U.S. teen tops Mancuso, Vonn in giant slalom

By USSA

ASPEN – The U.S. Ski Team's Mikaela Shiffrin put together two solid runs, coming out of the 42nd start position to finish ninth – a career best giant slalom – at the Nature Valley Aspen Winternational.

Slovenia's Tina Maze picked up the win Nov. 24 to remain undefeated in GS as the Audi FIS Alpine World Cup began a two weekend swing in the United States.

Julia Mancuso of Squaw Valley was 15th, while a still ailing Lindsey Vonn of Vail was 21st.

The 17-year-old Shiffrin of Eagle-Vail in just her second year on the Audi FIS Alpine World Cup has six top 10s – five in slalom. Her previous best GS was 26th in Andorra last season.

Be wary when shopping online

The dramatic increase in cyber shopping on the Monday following Thanksgiving has increased the number of deals available to online shoppers on Nov. 26. This is also an important time for shoppers to increase their awareness of the risks associated with shopping online.

Washoe County sheriff's Sgt. Dennis Carry, who investigates online fraud as supervisor of the Northern Nevada Cyber

Center, knows the risks of online shopping all too well.

“You can take every step to protect yourself online but consumers must understand that providing credit card information to others is always a risk,” Carry said in a statement. “The most effective way to protect yourself from fraud is to shop locally with cash or tamper proof checks.”

Carry recognizes the convenience and options of online shopping will always make it popular with consumers and encourages the public to be safe and observant with all online purchases.

Carry recommends making sure you have an up-to-date security suite (firewall, anti-virus and anti-spyware) installed with the most current information before shopping online. Also, keep your operating system and Web browser up-to-date.

Before entering personal and financial information for an online transaction, look for signs that the site is secure. This includes a closed padlock on your Web browser’s address bar or a URL address that begins with shttp or https. This indicates the purchase is encrypted or secured. Never use unsecured wireless networks to make an online purchase.

Before providing personal or financial information, check the website’s privacy policy. Make sure you understand how your information will be stored and used.

If you’re using wireless Internet, make sure it’s secured and not left open for just anyone. Use caution when using free Internet at a hotspot as you have no control over who might be intercepting your passwords and account information.

Print and save records of your online transactions, including the product description, price, online receipt, terms of the sale, and copies of any email exchange with the seller. Read your credit card statements as soon as you get them to make sure there are no unauthorized charges. If there is a

discrepancy, report it immediately.

Never send cash through the mail or use a money-wiring service because you'll have no recourse if something goes wrong.

Workshop to focus on Martis Valley groundwater plan

The final public workshop of the draft groundwater management plan groundwater model for the Martis Valley will be Nov. 29 from 5-7pm.

The Truckee Donner Public Utility District, Northstar Community Services District, and Placer County Water Agency have partnered to develop the plan.

The workshop will be at Truckee Donner Public Utility District's board room, 11570 Donner Pass Road, Truckee.

The next steps are formal adoption of the Groundwater Management Plan by each partner agency and to begin implementation of the GMP.

Information may be found online.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Harrison Avenue will be the main topic before the South Lake Tahoe Planning Commission on Nov. 29 at 3pm at Lake Tahoe Airport.

• The Fields Advisory Committee of the South Lake Tahoe Recreation Facilities Joint Powers Authority will meet Nov. 26 from 4–6pm at Lake Tahoe Airport.

• Jalapeños Taqueria is open on Emerald Bay Road in South Lake Tahoe.

• Here is the weekly roadwork schedule from Caltrans for El Dorado-Tahoe and Placer.

• The inaugural Kelly Clark Foundation Wine, Dinner & Auction is Nov. 30. More info is online.

Placerville man to oversee California National Guard

By Charles Piller, Sacramento Bee

Gov. Jerry Brown appointed Lt. Col. David Kauffman of Placerville as the first independent inspector general of the California Military Department, which includes the National Guard.

The position was established by Senate Bill 921, signed into law in September in response to concerns raised by a *Bee* investigation of the Guard that exposed widespread financial fraud, as well as neglect of Camp Roberts, a key training facility.

“I’m pleased the governor acted so quickly to appoint a new inspector general,” said Ted Lieu, D-Torrance, an Air Force veteran and co-author of the new law. He said the governor’s appointment signals that Kauffman will be independent from Guard leadership — meant to assure whistle-blowers that they can report wrongdoing without fear of reprisal. The law also bars such retaliation. Kauffman said in an interview that to help ensure that service members understand that they can safely share concerns about higher-ranking officers, he would visit units across the state to talk with rank-and-file soldiers without their leaders present.

In addition to examining complaints, Kauffman will issue quarterly and annual public reports.”The biggest challenge for anybody serving as an inspector general is making the hard call, whatever the pressure” or appearance of pressure from Guard leadership or from aggrieved service members, he said. “When the time comes to make that hard call, the office of the inspector general will do that.”

His appointment “continues the process of restoring confidence in the state’s military,” Lieu said.

Kauffman, 41, was appointed to a four-year term. Although he reports to the adjutant general, the Guard’s top leader, he cannot be fired except for cause. Should claims arise against the adjutant general, Kauffman would be required to report them to federal authorities and the governor.

Kauffman has served with the California Army National Guard and U.S. Army Reserve for almost 20 years, including tours of duty in Afghanistan and Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. His professional

experience includes work as a military attorney and as a deputy district attorney in El Dorado County. The position, which does not require Senate confirmation, pays $141,619 annually.

The Bee series described fraud involving tens of millions of dollars in Guard enlistment incentive payments. An ongoing federal criminal investigation of those concerns so far has resulted in four plea agreements, including one that involved a prison sentence for a former incentive-program manager.

The series also exposed improper “double-dipping” payments to top pilots in the Fresno-based 144th Fighter Wing, which resulted in their removal, and to former Adjutant General William H. Wade II, who has agreed to repay tens of thousands of dollars.

Diamond Peak wants to extend special use permit

Diamond Peak Ski Area in Incline Village is seeking another 10-year special use permit from the U.S. Forest Service.

No significant improvements are located on the permitted land, although grooming, hazard tree removal, and snowmaking are allowed.

Comments are being sought on the draft decision memo. Only those who provided comment during the original spring comment period are eligible to comment now.

Comments will be taken until mid-December.

For more information, call (530) 543.2600.

Ski report: Remember you aren’t alone on the slopes



Another beautiful day to hit the slopes.

Advice to riders, though, to slow down and be safe.

Have a great day.

Here is the Nov. 24 ski report.

— Curtis Fong

Then and now: Y grows from 3-way to 4-way intersection



The black and white photo (circa 1952) shows how the melding of highways 50 and 89 in Tahoe Valley formed a three-way Y intersection.

The camera is on Highway 89, coming from Camp Richardson, looking at where 89 joined Highway 50 from Stateline (left) going (right) to Meyers.

According to longtime local (since 1940s) Dave Wakeman, the Tahoe Trading Post was owned by John Phillipson, who was also the local postmaster. The building at the left was Nevada Lumber Company. To the right of the photo was a two-pump 76 gas station and Lampson's Market, post office, and bank. Factory Stores at the Y essentially cover this area now.

The color photo shows today's four-way intersection there, as Lake Tahoe Boulevard (lower-right in photo) was forged by the Martin Brothers and partners in the early 1960s and Caltrans used its property rights to enlarge the entire intersection.

About the only thing similar between these two photos is the distant mountain profile of what became Heavenly Valley.

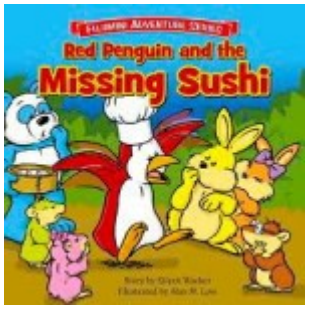
– Bill Kingman



Asian-themed children's books cross cultural lines

By Kathryn Reed

When I read the promotional material about Eileen Wacker's children's books, I expected the books to have a heavy Asian feel that might not cross all cultural borders. I expected these to be geared toward Asian kids. Though, at the same time, I have no idea what an Asian-centric book looks or reads like.



After all, Wacker wrote, "Asian cultures take immense pride in their customs and traditions. The characters in the books represent this in a way that strives to honor those traditions and share the wonder of Asian culture with children everywhere."

Reading the four books (story lines for eight more have been created) led me at first to wonder what was so "Asian" about these books. Then I had to take a step back and laugh. I realized if I had read these books as a kid (they are geared toward preschool through first grade), that I might not have connected with them. But in today's more ethnically diverse world, at least reading them as an adult, I wasn't thrown by sushi eating penguins to Taekwondo practicing bunnies.

And, really, with pandas in the storyline, I probably would have been all over these books as a kid because to this day I have a thing for pandas.

I'm sure as a Caucasian I don't see the "white" storyline through so much of literature – whether it's children's stories or adult books. I'm sure it also helps that growing up in the Bay Area and going to a university where I was a minority helped make me a bit more colorblind.

I can only see good coming from books like Wacker's that go beyond the stereotypical Caucasian influence to deliver messages. And as with any good children's book, there are messages for youngsters – like lying is bad – even if kids can't articulate the underlying theme.

"Fujimini Island is home to a cast of fun and silly animal groups, each of which reflects a different Asian inspiration," is how the promotional material describes the books.

I would recommend all four – "Green Hamster and the Quest for Fun", "Red Penguin and the Missing Sushi", "Silent Samurai and the Magnificent Rescue", and "Pink Hamster and the Big Birthday Sunrise".

Sledding provides hours of outdoor thrills

By Kathryn Reed

SPOONER SUMMIT – Based on the smiles and whoops of joy, sledding clearly has no age limit.

“There’s nothing like this back East,” Bill Stump, 50, of Palo Alto said surveying the hill. He and his family recently moved to the Bay Area from New Jersey. They were in Tahoe for the long Veterans Day weekend.

His 13-year-old daughter, Alexandra, thought the forest they used to live in was fun, but when she talked about the steepness of the hills in the Sierra, a big smile came across her face.



Joe and Nick Cortez are all smiles as they descend the Spooner Summit sledding hill. Photos/Kathryn Reed

And she’s been at this a few years, so she knows what type of device works best. Pointing to the rectangular purple sled that has an edge a few inches high all the way around it, she said, “I like these kinds because they are easier to shred.” Alexandra said the saucers are too hard to steer.

Steering, though, didn’t seem to be on option on any of the sleds. And one that had brakes didn’t work. That didn’t matter to Nick Cortez.

“I liked the part where I went by myself. I put my legs out to

stop like brakes," 4-year-old Nick said.

Before most ski resorts started spinning chairs people were eager to play in the white stuff. This hill at the junction of highways 50 and 28 is popular all winter. Part of it has to do with the steepness, part because it's free, part because it's at a high enough elevation to have snow when it's dirt elsewhere and definitely because it's fun.

Sledding, while seemingly a tame sport, if one can call it a sport, is not necessarily safe.

"Sledding is a lot of fun, but we see most injuries in the early season when hard objects are barely covered, [like] stumps, branches, rocks and when the snow is very hard," Warren Withers, medical director of Barton Health's Emergency Medical Services, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

While objects were clearly visible and the worn path of white was showing dirt Monday last week, no one was taken to the ER. But some bruises turned up.

Withers suggests helmets be worn – just like on the ski slopes. One kid had a helmet, but everyone else was taking his or her chances.

A few parents also didn't heed the doctor's advice when it came to riding with their kids.

"Parents should think twice about going on the same sled with children too small to sled by themselves. Crashes can be bad for smaller children riding with adults," Withers said.

Everyone who wiped out seemed to do some sort of flip or at a least hard fall to one side, so it would be easy to see how a little one could be hurt riding with an adult during a tumble.

Even this early in the season bits of plastic were strewn about – an indication the hill won and the sled lost. An old-time metal saucer needed some waxing to go faster. Then there

were the Body Glove sleds that worked well for those going down on their stomach. Plus, they looked durable and like they would work well on the water in another season at Lake Tahoe.

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