for goodies to go under the tree at the Christmas in Tahoe: the Christ Kindle Mart.

The Optimist Club of South Lake Tahoe and the South Tahoe Chamber of Commerce are partners in this project.

In addition to the Optimist tree lot, Santa, and music, many local businesses will be at the Christ Kindle Mart offering special gifts.

Visit the tents of the Boys & Girls Club of Lake Tahoe, Napa Auto Parts, The Sportsman, Overland Meat, Sugar Pine Bakery, Steamers, Free Bird, South Tahoe Chamber of Commerce, Business by Referral group, Tahoe Best Friends and more.

The Santa House will be available courtesy of the South Lake Tahoe Parks and Recreation Department.

The event is Dec. 10th from 3-9pm and Dec. 11 from 11am-9pm at the Optimist Tree Lot on Lake Tahoe Boulevard near El Dorado Beach.

The Optimist Club donates to youth groups on the South Shore. All proceeds will go to help the community.

For additional information, call (530) 544.7412.

Ski report: Homewood, Tahoe Donner open today



Homewood Mountain Resort and Tahoe Donner Ski Area open today.

Winds – again – may hamper operations on the upper parts of some resorts today.

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

Mammoth's Mitrani second in halfpipe in qualifying round

By Lindsey Sine, U.S. Snowboarding

COPPER MOUNTAIN, Colo. – Halfpipe athletes from around the globe were right back at home Thursday as they dropped into the qualification rounds of the Visa U.S. Halfpipe Grand Prix

at Copper Mountain in Colorado. And none other than Olympic gold and bronze medalist Kelly Clark (Mount Snow, Vt.) was back in top form, taking the top qualification spot for the ladies.

“I qualified first for finals, which is always a great way to start the year. I’m really looking forward to Saturday, there’s a lot of great riding out there and I feel like it’s going to be a good event,” Clark said.

The hafpipe was full of energy as the sport makes its return to competition for a new winter season following an incredible Olympic year.

Clark was the leader for three of her U.S. teammates, including Kaitlyn Farrington (Sun Valley, Idaho) who had a breakthrough string of events to bump up to the Pro Team, and Ellery Hollingsworth (Stratton Mountain, Vt.), who’s no stranger herself to the Grand Prix podium.

“The pipe was really good today better than it has been and it was good to get out there and do the best quail of the season everyone was ripping,” Hollingsworth said.

Norway’s Torre-V. Holvik took the men’s first spot, followed by Luke Mitrani (Mammoth) in the second spot. Colorado’s own Broc Waring (Edwards, Colo.) had a killer performance against a tough field to come in the third qualification spot.

“I’m pumped. I’ve been riding well and it’s so good to land a solid run,” Waring said. “It gives me some extra confidence beginning the competition year like this. It’s the right way to kick it off and hopefully I can bring in the same thing in the finals.”

The snowboarding continues Saturday with men’s and women’s finals at 11:30am.

Offial Results, 2011 Visa U.S. Halfpipe Grand Prix, Copper

Mountain, Colo., Snowboard Qualifications

Men

1. Tore-V. Holvik, Norway, 26.90

2. Luke Mitrani, Mammoth, CA, 26.80

3. Broc Waring, Edwards, CO, 26.70

4. Greg Bretz, Mammoth, CA, 26.40

5. Brett Esser, Breckenridge, CO, 26.20

6. Louie Vito, Sandy, UT, 25.60

7. Zack Black, Breckenridge, CO, 25.30

8. Scotty Lago, Seabrook, NH, 25.00

9. Kohei Kudo, Japan, 24.90

10. Kosuke Hosokawa, Japan, 24.60

11. Nathan Johnstone, Australia, 24.40

12. Ben Farrow, Mount Holly, VT, 24.30

13. JJ Thomas, Golden, CO, 23.90

14. Kazuumi Fujita, Japan, 23.50

15. Matt Ladley, Steamboat Springs, CO, 23.30

16. Spencer Shaw, Stratton, VT, 23.20

Women

1. Kelly Clark, Mt. Snow, VT, 27.90

2. Kaitlyn Farrington, Sun Valley, ID, 26.20

3. Ellery Hollingsworth, Stratton Mountain, VT, 25.70

4. Queralt Castellet, Spain, 25.30

5. Soko Yamaoka, Japan, 24.40

6. Rana Okada, Japan, 24.30

7. Holly Crawford, Australia, 23.90

8. Sarah Conrad, Canada, 23.60

Budget gifts: Original pottery by local artist

Publisher's note: ***Lake Tahoe News is looking for ideas for gifts that cost less than $20 to share with readers. Read this for details.***



South Shore potter Barbara Wesson has small horsehair raku vases for sale for less than $20, as well as a few planter pots in that price range.

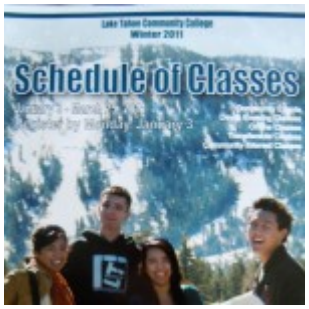


She describes her website as a bit rough, but several items are on it. Wesson may also be reached by calling (530) 577.2729.

LTCC does 180 on policy regarding printing schedule

By Kathryn Reed

Lake Tahoe Community College has reversed its policy regarding mailing quarterly class schedules.



In what was touted as a green initiative in terms of money and fewer trees being destroyed is no longer the direction the two-year institution is pursuing.

Tom Greene, who became vice president of Academic Affairs and Student Services at the South Lake Tahoe college after the policy was in place for fall quarter, initiated the reversal.

“Ethically speaking it’s important,” Greene said of mailing the schedules. “It doesn’t feel right not to. It’s hard to quantify the access barrier it may have created.”

Part of the mandate of California community colleges is to provide access to all. Greene said a significant segment of the South Shore does not have computer access, and therefore is cut off from knowing course offerings without it being printed.

But if people can get to the college, then they have computer access. Libraries also have computers.

The college printed the fall schedule, but it was only available at the college.

When it was announced in August this would be the new policy, an annual savings of $10,000 was proclaimed. Starting with fall the schedule was half the number of pages as previous

ones because course descriptions were eliminated.

The printing cost for the fall schedule was a little more than $2,900. The run for winter quarter was about $4,300 because of printing enough to mail to people living in California. It cost about $1,500 to mail them.

It is not possible to discern if the lack of mailed schedules impacted enrollment for fall quarter. Part-time enrollment is down, but that could be because fewer classes are being offered per state mandates that adult community members would take. Full-time enrollment is up, which has made overall enrollment rates be higher.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• The Black Bear Inn in South Lake Tahoe is serving dinner Wednesday-Sunday. Reservations are mandatory.

• Red Hut Café at Ski Run Boulevard is offering dinner Thursday-Friday-Saturday.

• Bona Fide Books is seeking short fiction and nonfiction selections of 500 words or less for a Tahoe anthology. Subjects may range from the gritty to the sublime. Submissions will be open Jan. 1 through May 1. Send work to submissions@bonafidebooks.com or P.O. Box 550278, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96155.

• The Sierra Ballet Theatre Company will be performing

Madeline’s Christmas at MontBleu in Stateline on Dec. 17 and Dec. 18 at 7pm.

• The Iron Girl triathlon is coming back to the South Shore for a second year. It will be in September again.

• Dirk Yuricich is having an open house Dec. 11-12 from noon-5pm at the gallery at 171 Shady Lane, Stateline.