Tangible Olympic memories for sale

By Kathryn Reed

WHISTLER, British Columbia – Shopping probably should be added as an Olympic sport. Merchandising already seems to be one.

It's a bit overwhelming all the trinkets that can be purchased in British Columbia.



Olympic pins could drain a person's wallet. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Pins have been traded at several Olympics. It's hard to know why they need to be traded when nearly every store in Whistler was selling them before the Games began. Maybe they are sold-out now that the Olympics are halfway over.

Some pins are for an individual event. Some have a single flag representing a specific country. Many have the U.S. and Canadian flags.

Most cost about $8.

For those ordering a bottle of wine at the Wildflower restaurant at Fairmont Chateau Whistler a pin is given to all

those imbibing – at least that was the case before the Games started.

Stuffed versions of the three official and one unofficial Olympic mascot are everywhere.



Olympic mascots are everywhere in Whistler. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Quatchi is a young Sasquatch, also known as the legendary Bigfoot, from the Pacific Northwest forests. Miga is a sea bear that lives off the British Columbia coast. Sumi is an animal spirit displaying legendary traits. Mukmuk, the unofficial mascot, is a marmot from Vancouver.



All things Olympian are for sale. Photo/Susan Wood

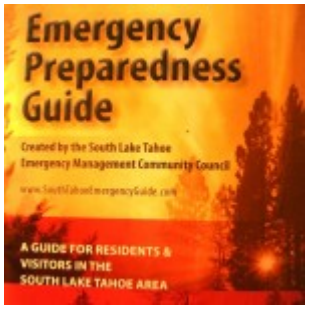
Even though Olympic goods ranging from clothing to all kinds of drinking glasses to postcards are in many of the stores, there's a store in Whistler that only sells Olympic merchandise.

Lake Tahoe ski report, Feb. 21



It's a powder day. A couple inches of snow fell at the lake, so more will be on the slopes. Here is the ski report from Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.

Emergency guide designed specifically for Tahoe residents



By Kathryn Reed

What would you take in an emergency? Who would you call? Where would you meet? What happens if all your contacts are on your computer and it's not with you or your cell phone doesn't work

or the battery dies?

Those are just some of the questions the “Emergency Preparedness Guide” makes people think about.

The South Lake Tahoe Emergency Management Community Council created the free 32-page document. The council is a mix of emergency responders from El Dorado, Douglas and Alpine counties.

“We talked about it before the (2007) Angora Fire. The fire gave us the drive to get it done,” Darcie Carpenter, chairwoman of the council who is also the director of Emergency Management and Infection Control for Barton HealthCare System, said of the guide. “We wrote it so the material would not be outdated tomorrow.”

She does hope it could be updated every five years to make sure things are current. Former El Dorado County Sheriff Jeff Neves’ introductory page outdates it because he is no longer in office.

A slew of people were involved in the project. Experts in a particular field were responsible for suggesting what to do in an emergency. For example, it was school officials helping to write about what happens in an emergency if school is in session. It was South Tahoe Public Utility District talking about the precautions to take before tragedy strikes in regards to water issues.

It’s not a generic guide, but it’s not too detailed either to be something people wouldn’t read or do when it comes to the checklists.

“The risks here are specific to Tahoe,” Carpenter said.

Wildland fires, floods, air quality and extreme cold weather are some the issues in the guide

A list of documents that should be able to be retrieved

quickly is listed. They range from passports to wills to immunization records.

The guide lists what should be assembled for a disaster preparedness kit. In part this includes water, an extra pair of glasses, phone numbers, sanitary supplies and cash.

Something that is often not talked about when it comes to emergencies is what to do if you are work. One entry says, “Do not rely on electronic lists, direct-dial phone numbers or computer organizers that may not work in an emergency.” Thus the need to print some of that information before disaster strikes.

The council printed 14,000 copies of the guide. The Red Cross, one of the partners in the project, has distributed guides out at schools. The council will be handing them out at various community events and they are available for free at South Shore fire stations.

State grants helped pay for the printing as well as a slew of sponsors who are listed in the guide.

9-week grief counseling class starts in March

In addition to Barton Hospiceâ€™s ongoing â€œMemory Dish Bereavement Groupsâ€ that meet twice monthly, there will be a nine session focused group called â€œUnderstanding Your Griefâ€ beginning March 3.

â€œUnderstanding Your Griefâ€ is sponsored and facilitated by Barton Hospice.

Pre-registration is required and the group will be limited to 10 people. After the second session, registration will be closed.

â€œUnderstanding Your Griefâ€ is for anyone who has experienced the death of a loved one.

Dates of the nine sessions are March 3, March 17, March 31, April 14, April 28, May 12, May 26, June 9 and June 23.

The group will meet at the Barton Foundation Office, 2092 Lake Tahoe Blvd., Suite 600, South Lake Tahoe.

For more information or to register, call Phillipsen at (775) 220.0342 or Gina Bemis at (530) 543.5591.

6-week caregiver classes start in April

A series of six classes is designed to provide instruction and support for caregivers who are or plan to care for a family member or friend 60 years of age or greater.

Classes will be for six weeks on Mondays beginning April 5. They will be from 1-3pm at Embassy Suites, 4130 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe. Classes are free.

To register, call El Dorado County Department of Human Services Family Caregiver Support Program at (530) 621.6151.

Forethought for the future

By Roxanne Rain

Now that we have entered a new era, a new decade, maybe it;s time to readdress the “hole” at Stateline and begin to use logic and reality, rather than archaic mundane concepts like a Convention Center.

I recently read on *Lake Tahoe News* that studies were performed that indicate a Convention Center would do well here. Most statistics can be skewed to give the desired outcome. The questions are: â€œWho wants the Convention Center? Who did they pay to have those statistics rendered to their specs? Why is this town beating a dead horse?

The enormous Convention Center in Reno doesn’t stay booked. In an economy like this, what makes anyone think Tahoe can keep one booked? The casinos are barely surviving, and they have convention centers that are never fully booked. Where is the logic?

When did the City Council become “The Planners” and what qualifies them? That’s not their job. They should focus on serving the town’s interests and current issues. Leave master designing to experienced entities.

I have lived in this town for 22 years, and the Convention Center is not a popular idea. The hole is better left in the hands of wealthy visionaries such as Steve Winn or Donald Trump for example. Accomplished moguls with a track record who have built and designed unique successful monuments and wonderlands. Let someone or some corporation with vision and power get the job done.

It’s time for the City Council to step aside and allow vision, intent and purpose to take over. It would be spectacular if “We the People” of this town sent all of our ideas about what we would like to see happen to a specific email address, i.e.: the hole@___.com, and then allow a committee to sift through and put together a model which incorporates the best ideas into a state-of-the-art multi-faceted architectural phenomenon.

Why not create a landmark, a fabulous monumental structure that stands out on its own. Something that brings people from all over the world just to see it, like the pyramids in Egypt, or the more modern Luxor. Why not get grandiose and do something big and special, get original and create an eighth Wonder of the World. Attach a zipline from the top of Heavenly continuing onto the top of the new structure, ending with a dive into the lake. Add some zest and zeal for the adventuresome thrill-seekers. Give the world something to come see and talk about that is glorious and multi-functional.

Now that’s what I’m talkin’ about, and I declare a finder’s fee for the explicit idea.

Commission a special committee to collect ideas from the people of the town and the Internet. Find and explore some of the most exciting concepts and ideas, then hire a new age avant-garde firm, with a track record, to implement it. I would be happy to contribute to such a lofty creative adventure, melding architecture and art. Why settle for a boring mundane archaic idea when the sky is really the limit? If you do it right, people would want to come and hold meetings there, convention center or not. Convention rooms could be one aspect of the facility’s function.

A decade ago, I wrote an article about boosting the economy by allowing a topless club to exist, which generates enormous income, and brings in more businessmen, who currently choose Reno as a destination point, because of the option to indulge

in the strip club atmosphere. That is not just my opinion, but fact. I have taken several calls from gentlemen seeking a topless club venue, for which I explain that we are an adult entertainment agency who sends entertainers out. Consequently, they have left Tahoe behind, chartered a bus to Reno, and spent their money elsewhere. There is no doubt they patronized other vendors in Reno as well, such as restaurants, casinos, specialty shops, etc. The point is they did not spend their money here.

To address the moralists, strip clubs are similar to churches in that no one forces anyone to attend. People go of their own volition, seeking the experiences they themselves choose. Strip clubs don't bring in bad elements; bad elements congregate where they are able to thrive.

I have heard and read all the hype about drug dealing and prostitution associated with topless clubs. That element goes on across the globe, and will continue to go on no matter what. Strip clubs will only attract that element if those in charge (owners, managers) partake and perpetuate it. Good security, and upscale environment can deter undesirables. It's time to stop playing judge and watchdog to the detriment of our economy. Let change unfold and flow as it naturally does. Let people with vision, intent, and purpose thrive and go forth.

I mentioned how hind sighted it was to try to stop indigenous American Indians from opening casinos in Shingle Springs (an entirely different community) when Red Hawk was in the planning stages, and rather focus on what we can do here to bring more people.

Well, I hate to observe, a decade later, the same mistakes are being made. Wake up and embrace change, forget the Convention Center and do Tahoe a favor, allow fresh creative influences to flourish.

And what about the Horizon Casino? I have heard of people turning buildings into new green producing projects that bring jobs to the unemployed. Wouldn’t it be spectacular if Heavenly did something for the children and created slide shoots in the summer from the top of the mountain to the base? They could use rope, instead of permanent structures, to implement a unique slide park for the kids. How cool would that be?

What if the whole zone from the hole to the Horizon became one huge monumental functional facility as well as an amusement facility for children? Let’s bring in some visionaries with innovative ideas and money to back them, then our town might have viable hope.

Transportation is another issue. I went to several city planning meetings where our group pushed for a monorail system that started in Meyers, and continued down the highway and Pioneer Trail all the way to Stateline, including all the main arteries (thoroughfares) of town. What a great vision. Do you think that beautiful concept got any airplay? People could park at a designated lot in Meyers and ride the rail. That would cut down on traffic, eliminate DUIs, and restore the social fabric of the community.

What a concept, why don’t intelligent things happen? Is it per chance we don’t think about the long-term benefits due to narrow-minded scope, or are we paralyzed by our own system that now serves itself rather than “We the People”?

Roxanne Rain is a resident of South Lake Tahoe.

Mancuso out of medal contention in super G



By Matthew Piper, USSA

WHISTLER, British Columbia – It wasn't another gold, but Lindsey Vonn (Vail, CO) earned her second Olympic medal with a gutsy bronze in Saturday's super G. Austria's Andrea Fischbacher sped down in the day's fastest time, while Slovenia's Tina Maze edged out Vonn for the silver.

Vonn, who has already clinched the 2010 World Cup super G discipline title with two races remaining, raced from the 17th spot and cruised to more than a half-second advantage over the field. She lost critical tenths on the bottom section, however, and Fischbacher held onto a more aggressive line two spots later for a .74-second lead.

"When I came down to the finish and saw No. 1 next to my name, I thought 'Hopefully, this is another gold medal,'" she said. "Obviously, that wasn't the case, but I did my best, and I'm definitely very, very proud of another Olympic medal.

Vonn, who won gold in the World Championship downhill and super G a year ago, came into Vancouver with hopes for a medal and now has downhill gold and super G bronze.

"I'm a double Olympic medalist, and that's a pretty cool thing to be able to say, she said. "I obviously would have loved to have a gold medal today, but Olympic medals are never very easy to come by."

Julia Mancuso (Olympic Valley, CA) for a while seemed poised to collect her third medal of these Games after storming out

of the gate first for a lead that held through 12 skiers until Germany’s Maria Reisch beat her out by .04 seconds.

Mancuso lost time on a tricky corner in the Frog Bank. In Wednesday’s downhill (where she won silver), the banking of the hill carried racers through the turn , and Mancuso brought too much speed into the section.

“It surprised me a lot,” she said. “I thought it would be similar to the downhill, where the bank would take you around. But the bank didn’t take you around, it compressed you so it shot you on your tails.”

She somehow stayed on her feet through a sweeping left turn in the backseat, but Mancuso got sucked low and lost time. Still, despite that mistake, flat light, and a challenging start position, she finished just 0.62 seconds out of the medals.

“I felt my run was strong,” Mancuso said. “It was that mistake. Without that mistake, I think I would have been in there, even without the light.

“When I watched Maria’s run and she beat me by four-hundredths, I was bummed. But she beat me by a second in the section I made my mistake.”

Nonetheless, Mancuso owns the most medals ever by a U.S. woman after adding silvers in downhill and super combined to her giant slalom gold in Torino.

“I have nothing to lose,” she said. “I’m really, really proud of my Olympic career so far â€“ a gold and two silvers. I’m not going into the GS ranked the best, but I’ve been training well and skiing really well. And I’m excited to go in there and give my best.”

Leanne Smith (Conway, NH) was 18th for a solid finish in her first Olympic super G, while Chelsea Marshall’s (Pittsfield, VT) Games debut ended suddenly when she took out a gate in the

challenging Frog Bank and did not finish.

Mancuso and Vonn will try to add to the U.S. Alpine Ski Team's medal count when they take back to Franz's Run for the giant slalom on Wednesday.

"I don't have any regrets on any of my races here," Vonn said. "I definitely gave it everything I had every day. Especially on super G, it's difficult. If you look back, you can always find places where you could have made up time, but having only one inspection and no training runs, it's difficult to always know how aggressive you can ski and how the line is going to run and what the speed is going to be. Given the circumstances – a lot of girls had trouble today – and given everything, I think today was a really solid result."

2010 Winter Olympic Games, Feb. 20, Women's Super G

Gold – Andrea Fischbacher, Austria, 1:20.14

Silver – Tina Maze, Slovenia, 1:20.63

Bronze – Lindsey Vonn, Vail, CO, 1:20.88

4. Johanna Schnarf, Italy, 1:20.99

5. Elisabeth Goergl, Austria, 1:21.14

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9. Julia Mancuso, Olympic Valley, CA, 1:21.50

18. Leanne Smith, Conway, NH, 1:23.05

DNF – Chelsea Marshall, Pittsfield, VT

Carson Valley Arts Council fundraiser

Carson Valley Arts Council is hosting a fundraising event March 17 to help support education outreach to the younger members of our community.

This fun evening of food and entertainment will include social hour, buffet dinner, murder mystery presentation, raffle, and silent auction.

Social hour begins at 5pm in the Shannon Ballroom of the Carson Valley Inn in Minden. The cash bar will have the usual fare as well as the eveningâ€™s special â€œgreenâ€ drink; 100 percent of the proceeds from the â€œgreenâ€ drink will go to CVAC.

During the social hour, there will be time to view and bid on silent auction items, all generously donated by local artists and businesses. Those who canâ€™t make up their minds on an empty stomach will be able to place final bids when dinner is over.

Dinner will be from 6-8:30pm with an Irish-themed buffet dinner of lamb and barley soup; green potato salad; pickled herring; green salad; cucumbers in dilly; fresh fruit; entrees of beef and stout beef casserole; braised pork loin with apples and cider; corned beef and cabbage with horseradish sauce; whiskey mustard baked chicken; smoked lamp chop with roasted Guinness glaze; green peas and pearl onions; carrots, cabbage and butter; rosemary potato pancakes; Cullen’s colcannon; and for dessert deep dish apple pie, shamrock cookies, and Irish almond cake.

During dinner, guests will be challenged to help the talented players of the Carson Valley Community Theatre solve A Murder Most Green. This delightful murder mystery will have guests on

the edge of their seats until the murderer is found. In the meantime, everyone is a suspect.

Raffle drawing will take place after dinner and the deadline for final silent auction bids will be 9pm.

Tickets for the evening are $35 for adults and $25 for children 10 and younger. Seating is limited. Tickets are available on the CVAC website at http://www.cvartscouncil.com; by phone at (775) 782.8207; or in person Monday through Saturday, 10am to 5pm at the CVAC office or Heartstrings both of which are located at 1572 Highway 395 in Gardnerville.

Lake Tahoe ski report, Feb. 20



Winter may be returning to Lake Tahoe for the next couple of days. Here is the ski report from Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.

Kirkwood working out its electrical issues

By Kathryn Reed

Ratepayers are not expected to see a spike in bills as Kirkwood continues to get its power from temporary rented

generators.

Although Mountain Utilities, an arm of Mountain Springs Kirkwood, is suddenly paying for power in a different way because a New Year’s Day fire destroyed the powerhouse, what’s in place now is more efficient so the cost balances out.



Kirkwood Photo/ Kathryn Reed

Insurance issues are still being worked out regarding the fire that knocked out power to the ski resort and all lodging facilities for a couple days.

“There is a high degree of confidence that a new plant can be operational by fall,” said David Likins, CEO for Mountain Springs Kirkwood. MSK also owns Kirkwood Mountain Resort.

Long before the fire, Mountain Utilities had been talking to Kirkwood Meadows Public Utility District about taking over the power operation.

“The terms of the final acquisition have not been resolved. It’s difficult to put a dollar value on it until that transaction is negotiated in final form,” Likins said.

The plan is Mountain Utilities would then dissolve. The 10 employees are likely to work elsewhere for Mountain Springs Kirkwood.

The ski resort will still have to maintain transformers for the chairlifts just like homeowners are responsible for the interior wiring of their homes no matter the electrical

supplier.

Before the fire, the diesel powerhouse was not going to be part of the sale.

Likins said the plan now is to have KMPUD work with Mountain Utilities on creating the new powerhouse, with the idea KMPUD will eventually own and operate it. Eventually, it will be the backup in case power lines go down.

The generators now in place will remain there until the powerhouse is erected. Likins anticipates the permitting process to go smoothly because the land is being used for the same thing.

In March, the draft environment impact report and statement should be released by the U.S. Forest Service and Kirkwood Meadows Public Utility District for the potential authorization of a 50-year special use permit for the construction, use and maintenance of a KMPUD power line connecting the electrical grid near Salt Springs with Kirkwood Meadows.

The line would connect with an existing Pacific Gas & Electric line. The new line would likely be on Eldorado National Forest land.

The final EIR/EIS could be released in October.

KMPUD now provides water and sewer services to the area as well as power to its plant, office building and employee housing off Loop Road in the Kirkwood valley.