Olympic Valley skier named U.S. super G champion

By Elizabeth Karam, USSA

LAKE PLACID – Travis Ganong (Olympic Valley, CA) and Keely Kelleher (Big Sky, MT) were crowned 2010 Visa U.S. Super G Champions on Saturday at Whiteface Mountain in Lake Placid. Ganong and Kelleher both led the pack from starting bib one.

U.S. Championships bring together top athletes from national team and ski clubs from across the states to race for the honor of being the best racer in the U.S.

Ganong clinched his second U.S. Championship title for the 2010 season on Saturday, winning both the downhill, which was in February at Aspen, and the super G. Ganong led the field by nearly a second with 2010 Olympic Alpine Team member Will Brandenburg (Spokane, WA) in second, followed by Warner Nickerson (Gilford, NH) in third.

“It’s warm out here, so there’s definitely an advantage of running first. When it’s like that, the track is smooth,” explained Ganong. “I skied pretty well, I nailed all of my marks. It was fun.”

On the women’s side Kelleher laid down the fastest time running first to clinch the win, marking her first U.S. title. Kelleher was followed by teammate and 2010 Olympic Alpine Team member, Chelsea Marshall (Pittsfield, VT) in second. Laurenne Ross (Klamath Falls, OR) rounded out the podium in third.

The men and women will race slalom on Sunday.

2010 Visa U.S. Alpine Championships Lake Placid, March 20
Super G

Men

1. Travis Ganong, Olympic Valley, CA, 1:05.34

2. Will Brandenburg, Spokane, WA, 1:06.20

3. Warner Nickerson, Gilford, NH, 1:06.42

4. Tim Jitloff, Reno, NV, 1:06.44

5. Tommy Ford, Bend, OR, 1:06.73 1:06.74

Women

1. Keely Kelleher, Big Sky, MT, 1:06.31

2. Chelsea Marshall, Pittsfield, VT, 1:06.67

3. Laurenne Ross, Klamath Falls, OR, 1:06.70

4. Katie Hitchcock, Sacramento, CA, 1:06.85

5. Megan McJames, Park City, UT, 1:06.93

USFS seeks second round of comments on Heavenly's plans

The U.S. Forest Service is seeking comment on an environmental assessment for proposed capital improvements at Heavenly Mountain Resort, the second round of review for this proposal.

Initial comments primarily supported the proposed improvements. There are no major changes from the proposal originally released for review.The projects, which include a new lodge, new runs and replacement of an existing lift are consistent with the improvements identified in Heavenly's accepted Master Plan Amendment. If approved, the resort would

implement these projects over the next few years.

Heavenly is proposing to build a new lodge with 488 indoor seats near the top of the gondola. This would be a single-story building with a simple shed roof providing self-service dining, a small bar, open seating and restrooms. The building would cover 14,750 square feet and have a maximum height of 39 feet. The new lodge would also feature a 4,320-foot poured-in-place concrete patio for outdoor dining.

Other than a 300-foot delivery spur from the existence maintenance road, no new roads would be needed to construct or operate the lodge. The proposal calls for relocating a 300-f00t spur of an existing maintenance road.

Heavenly plans to situate the lodge in an already disturbed site, minimizing the need to remove trees for construction. To accommodate the new lodge, Heavenly would relocate the Magic Carpet ski school conveyor lift and move the “Umbrella Bar” from the top of the Gondola to Snow Beach on the California side, requiring the pouring of new concrete footings and running utilities to the site.

The resort is also proposing to replace the Galaxy fix-grip double chairlift with a new high-speed detachable lift. The alignment and terminal locations would be the same. Replacing the lift would require widening the lift corridor to a maximum of 33 feet, which would necessitate removing some trees.

Four new runs would increase the skiable terrain served by the faster lift. The proposal includes installing below-ground snowmaking infrastructure for these new runs, as well as the two existing runs. Temporary ground disturbance would result from installation of snowmaking lines, but these areas would be promptly restabilized and revegetated. The Galaxy runs are located outside the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency’s boundary.

A final element of the proposal would implement the Easy Street Run Hazard Reduction prescription on a section of the

California Trail. This prescription, named for the trail on which it was initially implemented, would be used to carefully and selectively reduce the height of natural obstacles such as boulders and felled trees, minimizing the amount of snow required to cover the trail. The prescription is designed to remove large obstacles while keeping ground cover intact to avoid additional runoff, sedimentation and erosion. A buffer zone would protect Tahoe draba (a sensitive plant species). This prescription would also apply to the new runs served by the Galaxy lift.

The full proposal is available for viewing on the LTBMU website by visiting Heavenly Mountain Resort 2010 Capital Projects. Written, facsimile, hand-delivered, oral, and electronic comments concerning this action will be accepted until April 12.

For more information, contact Matt Dickinson, (530) 543.2769.

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14 Tahoe forest fuels projects approved by state agency

By Kathryn Reed

Nearly $1 million was allocated by the California Tahoe Conservancy board to reduce forest fuels, improve habitat and forest restoration.

In that dollar amount is $200,000 to finish work in the Angora Fire area on CTC land. This includes the urban lots as well as 30 acres the state owns. Many of the trees that were planted

after the devastating June 2007 fire have died.



Work in the Angora burn area will take place this summer. Photo/Kathryn Reed

More trees will be planted, plus the money will pay for two years of monitoring the revegetation project.

When it comes to thinning of the forest, the CTC has seven areas targeted on the South Shore, four on the West Shore and three on the North Shore that will be treated this year. More than 400 acres will be treated.

It costs about $3,500 to treat one acre.

The projects that were approved on Thursday by the Conservancy board will be paid for with federal and state money that has already been secured.

The objectives of the plane are to: enhance the health of forest resources, preserve water quality, enhance wildlife habitat, and provide for public safety and protection of property.

â€œFire frequency, intensity, severity, and seasonality have a great impact on forest vegetation,â€ the staff report says. â€œStudies of fire frequency dating back hundreds of years,

known as the fire return interval, have shown that each acre of conifer and ponderosa pine forest burns on an average of every 11 to 15 years. In contra, it may now be almost 200 years before each acre of this forest type burns as a result of fire suppression causing forest fuels to continue to accumulate.â€

The Conservancy is hoping the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act, which is percolating in Washington for reauthorization by Congress, will be approved. In it is millions of dollars dedicated to forest fuels reduction throughout the basin in both states.

The Conservancy has spent about $1 million on average per year during the last decade on forest fuels management.

Ski resort focuses energy on reducing consumption

By Daniel Gross, Newsweek

The balmy weather in Vancouver, which delayed some of the Olympic downhill events, highlights the danger warmer winters pose to ski resorts. The situation isn’t as dire in the higher-elevation resorts of the Rockies, however. But these large businessesâ€”think of the Trapp Family Lodge on steroidsâ€”still worry that a warming planet could melt their businesses.

Vail, the home base of gold medalist Lindsey Vonn, where I spent a chunk of a recent week desperately trying to maintain my balance, is the largest single ski area in the United States: 32 lifts, 198 trails, 63 miles of snowmaking pipe, and

six on-mountain restaurants. Its parent company, Vail Resorts, which has a $1.3 billion market value, has a lot to lose from climate change, and a lot to gain from cutting energy use. The company spent about $27 million in energy in 2009.

Read the whole story

El Dorado, Placer county killers up for parole

By Sacramento Bee

Wife killers, one from Placer County and one from El Dorado County, are scheduled for parole hearings within the next two weeks.

Here is the list of Sacramento area convicts serving life sentences who are due hearings by the end of the month:

-March 23, Ronald LeRoy Koehler, 66, California Men’s Colony.

A Placer County Superior Court judge sentenced Koehler to life in prison in June 1982 for murdering his wife, whose body was found in September 1978, a few weeks after the couple separated, according to records and Bee reports.

Read the whole story

Rail jam at MontBleu

Salomon Snowboards will host the Salomon Backyard Bang rail jam at Stateline’s MontBleu Casino on March 27.

The event will feature Tahoeâ€™s elite local snowboarding athletes competing for $2,000.

The Salomon Backyard Bang will be in the MontBleu parking lot under the lights by the marquee.

The event is invite-only and limited to 30 competitors. There will be a 30foot triple rail feature.

There will also be a beer garden, tent village and disc jockey.

Practice will begin at 4:30pm, with the event kicking-off at 5pm. At 6:30pm 30 competitors will be cut to 10 and awards will begin at 7:15pm.

Immediately following the event Orange County based prog-emo band Thrice will perform at the MontBleu Showroom. Opening acts include Kandi Coded, featuring Jamie Lynn, and local metal band I.Dee.Kay. A special presentation of the â€œI AM SNOWBOARDINGâ€ art project in honor of Jeff Anderson will be displayed in the showroom for viewing featuring art by Mike Parillo, Jamie Lynn, Mark â€œGonzâ€ Gonzales, RYN o, Adam Haynes, Ben Brough, Michael Jager, Jeff Curtes and more.

Doors open at 8pm and tickets are available at the MontBleu box office in advance for $28. Ticket price includes access to the after party at Blu nightclub featuring DJ Greyboy.

South Tahoe woman competes in NCAA swimming championships

By Whitworth University

MINNEAPOLIS – Rory Buck raced to the highest individual finish of the meet to date for Whitworth University, finishing third in the 100-yard breaststroke during the second day of the 2010 NCAA Division III Swimming and Diving Championships hosted by Beloit College and The College of Wooster at the University of Minnesota Aquatic Center.

Rory Buck (So., Dubai, U.A.E.) raced to a time of 55.25 in the championship finals of the men's 100-yard breaststroke to finish third. His time not only shattered his own previous school mark of 57.23, he broke the Northwest Conference record of 55.70 formerly held by Paul Hughes of Puget Sound.

In the night's final event the Whitworth women finished in eighth place in the 800-yard freestyle relay with a new school and NWC record of 7:32.54. The previous record in both was 7:38.59 set in February of 2009. The Pirates' relay order was: Ashley Lecoq (Jr., Renton, Wash.), Jennifer Benson (So., Phoenix, Ariz.), Christine DeHaven (Jr., Gig Harbor, Wash.) and Natalie Turner (Sr., South Lake Tahoe, Calif.).

Read the whole story

Dugard case brings changes to

how state monitors sex offenders

By Sam Stanton, Sacramento Bee

California corrections officials have increased scrutiny of paroled sex offenders, a move that follows years of failures in how Phillip Garrido, now accused in the kidnapping of Jaycee Lee Dugard, was monitored.

A policy that took effect Thursday calls for parole agents to check records of GPS tracking for offenders who are on “passive” monitoring.

Those offenders wear GPS monitoring devices. Previously, the records of their whereabouts were checked only if a crime had been committed or questions arose about an offender’s movements, said corrections spokesman Oscar Hidalgo.

Read the whole story

REELcomp adds skateboarder ambassador

REELcomp.com of Incline Villages hopes for a major uplift to its one-of-a-kind Skate Community with the addition of its newest ambassador, skateboarder Aaron “AA” Astorga.

REELcomp.com is committed to providing a rich experience to its membership in the snow, skate, surf and ski communities and is established as the premier site to upload original footage, participate in online competitions and watch popular

live event webcasts. REELcomp.com’s ambassador program adds to the sites rich community experience providing exclusive content and access to members and providing all involved added exposure in the industry.

“Aaron brings years of professional skateboarding, sponsors, endorsements and contacts in the skateboarding industry,” said Bob Witty, REELcomp CEO, said in a press release. “We want to create the ultimate user experience for the skateboarding community and we believe Aaron is the best athlete to take on the responsibility.”

Astorga said in a statement, “The REELcomp team has given me complete creative freedom in the skateboard community to create something world class. I will create incredible contests, feature new riders, photographers, lifestyles and artists in the skateboard community. REELcomp is an amazing platform that will be connecting the world with their favorite riders and the world’s best action sports athletes and personalities.”

Further information on REELcomp click here.

Lake Tahoe ski report, March 20

It’s the first day of spring and it will feel like it on the slopes today. Here is the ski report from Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.