Nevada allows betting on non-sports events

By Bill O’Driscoll, Reno Gazette-Journal

Imagine placing a bet on the Academy Awards. Or “American Idol.” Or the Great Reno Balloon Race or Best in the West Nugget Rib Cook-off.

State gaming regulators recently revised the rules to allow wagering in Nevada’s race and sports books beyond sporting events. The move could generate new revenue in a financially ailing industry, as well as draw casual bettors into sports books.

“We’ve thought about some fun things, like the rib cook-off, or even something as off the wall as our pig race,” said Beth Cooney, executive director of marketing at John Ascuaga’s Nugget, sponsor of the annual Best in the West Nugget Rib Cook-off over the Labor Day weekend.

Bill Eadington, director of the Institute for the Study of Gambling and Commercial Gaming at the University of Nevada, Reno, said the challenge will be in marketing a new betting event.

“Can you find events that will have popular appeal and clientele that will wager on them?” he said. “It’s a bit of a gimmick. But it provides additional dimension. Betting like this is already available in the U.K. We’ve really been constrained to just sports.”

No formal requests have gone before the Nevada Gaming Control Board yet, officials say, and any that do will receive a thorough review to assure they meet standards set out in regulation.

Read the whole story

Knee replacement surgery good for 20 years

By Shari Roan, Los Angeles Times

Knee replacement surgery has become common in the last 30 years, and more younger people with bad knees are considering the surgery. A study presented last month at the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons annual meeting may reassure them that the replacement should hold up for a long time.



Researchers evaluated 128 people who had lived at least 20 years after total knee replacement surgery. The patients' average age at the time of surgery was 63. The average age at the post-20-year follow-up was 82. The study found that almost all of the patients had good physical function. Most could walk at least five blocks, and half said they had "unlimited" walking ability. All but two could walk up and down stairs. None of the patients had experienced an implant failure.

Read the whole story

One enchanted evening

By Laurie Brazil

STATELINE – The dance floor was crowded for most of the night Saturday as Soroptimist International of Tahoe Sierra hosted its annual fundraiser Elegant Evening at Harrah's Lake Tahoe. More than 420 delicious meals were served by the catering staff to the crowd who gathered to support nonprofit group and spend a few dollars at their live and silent auctions.

It was an exciting and fun filled event with a lot of smiling faces and a constant excitement-filled low buzz. The wine was flowing, the hips were swinging and laughter could be heard all throughout the elegantly decorated convention center starting at 6pm.

Young and old were there to share in this year's festivities including donations on exquisite original art pieces to products and other services from a lot of local businesses and friends.

"I used to work at Barton and live here for many years, and I love the continued community spirit and the great music, so I just had to make it a weekend at the lake. I am taking home some fabulous art, a glider ride plus three of these great bags. We're having so much fun," said Jonna Paz Loose, who came up from Santa Cruz.

George Alm, the dapper auctioneer for the evening, emceed during the live auction to get bids for several vacation holidays including one in Carmel another in Maui and one all the way to the blue skies of Montana. Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District personnel paid a visit to the event to help promote their donation of a dinner at the firehouse with firefighters serving for eight people.



The dance floor filled yet again for another successful Elegant Evening. Photo/Laurie Brazil

The music of the Soul Experience was an added draw for the many fans of this long time community band, which consists of the talented Trey Stone and Rocky Sleight plus the amazing vocals of Carlee Knight.

If interested in attending or joining this group that supports women and children both locally and globally, visit the Facebook page or website at www.sitahoesierra.org for meeting schedules and speakers.

Laurie Brazil is a member of Tahoe Sierra Soroptimist International.

History: Loss of historic

Bliss house in Glenbrook

Publisher's note: ***This is reprinted from the June 1975 Lake Tahoe Historical Society newsletter.***

Tahoe residents and visitors alike will be saddened at the loss of the 90-year old Bliss mansion in Glenbrook, which was destroyed by fire within a half hour during the early morning hours of June 5th. No cause for the fire has been determined although investigators say [it] is unlikely arson could be involved.



The two-story frame house, which has been used by five generations of the same family, was built by pioneer Tahoe lumberman D.L. Bliss at the time Glenbrook's claim to fame was not as a resort but as the center of a prosperous logging business. The home, now owned by William Bliss, was furnished with expensive Victorian antiques dating from his great grandfather's time.

Bill Bliss, a Society Member, stated no value could be placed on the loss of the home and furnishes until insurance reports are received. He will tear down the remaining walls and let grass fill the area.

The mansion has been the subject of many writings on the Tahoe Area and its past and is well known to the Society.

Only last summer, Bill Bliss, after recalling the picturesque little community's thriving area at the February meeting, hosted the membership at a luncheon tour of historic Glenbrook, including the lovely old family home.

Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival returns to its roots

By Kathryn Reed

Shakespeare is back – *really* back.

Last season the Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival did not put on a full play of William Shakespeare. While officials say the abridged version of his work that was staged was well received by audiences, plenty of others stayed away because it wasn't a true Shakespeare play.

"Twelfth Night" will be performed in July and August on the shores of Lake Tahoe at Sand Harbor in Incline Village. Officials have their fingers crossed the economy will continue to improve and a second play will be added in 2012 as has been the norm in prior years.



Karen Buranch as Julia Child in 2010. Photos/Kathryn Reed

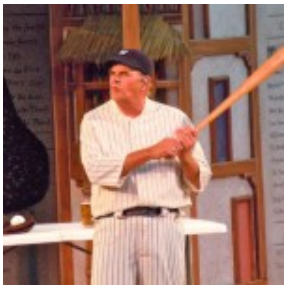
"It's going to be a wonderful show. It's full of great costumes and great music," said Daphne Lange, marketing director for the festival. "I think people will enjoy the return to traditional Shakespeare."

The actors have Mondays off. Festival organizers hope to fill in those days with other events. So far the Reno Philharmonic is booked for July 18. A Chautauqua performance will be part of the playbill Aug. 8.

Chautauqua is when a performer is dressed as a historical figure and shares stories about the character's life. Ginny Liebner Yates organizes the Chautauqua group that comes to Tahoe. Last year it was titled Hot Dogs to Haute Cuisine. It was appropriately named as husband-wife Gene and Karen Buranch took on the persons of Babe Ruth and Julia Child.

Dressed as if they were these American icons and with a minimalist setting of a kitchen of sorts for Julia Child, and a beer and baseball bat for Babe Ruth, it was almost as though they were really the people they were playing. This is because they are more than actors; they are historians and must know their character beyond the role.

As is the norm with Chautauqua, the actors stay in character to take questions from the audience – answering from the perspective of the character and in the time period they were alive. So no questions about steroids in baseball could be asked.



Gene Buranch as Babe Ruth.

This summer Karen Buranch will be back. Doug Watson will be her partner. They will be playing Western outlaw Belle Star and cowboy Will Rogers.

Changes at the venue this year include the lower gallery – aka beach chair section – will be assigned seating. This means not longer having to queue up hours before the performance.

The upper gallery will have beach chairs provided, though people can still bring blankets to sit on.

The entire venue seats 1,200 people.

Lange said the menu will be changing, but didn't have specifics just yet.

Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival's website has more information. Tickets for some performances are on sale now.

Carson City man has plan to save American Flat

By Frank X. Mullen Jr., Reno Gazette-Journal

Neal A. Dach admits he has no background in developing tourist attractions.

The Carson City native is a former Army bomb detection and disposal specialist, an Iraq war veteran and a graduate student in neuroscience at Harvard University. But when it comes to the historic American Flat ruin near Virginia City, he has one major question:

If millions of dollars of taxpayers' money are going to be spent on the 52-acre site, should they be used to turn the area into a revenue-generating tourist attraction or to blast it from the face of the earth?

“Demolishing the United Comstock Merger Mill devalues Nevada history,” said Dach of the U.S. Bureau of Land Management’s plan to turn the 89-year-old complex of eight buildings back into a sagebrush desert.

Read the whole story

V&T Railroad gearing up for summer season

The 2011 season for the Virginia & Truckee Railroad is high-balling down the track toward opening weekend, May 27–29 in Carson City.

Before the official opening weekend, the railroad is offering a sneak peek into the historic route with a special event on Mother’s Day, May 8.

Families hopping aboard the special edition train in celebration of mom can surprise her with a rose en route to Virginia City, then enjoy an afternoon of shopping, antiquing or lunch before returning to the depot. Tickets for the May 8 Mother’s Day excursion from Carson City to Virginia City are $29 for adults, $16 for kids under 12 and $26 for seniors over 65.

Season opening festivities slated for Memorial Day weekend showcase steam and diesel engines with round trip and one-way rides from Carson City to Virginia City. After opening weekend, trains run weekly Friday – Sunday through Oct. 30. With the first two seasons’ impressive complete sell-outs, getting “all aboard” now preserves a window to Old West history.

The V&T Railroad’s 16 miles of track re-opened in August 2009 after 70 years of non-operation. Each 90-minute ride includes scenic vistas of the Carson River and majestic Sierra Nevada, passing through two tunnels, by abandoned mine shafts, old cemeteries and offering occasional sightings of wild mustangs. The historic train travels the same silver route paved by the miners of the infamous 1860s Comstock silver boom.

For tickets, go online.

TOCCATA sets spring concert schedule

TOCCATA will present selections from J.S. Bach’s St. Matthew Passion in a series of concerts April 17-23.

Concerts are:

April 17 at 5:30pm at Trinity Episcopal Church in Reno;

April 20 at 7:30pm at St. Theresa Catholic Church in South Lake Tahoe;

April 22 at 7:30pm at St. Patrick’s Episcopal Church in Incline Village;

April 23 at 3pm at Christ the King Lutheran Church in Tahoe City.

Tickets are available at the door or online for $35 preferred, $25adults, $20 seniors, and $5 students. For information, call (775) 313.9697.

Reno man on trail of Amelia Earhart mystery

By Frank X. Mullen Jr., Reno Gazette-Journal

A Reno man, who for more than 30 years has been searching for Amelia Earhart, has come up with a way that scientists may be able to isolate the lost aviator's DNA from spit left on seals of envelopes.

If Earhart's DNA is available, it can be compared with a bone fragment found two years ago on a remote Pacific island near where Earhart vanished in 1937.

"I watch the TV show 'CSI Miami' and thought about how they are always extracting DNA from evidence," said Elgen M. Long, an Amelia Earhart scholar and author of "Amelia Earhart: The Mystery Solved." "I said, 'hey, I've got these personal letters she wrote and probably sealed herself.' People used letter openers back then, and sure enough the envelope seals were never broken."

Long called Justin Long, his grandson and a student at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, Canada. Justin pitched the project to Dongya Yang, a genetic archaeologist at the university. Yang agreed to attempt to extract DNA from mouth-lining cells that would have been in the saliva Earhart used to seal the envelopes.

"One of the letters was written by Amelia on airline letterhead while waiting for a flight, so we can be fairly certain that she is the one who sealed the envelope," said Justin Long, whose public relations and design agency ACG Corp. is partially funding the research.

Read the whole story

Art contest open to high school students

All high school students in the Fourth Congressional District are invited to participate in the Congressional Art Competition, An Artistic Discovery, a nationwide high school art competition sponsored by the members of the U.S. House of Representatives.

First-place entries from each congressional district will be displayed for one year in the Cannon Tunnel, leading to the U.S. Capitol. Each winning student will be invited, along with one guest, to the unveiling of the exhibit and a reception for all winners in June. Two round-trip airline tickets will be provided to the winning student.

Contest guidelines and release forms are available online.

Artwork should be sent to the following address no later than April 29: The Fourth District Congressional Arts Competition, PlacerArts, 808 Lincoln Way, Auburn, CA 95603.