Bus info for New Year’s Eve

BlueGo, the public bus service on the South Shore of Lake Tahoe, has special New Year’s Eve route information. Click BlueGo for details.

Water content 75 percent of normal in Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

PHILLIPS – Predicting whether California reservoirs will be full in the spring isn’t something Department of Water Resources officials were about to do Dec. 30 as they took the season’s first reading of the water content near Sierra-at-Tahoe.

The numbers are about what they were a year ago – 75 percent of normal. Statewide, the content is 85 percent of normal. More than 140 locations are surveyed.



Frank Gehrke, right, reads the measurement for John Deam

to record on Dec. 30. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Frank Gehrke, chief of the California Cooperative Snow Surveys Program, said the trend so far this season is totals are lower in the north part of the state and progressively better heading south.

He wasnâ€™t too concerned about the readings along Highway 50.

“Right now things look adequate,” Gehrke said as snow gently fell on those standing in the meadow. “This is a typical California start to winter.”

“Absolutely” was his response when asked if the state is still in a drought. Gehrke added, “We would need a humongous year or several above average years” to get out of a drought.

By the time April rolls around, water officials will have the task of declaring if this is the fourth year of drought.

With California receiving about 20 percent of its precipitation in January, the numbers could steadily improve or sour dramatically.

What water officials like is when the snow sticks around for a while instead of seeping into the ground right away because better for the groundwater supply for water to be absorbed slow.

The average depth of the snow at the corner of Highway 50 and the road leading to Sierra ski resort was 38.5 inches. The water content was 9 inches. The water content is what’s important, not the depth of the snow.

The importance of the water content is that it runs downstream to fill the reservoirs. These reservoirs are storage sheds of

sorts for farmers and municipalities for much of the state. These reservoirs are also huge recreation facilities and without water, there’s nothing for a boat to float on.

Even though 2009-10 is being called an El Nino year, Gehrke explained there are wet and dry El Nino years. He also said wet years tend to start much sooner than late December.

“There’s a whole lot of winter left to go,” Gehrke said, cautioning this first survey of the season should not be used to predict how the year will go.

Winter Film Series in Tahoe City

Join Alpenglow Sports and Alex Honnold for the third free show of their annual Winter Film Series.

Over the past few years the visionary solo ascents, ground breaking speed ascents and free climbing at the highest grades by Northern California local Alex Honnold has consistently rocked the international climbing community.

Honnold makes his debut public presentation that will highlight some of his favorite climbs from Borneo to England’s Gritstone and especially his favorite place: the soaring granite walls of Yosemite Valley.

Who: Alex Honnold

What: Alpenglow Winter Slideshow Series to benefit ARC

When: Jan. 21 at 7pm

Where: Sawtooth Ridge Cafe in Tahoe City, 877 N. Lake Blvd.

Why: To provide a quality community event combined with a focus on community service and charity

There is no charge for the shows and everyone is welcome. The bar and restaurant will be open for drinks and food. The cafe will offer an early bird dinner special starting at 5:30pm. Reservations are recommended.

People are encouraged to arrive early for good seating. Call Alpenglow Sports (530) 583.6917 with any questions.

Lake Tahoe ski report, Dec. 30



Fresh snow and wind will greet skiers and boarders at Lake Tahoe resorts today. Here is the ski report from Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.

Keep the snow shovel close at hand

A winter storm advisory remains in affect until 10am today. But expect snow to be falling much of the day in the Lake Tahoe region. White stuff is likely to taper off as the afternoon progresses.

Slopes in the Sierra and at lake level have seen wind gusts between 35-55mph.

The warm temps mean snow totals will not be as high as first forecast.

Snow was sticking on the eastern side of Spooner Summit at about 9:30pm Tuesday. The snow seemed to stop after travelers went through Cave Rock. By morning a few inches had fallen at the lake overnight on the South Shore.

Sierra-at-Tahoe at 6am reported 6 inches of new snow. Squaw Valley says it has a couple inches at the base and up to 6 on the top of the mountain.

Expect slow going over mountain roads today. A rollover accident on Kingsbury Grade was reported this morning.

Snow is in the forecast for the rest of the week, with the sun returning on Saturday. Expect snow to heavier later in the day New Year's Eve.

Ex-Nevada archivist: Next decade not so bright

Guy Rocha, Las Vegas Sun

Iâ€™m not hopeful for 2020. Some think CityCenter is the start of a return to the heyday, but those people are living in the past.

By 2020, the casino business will no longer be the stateâ€™s cash cow for a number of reasons, not the least of which being that the number of competitors in the legalized gambling

business just keeps growing. I donâ€™t expect Nevadaâ€™s gambling industry will have dried up and blown away by 2020, but I expect more casinos will close over the course of the next 10 years.

Read the whole story

Nevada construction job loss worst in nation

Nevada lost more construction job in November than any other state, according to a federal report. Nevada lost 1,100 construction jobs in the one-month period.

The Associated General Contractors of America said Nevada was tops in the states with the biggest percentage losses in construction employment over the year at 24.7 percent.

Dirt roads in Eldorado National Forest to close

Eldorado National Forest dirt roads and trails will be closed to wheeled motorized vehicles starting Jan. 1.

The seasonal closure will be in place until at least April 1.

Surface roads are not part of the closure.

Bringing Northern Italy to Lake Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – Looking at the photographs mounted on the wall it makes one want to make sure their passport is valid.

People strolling through Dirk Yuricich's studio on the opening weekend of his Northern Italy Photo Exhibition could be overheard talking about their travels to this region of the world and ohhing and ahhing over his work.



Dirk Yuricich

He captures the people, the buildings and the scenery in an array of photographs – some small, some large – all captivating.

The exhibit runs through Feb. 16 at the Dirk Yuricich Photography Gallery, 171 Shady Lane, Stateline. The studio is open 11am-5pm Friday-Tuesday and by appointment. It will be closed Jan. 27-Feb. 4.

For more information, call (775) 588.5816 or visit www.dirkphotoz.com.

Embracing Squaw Valley's Olympic heritage

By Susan Wood

When enthusiasts of the Winter Games mark a half-century milestone during Squaw's Olympic Heritage Week at Lake Tahoe next month, few will boast a national and regional pride like Martin Hollay.

The 89-year-old native of Hungary escaped his war-torn country in 1956. He has lived in South Lake Tahoe for more years than Squaw's milestone – 52. He has made the most of his time by advancing his passion for skiing.

Among other volunteer duties, he helped build the 20-kilometer 1960 Olympic Nordic Trail system



Martin Hollay

near Sugar Pine Point State Park, a course designed by former U.S. Olympian Wendall "Chummy" Broomhall and Dartmouth

University ski team coach Allison Merrill. The trails are considered part of the first cross country ski area in the United States and run between the park, Quail Creek Meadow and McKinney Rubicon Road. They've been resurrected in time for the historic Olympic ceremony slated for Jan. 8-17.

During that time, the Nordic ski trails' home base – Granlibakken Resort near Tahoe City will host a special dinner featuring a multi-media presentation with rare footage of the winter that shaped Tahoe in honor of the cross country ski and biathlon participants, coaches, groomers and supporters.

"Our Olympic roots run deep, tracing back to the 1932 Olympic ski trials held here at Granlibakken," resort manager Kay Williams said of the Jan. 15 event.

Hollay plans to take part in the Heritage Week festivities at Squaw Valley and the North Shore, which also include a commemorative torch relay from Sugar Pine Point to Squaw and an "Opening" ceremony of sorts complete with fireworks and live music on Jan. 8. The next day features a re-enactment of the sport of biathlon, and with good timing. It has just received its due recognition at Northstar-at-Tahoe. The Truckee ski resort installed the West Coast's one official course this year.

In addition, a cross country ski expo is set for Jan. 10 at Granlibakken. There, the first-sanctioned Scholastic Nordic Race held since the Winter Olympics and other events at Squaw will round out the week of activities.

Parties, events and venues aside, Hollay has another motive for taking part in the historic ceremony that for him is a bit more nostalgic.

"I'm wondering who's still going to be alive," he said one recent afternoon, while glancing around his home located a few steps from Heavenly Mountain Resort.

Outside his humble abode, Hollay mounted cross country skis to the cabin. Inside, a large, framed photograph hangs high on the wall to showcase him skiing the official Olympic torch at Heavenly when it made its way through South Lake Tahoe in 2002 on its way to the Salt Lake City Games. A book – "Snowball's Chance" by Tahoe resident David Antonucci on Squaw's long shot to host the 1960 Winter Games sits on his end table.

Hollay reflects fondly on his 35 years of skiing at Heavenly, where he worked a dozen years as a ski patroller. In the early days, he recalled being impressed when he met the little-known ski school director – Stein Eriksen, now a legend in long-time skier circles.

Hollay still skis the slopes about every day with his signature knickers and wool sweater.

Upon asking to be his native homeland's guest, Hollay dreams of making it to the Opening Ceremonies in Vancouver, British Columbia, for the Winter Games' return to the West Coast in February.

"I'm very excited about that," he said.

"Fifty (plus) years ago I came to Tahoe. Squaw had one lift. I carried a telephone box around to the aid station," he said of his volunteer work leading up to and during the Games. The technology was lacking – but not the piercing drive of the athletes and community pride of their supporters. A humbled Hollay gingerly pulled out a medal for volunteers like he won gold.



Reno Tahoe International Airport Olympic exhibit. Photo/Squaw Valley

Hollay hasn’t given up skiing or a zest for life, but he has surrendered his skis and boots from the era of the eighth Olympic Games for an upcoming Squaw Valley Ski Museum. For now, Squaw foundation organizers have erected a temporary version at the Reno Tahoe International Airport until the permanent facility goes up near the Ehrman Mansion in May. The 500-square-foot display at the airport is adorned with international flags and other memorabilia including a uniform from U.S. Ski Team member Bev Anderson.

“It’s received amazing attendance,” said Carolyn Wallace Dee, the Squaw Valley manager of business administration and mayor of Truckee.

Catch the spirit

Those wanting to get up close and personal with the Olympic Heritage commemorative torch relay



Re-creating the Olympic torch run will be Jan. 8. Photo/Kathryn

may view the spectacle during the lighting at and departure from Sugar Pine Point State Park at 9am Jan. 8, at Homewood Mountain Resort at 10:45am or Sunnyside Resort at 11:40am.

From there, it will continue to Granlibakken at noon, Heritage Plaza at Tahoe City at 12:35pm, Alpine Meadows Ski Resort at 1:15pm, Resort at Squaw Creek at 2:25pm. The torch will be skied down Squaw's Red Dog run at 3:05pm. One may also get a glimpse of it at the Village at Squaw at 3:30pm, where the ceremonies will kick off. All times are approximate.

During the 10-day celebration, ski enthusiasts may simulate the challenge of negotiating the original 1960 Olympic men's and women's downhill courses on Squaw's slopes. The festivities culminate with a 1960 Olympic Legends Ball at the Resort at Squaw Creek.

Click here for more information.

Publisher's note: *On Jan. 1 read about adaptive skier Bill Bowness' story as it relates to Olympic Heritage Week.*