Hight, Teter on podium in Mammoth

By Lindsey Sine, USSA

MAMMOTH – Olympic gold medalist Shaun White (Carlsbad, CA) can book a ticket to Vancouver now as he won his second Sprint U.S. Snowboarding Grand Prix competition to lock down his team spot for the Games. White was joined in the winners circle by Olympic Silver medalist Gretchen Bleiler (Aspen, CO) whose win, along with a second place in Copper, brought her a step closer to reaching her Olympic dreams.



Elena Hight

“I’m happy to be on the team and secure that spot. Now I can just work on my stuff and get dialed,” White said. “I was feeling great because I had a second and a first, and that’s pretty strong hold on getting on the team. But a first and a first is guaranteed, so I’m really excited.”

White was followed in second by Louie Vito (Sandy, UT) and JJ Thomas (Golden, CO) in third.

The legend solidified his win in the first run, but when it came to his victory lap he decided it was time to throw something fresh out and nearly landed.

“It’s a double cork McTwist 1080, but that last one I went 1260, so I’m going to have to pick and chose if I want to take it 12 or keep it 10,” White said. “It’s been a trick that’s

been messing with me for a while, but I'm excited to try to put it down in Park City and hopefully at the Games."

And with the pressure off to make the Olympic Team, White's plan is to dial in new tricks and try to have some fun with it.

"It's not that far away. I'm just trying to have fun this time, do my best, and put down heavy runs. Today was a good day, I put down some good stuff and I was holding my best back on that last run," White said. "I feel like if I hang tight and keep riding the way I am, I'm just going to keep getting better and better."

For Vito, two second-place finishes have him closing in on an Olympic spot and, while not solidified yet, he's happy with where he's standing.

"I can't really do much more, I just have to keep riding strong and keep getting better. I hope two seconds get me through, I have another contest and I could get a first, but I'm just going to try to be consistent," Vito said.

Vito put down a double cork, cab double cork, air, backside 9, frontside air for his spot on the podium and he plans to keep upping the ante to make it to the Games.

"I landed, I got a top three. That's all I really wanted and all I could hope for. Everyone's riding well and I have to keep stepping it up and I'm hoping for the best and what gets me to Vancouver," Vito said.

For Bleiler, the win was a breath of fresh air, especially as she accomplished it by landing a run that was new to her competition repertoire.

"I feel awesome. This whole season I've just been trying to figure out a run for myself, and today I switched it up completely and figured out a run that I've never done before,

and it worked for me," Bleiler said. "It feels really good to win today and I feel so much more confident."

The frontside 9, backside 5, crippler 720, cab 7, strainght air also helps edge Bleiler closer to Vancouver, which has the rider feeling solid.

"With a win today and a second in Copper, I'm pretty good right now. I'm excited to go back to the Olympics and represent our country in women's snowboarding," Bleiler said.

As for her game plan to get there, it involves grabbing and air.

"I am looking to just improve on that run and make sure the 9 is grabbed all the way around. I'm also going to keep working on my amplitude and the cab 7," Bleiler said.

Following Bleiler up in the second spot was 2006 Olympian Elena Hight (South Lake Tahoe, CA), who said the Olympics seem closer now that she's made her mark on the podium.

"I'm really happy about today. Making the podium makes the Olympics seem much more real. There's a lot of pressure on this year, but I'm just stoked to be doing well, having fun, and I'm looking forward to Park City," Hight said.

Hight threw out back to back 9s, which she says sets her apart in her riding style.

"The judges are always looking for amplitude and people stepping it up in different ways. Amplitude has never been my strongest point, but I've been spinning 9s for a long time," Hight said. "I learned them when I was pretty young, so they're a really solid easy trick for me. It's something no one else does and it's nice to go out there and land a run no one has."

Hight was followed in third by 2006 Olympic gold medalist Hannah Teter (South Lake Tahoe, CA).

The Sprint U.S. Snowboarding Grand Prix continues Sunday with a slopestyle competition before heading to the final two events at Park City Mountain Resort Jan. 22 and 23.

Mammoth Mountain, Jan. 9, Halfpipe

Men

1. Shaun White, Carlsbad, CA, 47.00

2. Louie Vito, Sandy, UT, 45.60

3. JJ Thomas, Golden, CO, 45.00

4. Luke Mitrani, Mammoth Mountain, CA, 44.20

5. Zack Black, Breckenridge, CO, 43.30

6. Steve Fisher, Breckenridge, CO, 41.90

7. Scotty Lago, Seabrook, NH, 39.40

8. Matt Ladley, Steamboat Springs, CO, 39.30

9. Elijah Teter, South Lake Tahoe, CA, 37.90

10. Dylan Bidez, Minturn, CO, 30.40

Women

1. Gretchen Bleiler, Aspen, CO, 44.10

2. Elena Hight, South Lake Tahoe, CA, 43.30

3. Hannah Teter, South Lake Tahoe, CA, 42.80

4. Kelly Clark, Mt. Snow, VT, 41.80

5. Ellery Hollingsworth, Stratton, VT, 41.60

6. Holly Crawford, Australia, 33.30

7. Clair Bidez, Minturn, CO, 26.50

8. Maddy Schaffrick, Steamboat Springs, CO

Protesters picket outside Broc's Puppies

By Kathryn Reed

Gloomy weather in South Lake Tahoe was not enough to keep a group of frustrated residents from protesting today outside of Broc's Puppies on Highway 50. They plan to be back Sunday.

The protest is one of many since the store opened in 2008. Unknowingly being sold a sick dog is the primary complaint. Accusations have also been made that the shop buys from puppy mills.



Protesters at Broc's Puppies on Jan. 9. Photo/Judy Brown

"It is so sad that a business of this sort is allowed to continue to sell sick puppies and to misrepresent them as 'pedigree' animals," said Judy Brown, one of the protesters and president of the South Lake Tahoe Humane Society's board

of directors. “And now with apparent criminal connections with drugs with store employees and owners, the city should take action to revoke their business license.”

Legally the city cannot revoke the business license because of the most recent charges the owner faces.

Christine Jacques said the protest helped business.

“People came in who didn’t know we were here. It was great,” Jacques told *Lake Tahoe News* on Saturday afternoon.

She said she is a friend of the family’s who is helping while David Franks deals with being arrested on Jan. 8 on a probation violation out of Nevada.

Jacques said Franks is part owner of the pet store. She said his brother Dennis and their father were original owners. A call to the city’s business license office on Jan. 8 was not returned so it’s not known who the city has on record as being the owner.

When the council was discussing the ordinance more than a year ago there was talk that the business could not be sold and still sell puppies. But no language to that effect is in the ordinance. This was news to some council members when reached Saturday.

The retail outlet is the only one in South Lake Tahoe that is allowed to sell dogs.

That will end in a little more than a year because when the City Council approved the ordinance last year to ban stores from selling dogs or cats, Broc’s was given two years before it would need to close.

Souers sworn in as president of STAR

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – Itâ€™s a much different real estate market today compared to when Theresa Souers began her first stint as president of the South Tahoe Association of Realtors in 2006.

2005 was a heck of a good year for those in the real estate market. The same cannot be said of 2009.



Theresa Souers

Still, Souers chose to take the helm of the nearly 300-member organization when Mike Phillips backed out of the job a month before he was to be installed.

The installation dinner was Jan. 8 at Edgewood Tahoe.

The other officers are: Amanda Adams, president-elect; Jill Teakell, vice president; Ken Daley, secretary-treasurer; and Barb Childs, immediate past president.

The directors are Pamela Francis, Judith Hanson, Michael Mulligan, Kathy Southern, Michelle Keck, Cindy MacLean, Jim Wire and Ginger Nicolay-Davis.

Awards given out Friday included: Barb Childs, Realtor of the Year; Doug Clymer and Amanda Adams, Distinguished Service Award; and Cindy MacLean, Community Service Award.

Iditarod talk at South Tahoe library

Iditarod competitor Jeanne Ashcraft will talk about the sled dog race at the El Dorado County Library in South Lake Tahoe on March 6 from 2-3:30pm.

Jack London event at South Tahoe library

Portrayal of Jack London’s life on Feb. 20, 2-4pm at the El Dorado County Library on Rufus Allen Boulevard in South Lake Tahoe.

Lovers’ Reading at Squaw

Free Lover’s Special Readings at the Rainbow Bridge in Squaw Village on Feb. 13 from 11am-1pm.

Candle, serenity bowl making

Valentineâ€™s Day Love Potion candle/serenity bowl making at Waxen Moon in the Squaw Village from 10am-5pm.

Freeride World Tour comes to Squaw

Freeride World Tour â€“ Tram Face – Squaw Valley

* The best freeride spots on earth have been selected by the Pro Freeriders Board (PFB) and the tour organizers to host four main events that make up the 2010 Freeride World Tour.

The valley will erupt with street parties, live music and celebrations not to be missed including the world’s most extreme athletes battling it out on the never before opened legendary tram face.

Cosmic Crystal Readings

Free Cosmic Crystal Readings at the Rainbow Bridge at Squaw on Feb. 28 fom 1-3pm.

Snowfest at Squaw Valley

Contestants try foods from around the world. In this challenge, the items get progressively more interesting. If youâ€™ve got a strong stomach, then you need to join in and enter this contest. Come cheer on all the crazy eating starting at 4:30pm. Entry is free.

Snowfest Opening Night Ceremonies

* 29th Annual Opening Ceremonies – As evening sets in, see Squaw Valleyâ€™s mountains and sky light up with a spectacular laser show, torchlight parade and incredible fireworks display. Featuring live music on the KTâ€“22 Sundeck. Presented by the Squaw Valley Business Association and Squaw Valley USA.