Tahoe Tallac Association wants you

By Steve Farnsley

The Tahoe Tallac Association's 2010 Membership Campaign is under way. Your membership contribution now will guarantee a great 2010 Valhalla Arts, Music, and Theatre Festival. Thanks to all who have already become supporting members of the 2010 Festival.

If you renew or become a TTA member now, we'll send you a specially-designed Valhalla Festival bookmark (for contributions of $25 or more) and a unique desk calendar featuring Tahoe-based photography (for contributions of $100 or more). The bookmark and calendar were designed by Valhalla Cultural Arts Store manager Sandy Ruacho. Membership levels and benefits are below.

Memberships:

- Novice $25 Receive 2 tickets to an event (Seniors, students, military, and teens only)
- Friend of Tallac $50 Receive 3 tickets to an event
- Thespian $100 Receive 7 tickets to an event
- Theatre Patron $250 Receive 1 Season Pass
- Star $500 Receive 2 Season Passes
- Buscaglia $1000 Receive 4 Season Passes (In honor of Boathouse Theatre Patron, Leo Buscaglia.)
- Corporate (Contact TTA for details and benefits)

Your membership contribution helps in two ways: (1) it provides much-needed cash flow during the slow winter season and (2) it provides matching funds for the many grants TTA receives. Your contribution does not have to be huge.Â Also, keep in mind that a Valhalla Festival Membership makes a great holiday gift – and your contribution is tax deductible

according to IRS guidelines.

It’s easy to become a TTA member and support our mission to promote artistic engagement and cultural enrichment in the Tahoe Basin as well as historic preservation at the Valhalla Estate. You can go to our website at valhallatahoe.com/membership.html, complete the membership form and pay online. Or call our office at (530) 541.4975 and make your Membership contribution by credit card. Please give us a call at (530) 541.4975 or email steve@valhallatahoe.com if you have any questions.

As always, thanks so much for your support. We can’t do it without you!

Steve Farnsley is executive director of Tahoe Tallac Association.

South Lake Tahoe furlough days

Beginning Dec. 4, many South Lake Tahoe offices will be closed the first and third Fridays.

These furlough days are designed to save the city money.

Public Works and Community Development offices on Tata Lane will be closed; plus the Administration, Finance and City Clerk offices at Lake Tahoe Airport.

City offices will also be closed Dec. 28-31, Jan. 1 and Jan. 4.

CalPERS chief wants to clean up scandal plagued agency

Publisher's note: *Alfred Villalobos, who lives on the South Shore of Lake Tahoe, has done work with Apollo, the private equity firm that owns Harrah's Entertainment. Apollo is tied to the CalPERS scandal.*

By Dale Kasler, Sacramento Bee

CalPERS' president, promising to clean up an influence-peddling scandal at the big pension fund, raised the prospect Wednesday of publicly reprimanding board members and employees who violate ethical standards.

"We won't let the actions of a few stain or tarnish the 77-year history of our organization," board President Rob Feckner said in an interview with editors and reporters at The Bee.

The California Public Employees' Retirement System has been scrambling to deal with disclosures that former board member Alfred Villalobos has earned more than $60 million obtaining CalPERS deals for his investment clients. CalPERS, which made the disclosures itself, has commissioned a "special review" of Villalobos and other so-called placement agents, and has endorsed legislation requiring agents to register as lobbyists.

Read the whole story

Apollo doubles down on Harrah's casino debt

By Josh Kosman, New York Post

An owner of Harrah's Entertainment, America's biggest casino chain, is doubling down.

Private-equity firm Apollo Management is buying bonds in the debt-swamped business so it has more power in the event of a debt restructuring, even if its large equity stake is wiped out.

Meanwhile, Apollo's fellow owners, PE powerhouses Blackstone Group and TPG, are not reinvesting, sources said. Apollo and TPG have roughly equal stakes in the casino company, while Blackstone's is smaller.

This is a change from early 2009 when Apollo and TPG bought Harrah's loans with a face value of $2 billion at a discount, in order to reduce the debt in the company.

Read the whole story

Lake Tahoe ski report – Nov. 19



Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe, is providing *Lake Tahoe News* with his daily ski report. Click on ski report to know what the conditions are like today and to learn other tidbits about what's going on in the area.

Squaw basks in its Olympic history

By Susan Wood

Squaw Valley USA opens one of its grandest years Saturday with a slate of events and improvements to mark a major double milestone.

Beyond a massive celebration for its founding in 1949 and the half-century turning as host of the VIII Olympic Games, Squaw will bring on a new season with a new chairlift at High Camp, an overhaul of the dining experience at mid-mountain, added ski and boarder programs and a dramatic drop in season pass rates.



Jonny Mosley

The drama begins with professional base jumper JT Holmes launching opening day at 2:20pm with a leap out of Squawâ€™s aerial Cable Car, which is marking its 40-year anniversary. That afternoon, the anniversary also features a balloon release from the Funitel, a screening of Squawâ€™s history, and cake with a Champagne toast by owner Nancy Cushing and the resortâ€™s chief mountain host and Olympic gold medalist Jonny Mosely.

Mosely will be around all season. He plans to take Squaw

riders out on â€œSki with Jonnyâ€ days.

The Truckee-area skier from Marin County who grew up dazzling spectators with his gravity-defying jumps and stunts has retired from competitive skiing. He promised those who go out with him he would â€œstart out slowâ€ but might perform â€œa few black flipsâ€ for posterity.

â€œIâ€™ve learned you have to ski ahead to do that or they wonâ€™t see you,â€ he told *Lake Tahoe News* while ordering a Dr Pepper at a drive-through restaurant on his way to the San Francisco Ski and Wine Festival last weekend in Santa Clara.

Mosely took home the top Olympic honor at Nagano, Japan, in 1998 for his unique moves. Come this February, he will provide commentary for NBC Sports during three Olympic events â€“ moguls, aerials and skier cross. The latter is an event his buddy and fellow Olympian Daron Rahlves will compete in.

â€œItâ€™s great Squawâ€™s celebrating the anniversary. I love Squaw. I grew up skiing there, and Iâ€™m just in awe,â€ Mosley said. The resort known for its steep terrain, full facilities and rich history named a run after him off the KT-22 chairlift – advanced terrain that is not for the faint of heart.

Squaw will host a slew of activities throughout the ski season to generate excitement for the international gathering that returns to the West Coast in Vancouver in February. As part of Olympic Heritage week slated Jan. 8-17, Squaw will set up a men and womenâ€™s downhill course. Skiers may brave the slopes to simulate the exhilaration of the flagship Olympic event.

In addition, a Torch Relay will start from Sugar Pine Point State Park, go to the resort, followed by an Opening Ceremony with fireworks, music and reception. The festivities culminate with an Olympic Legends Ball at the Resort at Squaw Creek. During the weeklong celebration, events are either free or proceeds will be earmarked to raise funds for the construction

of the Lake Tahoe ski heritage museum.

As a side note, thereâ€™s even a book by David Antonucci chronicling the historic event called â€œSnowballâ€™s Chance: The Story of the 1960 Olympic Winter Games and Lake Tahoe.â€

Other notables for the year at Squaw include further enhancements to the $3 million revamp of the Gold Coast Lodge, with the new, eco-friendly 39 North restaurant opening next month. Squaw also hired Executive Chef Scott Rutter to run the dining show. He comes with 20 years of experience, including a resume lined with the St. Regis, Ritz Carlton and J.W. Marriott.

Itâ€™s a new day

This year marks a monumental year on many fronts.

The last bastion of the high-priced season pass from a decade ago, Squaw substantially lowered its all-year rates from $1,499 to $469. The value pass costs $369 and excludes holidays and Saturdays. This is in contrast to an all-day adult lift ticket of $83, up $4 from the previous year.

â€œWe were always concerned that if we lowered them, it would ruin the Squaw experience. But with the other resorts dropping them, it was hard to justify spending $1,000 more. And we thought weâ€™d do it for 60- and 50-year anniversaries,â€ Squaw spokeswoman Savannah Cowley said.

Like the other resorts with their bargain rates and bonus packages, Squaw wanted to pass on a greater value in the hopes of creating another generation of skiers.

Squaw skier visitation has been up and down in the last five years. Snow can be a bane and blessing, with not enough between New Yearâ€™s and Martin Luther King birthdayâ€™s spreading a false sense of a poor year for conditions. But too much may scare many a Bay Area driver away from the mountains,

no matter how the economy fares.

â€œSnow is really seen as a factor â€“ not so much the amount of it, as the timing of it,â€ Cowley added.

Squaw is accessed a short jaunt off Highway 89 along the Truckee River, through www.squaw.com or by calling (530) 583.6985.

Rahlves proves Sugar Bowl is a young 70

By Susan Wood

Itâ€™s expected to be one sweet year for Sugar Bowl Resort atop Donner Summit.

The skierâ€™s paradise known for deep snow, much character and a magical Disney history will join Squaw Valley USA in celebrating a milestone during the 2009-10 season by commemorating 70 years of bringing joy to skiers and boarders. Thereâ€™s nothing â€œminiâ€ about it.

Sugar Bowl lovers will want to mark their calendars Jan. 25-31 for â€œSeason 70,â€ a weeklong celebration.



Daron Rahlves

To kick off the season slated to start Nov. 25, the resort

will co-host with Alpine Skills International a â€œBackcountry Ballâ€ featuring an evening of dining, music and educational presentations from Sierra Avalanche Center on Nov. 21. Tickets are $15. The event coincides with Sugar Bowlâ€™s opening of its Backcountry Adventure Center in the Village on the lower floor of the Ski and Sport Chalet building. Along with an array of backcountry rental equipment on hand, comprehensive survival training seminars and outings with certified guides will be on tap.

Backcountry skiing may be a growing trend for outdoor enthusiasts, but downhill or a version of it is still the name of the game at Sugar Bowl.

The season will ramp up like no other with Sugar Bowl constructing a skier cross/boarder X track on the Tunnel 41 trail that emulates the one to be built at Cypress Mountain for the 2010 Olympic Games in Vancouver. The resortâ€™s own downhill racing great Daron Rahlves will train alongside Jayson Hale before going off to the Olympics in February to compete in the newly sanctioned sport.

Rahlves, the most decorated American downhill and Super G skier in history, came out of downhill retirement to make a splash in the skier cross scene. In 2008, the 36-year-old ski veteran took the top podium in the sport at the Winter X Games in a nail-biting win.

Rahlves calls the current evolution of his career a â€œtransitionâ€ that harks back on his childhood on Tahoeâ€™s slopes.

â€œI used to have so much fun racing my buddies down the hill,â€ he told *Lake Tahoe News*. â€œYou can just go crazy with the sport, and it was time to do something new.â€

To get a closer glimpse of the sport, the resort will host more than 35 skier cross competitors March 27-29.

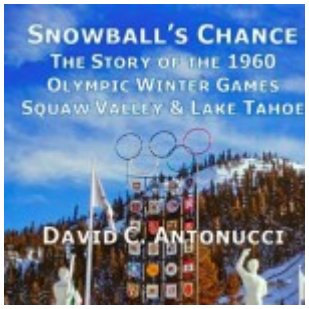
Also new in improvements this year, the Summit Chair can whisk 1,200 skiers and riders to the ridge top of the famed Judah Bowl at every hour. Upon the return to the chair, the newly remodeled Judah Lodge will be in full swing with full food service and bar offerings from the Sierra Vista Bar and Grill. Eat, drink, watch a game or just relax by the fire.

The lodge will host a free screening of selected films from the San Francisco Independent Film Festival on Feb. 27-28.

Hitting the slopes of Sugar Bowl will cost an adult skier and rider $66, $72 on the holidays. However, bargains can still be had through programs such as â€œGeneral Admission.â€ Skiers and boarders ages 13 to 69 who buy any lift ticket Monday through Friday can receive daily bonuses on basic rentals or group lessons at any level.

To learn more, access Sugar Bowl at www.sugarbowl.com or (530) 426.9000. The ski resort is located off Interstate 80 at Donner Summit.

History of Squaw Olympics becomes a book



David C. Antonucci of Tahoma has written a book chronicling the 1960 Winter Olympic Games at Squaw Valley. Historical photographs are by official Olympic photographer Bill Briner.

â€œSnowballâ€™s Chance â€“ The Story of the 1960 Olympic Winter Gamesâ€ contains what the author says is the only

complete account of the preparations, pageantry, ceremonies, competitions and epilogues of the historic VIII Olympic Winter Games at Squaw Valley and Lake Tahoe.

The paperback costs $15.99. To find locations where to buy it, go to www.TahoeFacts.com.

STHS students' achievements recognized

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – The English language does not have enough adjectives to justly describe the five young women who were honored Wednesday by Soroptimist International South Lake Tahoe.

Erika Cook, Hannah Elder, Glory Pillsbury, Diku Sherpa and Kelsey Smith were recognized as Young Women of Distinction for their academic and extra curricular achievements.

All are South Tahoe High School seniors with ambitions that, if fulfilled, are likely to have a lasting impact in whatever community they live in as adults.



Standing, l-r, Diku Sherpa,

Hannah Elder, Kelsey Smith; front Erika Cook and Glory Pillsbury.

“I don’t know how at such a young age these girls have accomplished so much,” Ivone Larson, STHS principal, told the more than 70 people in attendance at Harrah’s Lake Tahoe.

She introduced each of the women – all of whom were sitting with at least one family member – giving a synopsis of their achievements that led Soroptimist to single them out.

Larson on Cook: “Erika is not only a fun-loving outstanding student with a 4.5 gpa, she is also actively involved in a multitude of service organizations including being in the S-Club, she is the corresponding secretary in National Honor Society, she is the treasurer of the Key Club, and is the director of Student Affairs for the Associated Student Body. She has volunteered in the Lake Tahoe Marathon, the Pennies for Polio project, and the Multiple Sclerosis Walk. During high school she has received the All State Award for earning straight A’s, was nominated to attend People to People conference as well as Camp Ryla, received multiple Golden State Student Awards, is the team captain for soccer, and was most recently selected for the soccer First Team All League by the Sierra coaches.”

Larson on Elder: “Hannah participates in ALLY, a tolerance club at STHS, is president of the Friends of the South Tahoe High School Library, makes Baby Book Bags for Barton Hospital newborns through AVID, is a staff member of Bookworks, a nonprofit bookstore which generates funds for the Tahoe Family Resource Center, and is the founder and president of the Book Club at STHS. Notice a merging theme? Hannah has a 4.1 gpa and surprise – her favorite subject is English. She has applied to an interesting variety of colleges and her first choices are

Stanford or Berkeley to major in Classical/Ancient Civilization."

Larson on Pillsbury: "Glory has a 4.0 gpa and loves life sciences. She wants to become a nurse practitioner and would love to go to Africa to start her career while helping people in need. She is active in Key Club, and continues to raise funds to sponsor schools in Africa through Schools for Schools and the S Club, and raises funds to fight polio through the National Honor Society. As a Girl Scout since she was 5, Glory mentors young Girl Scouts by coordinating the activities for the Scouts on the North Shore. She has earned numerous merit badges, her favorite, of course, being the Wilderness Badge, as well as the highly prestigious Silver Award in recognition for her commitment and dedication to Girl Scout service. She has been in ASB Leadership since middle school and continues to serve on the council. She tutors other students through National Honor Society. As a result of her noted leadership, citizenship, and academics, she was sponsored by Rotary Club of South Lake Tahoe to attend Camp Riley, a leadership camp that provided her a life changing experience at the end of her junior year."

Larson on Sherpa: "Diku Sherpa left her family and friends in Nepal to join her father and brothers here in the United States when she was 14 years old. When she arrived in Lake Tahoe, Diku quickly acquired the English language, adding to her already long list of languages including Nepalese, Hindi, Sherpa and Tibetan. Due to inadequate health care providers in her native Nepal, Diku would like to attend Sonoma State University and pursue a career in nursing as she has been inspired by one of her role models, her step mother, Catherine Gaehwiler. Diku's talents and interests vary. In high school, she has played basketball and volleyball and has participated in Generation Green, a group geared toward environmental protection, and the Key Club, which is a member of the Kiwanis International family focused on teaching leadership through

serving others. Outside of school, her passion is horseback riding, playing guitar and piano. She has extensive volunteer experience including volunteering for the Lake Tahoe Marathon, participating in and volunteering for the AVID program, setting up the school assembly for Heritage Week, planting trees in the Angora Fire burn area, helping with the Christmas Dinner for Angora Fire Victims, participating in the Mystery Box program with kindergartners, and participating in the Project Learning Tree program."

Larson on Smith: "Kelsey Smith loves to run. Whether running for fun on trails throughout Echo Summit, or working on reaching her goal of running a marathon on all seven continents, many would argue that she doesn't run, she flies. She has won so many awards that it is hard to name them all. She received the AP Scholar Honor Award; she made the Nevada All-State Academic Team from 2007-2009. She won the Nevada Gatorade Cross Country Runner of the Year in '08 and '09, is the Wendy Heisman winner from South Tahoe High School, was the USA Track and Field Junior Olympic All-American for 2005-2007, and in 2008 she won both the 3200m and the 1600m at the Nevada State Track & Field Championships. She is the Nevada State Champion in Cross Country Running, was named the Female Athlete of the Year by the Tahoe Daily Tribune, and is the Runner of the Year for the state of Nevada. Whew! I am out of breath just listing some of the awards Kelsey has earned in her spare time â€" while maintaining an incredible 4.61 gpa. With her love of math, yes, AP Calculus is her favorite class, combined will all she has already overcome in her life, it is no wonder that she wants to attend Stanford to major in biomedical engineering and become a pediatric surgeon. By helping kids, she will continue to make a difference in the future of our world."

All of the young women thanked Soroptimist for the honor – some even saying they'd like to be a member of the Tahoe club one day.

Council acts on travel, city attorneys, pot, lodging fees

By Kathryn Reed

On a 4-0 vote Tuesday, the South Lake Tahoe City Council said no to sending Finance Director Christine Vuletich to Monterey for training.

The $785 expense was put on a city credit card prior to the meeting, though staff said it is refundable.

“The $785 is not as important as the procedure. That policy we debated pretty vigorously and (it) should be followed,” Councilman Hal Cole said.

The policy he is talking about is that requests for training or conferences by staff be made in advance, not after the registration and payments are sent in.

City Manager Dave Jinkens said he is the one who wanted Vuletich to attend the conference to learn more about what the state is doing in terms of taking away money from cities throughout California.

“I’ve looked at the schedule of speakers and don’t think anything will be brought forward that hasn’t already been brought to the city,” Councilman Bill Crawford said.

Cole, who is on the finance committee, also seemed exacerbated that the warrants the council requested be put in their packets each meeting have not been. Warrants are essentially the bills that have been paid.

Councilman Bruce Grego was absent from the meeting.

In other action on Nov. 17 the council:

Approved the contracts for Patrick Enright and Jacqueline Mittelstadt, now city attorney and assistant city attorney, respectively. Councilmembers Cole and Crawford commented on them just a bit – mostly about the fact they can't comment on the negotiations that led to the settlement agreement with Mittelstadt. "This had nothing to do with corruption. It has nothing to do with a cover up," Cole said.

Heard a presentation about raising the fee lodging guests within the city limits pay. The money is for the Tourism Improvement District. A vote is expected at the Dec. 8 meeting, with implementation of the fee on Dec. 18 so holiday travelers will be paying more. The money collected goes toward marketing the South Shore.

Agreed to a temporary moratorium on medicinal marijuana establishments until the city crafts an ordinance dealing with this type of business.