Rascal Flatts returning to Lake Tahoe

Country music super-stars Rascal Flatts bring their infectious, good-time country music to the 2010 Lake Tahoe Summer Concert Series at Harveys Outdoor Arena on July 30.

Up-and-coming country hitmakers Kellie Pickler and Chris Young open the show.



Rascal Flatts

Tickets go on sale at 10am March 1.

Rascal Flatts released their first Greatest Hits CD, Greatest Hits, Vol. I in October, 2008. The album contains 13 of their biggest songs, starting with â€œPrayinâ€™ for Daylightâ€ and going through â€œLife Is a Highway.â€

In October 2009, they released a second edition of their greatest hits collection, this time with a second disc containing live performances of â€œTake Me There,â€ â€œSummer Nights,â€ â€œMe & My Gangâ€ and â€œWinner at a Losing Game.â€ Their latest album, Unstoppable, continues to produce hits including, â€œHere Comes Goodbye,â€ â€œSummer Nightsâ€ and the title track, â€œUnstoppable.â€

Rascal Flatts have won numerous awards over the past decade, including multiple Peopleâ€™s Choice Awards, Academy of Country Music Top Vocal Group awards, 2009 CMT Music Award for

Group Video of the Year (â€œEvery Dayâ€) and several AMA awards, including one for the 2009 Favorite Band, Duo or Group.

Tickets will be available only through TicketMaster outlets, www.ticketmaster.com and www.apeconcerts.com

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Work takes Tahoe doc all over the world

By Kathryn Reed

Steve Bannar is about to have his passport stamped several times in the next few months.

The orthopedist from South Lake Tahoe is headed to Vancouver on Feb. 20 as one of the U.S. Ski Team doctors. When he comes back he hopes to finalize the paperwork so he can be part of Doctors Without Borders to help with relief efforts in Haiti.



Steve Bannar

Bannar is no stranger to going to foreign countries to provide medical care. Usually he is working for Health Volunteers Overseas, which is part of the World Health Organization. In 2004, he spent 23 days in St. Lucia.

He’s also done work in Vietnam.

“The primary goal of this organization is to teach the national people to do the care. It’s a great organization. It’s really professionally done. It’s way better than the Olympic Committee,” Bannar said.

The doctor is hoping to go to Haiti with a friend from the East Coast. They have mutual friends who are already in the island nation helping in the aftermath of January’s devastating temblor.

Bannar said Haiti is in need of surgeons to help with amputations.

What he was doing this past weekend was a little less intricate. Daron Rahlves of Truckee, who is slated to compete in the skiercross event during the Olympics, was in need of some platelet rich plasma therapy.

Terry Orr, a colleague of Bannar’s in the Tahoe Center for Orthopedics, is Rahlves’ surgeon. The two doctors injected the athlete while crews with Red Bull, one of Rahlves’ sponsors, took footage of the procedure.

“Most people are out three months. He is trying to get ready in three weeks,” Bannar said of Rahlves, who dislocated his hip during the Winter X Games.

Bannar will be stationed in Vancouver, headquarters of the Games. Orr is already in Whistler where the downhill events will be staged.

Summit Lodge – the Zen of

lodging at Whistler

By Susan Wood

WHISTLER, British Columbia – It's hard to imagine a hotel steps away from one of North America's most vibrant ski villages would find its guests sleeping like babies.

But that's the Summit Lodge & Spa in Whistler – tranquil, serene, relaxing and quiet in a big way. It's warm, inviting and comfortable, like the staff – with gas fireplaces in the lobby and rooms, local art hanging on the walls, Asian furnishings and some of the plushest robes ever.



Lobby at the Summit Lodge. Photos/Kathryn Reed

For an 11-year-old boutique hotel located in an area about to experience its busiest time by hosting the 2010 Winter Olympics, the staff and even the nature of the place seem to approach the prospect of being on a world stage with a reserved excitement and self-assuredness. It's not meant to be a Fairmont, Westin or Hilton with small villages inside. Instead, the Summit has comfort, style and character of its own. A Malaysian family, who also just opened Whistler's Aava Whistler Hotel near the base of the slopes, owns the Summit.

"Sometimes we compete with great difficulty. But the playing field can be very level when you're quiet," General Manager

Rosemary Cook told *Lake Tahoe News* of competing with so many large hoteliers in a well-known luxury resort market.

A typical day at the Summit may start with rolling out of a comfortable king bed. From there, it's a flick of a switch for a gas fire and a glance out the two-story balcony at the outdoor heated swimming pool and hot tub. The plush robe competes with the slopes that are within walking distance or a short bus ride away.

Morning continues with coffee in the fully equipped kitchenette. It's as if a cook furnished the room. But breakfast today consists of a banana to make room for on-the-slopes French fries at noon. Then, it's save-yourself-for tapas at the Elements restaurant next door later that evening before retiring for the evening in front of the movie "Downhill Racer" starring Robert Redford, which aired a few weeks before the Winter Olympics.

Nice touches make the morning pleasurable, with toiletries like seaweed soap from the Taman Sari Spa, which is located down the hall from the lobby. And yes, it's nice knowing the thoughtfully placed clothesline across the bathtub shower can dry out a swimsuit in a few hours.

A quick check of emails sitting on the soft sofa was comfy for a limited time. With needing to plug into the free high speed



A room at the Summit.

Internet and not having it automatic, meant not being able to

type at the table in a more comfortable business-like setting.

If playing tunes is the thing to do, the room comes with 40 digital music channels. Yoga kits, books and games are also available. Those with a bigger staff will find 866 square feet of meeting space to accommodate 80 people.

Before a day of skiing, the best treat for muscles is a hot tub â€“ with coffee in hand because one never wants to become too docile before facing a mega-mountain like Whistler Blackcomb.

The Summit provides ski lockers downstairs for an easy out to the city bus or to the hotel's part-time shuttle service.

A five-minute walk from the Summit Lodge through the invigorating Whistler Village provides access to the largest ski resort in North America with more than 8,000 acres and a 5,000-foot-plus vertical drop.

Only one ski resort comes close – Zermatt in Switzerland. In scenery and magnitude Whistler looks like a distant cousin from Europe.



The Summit is on the edge of Whistler Village.

Providing a desirable environment while helping the environment is a part of the plan. The Summit has implemented a recycling program throughout the hotel, including the reuse

of soap, shampoo and lotion and composting food waste from Elements. High efficiency light bulbs have also been put in fixtures and lamps.

The Summit's general manager knows the feeling of falling in love with the place. The England native arrived from Bermuda 16 years ago and hasn't looked back.

"People will go on holiday and want to walk in and be impressed,"Coo k said. She keeps that in mind every day.

Cook advocates making improvements – whether they involve the property she manages or at the ski resort her guests come to play on. Albeit skeptical at first with its hefty $52 million price tag, she admits to now being a big supporter of Whistler Blackcomb's most notable mountain enhancement – its Peak-2-Peak Gondola. In 11 minutes, the largest unsupported gondola in the world can whisk skiers and boarders from one mountain to another.

After all, Cook came to Whistler with the sole purpose of learning to ski.

"I couldn't imagine living anywhere else," she said.

The sentiment may well be taken from her guests, who may not imagine spending a winter vacation anywhere else – especially for such a grand occasion as the Games. It may also apply to her vendors wanting to be a part of an event intended to instill peace and goodwill among nations.

Among its artwork, the Summit is displaying the acrylic paintings of Lynn Pocklington. Whistler will feature its ArtWalks during the Feb. 12-28 Olympics, and Pocklington]s bears and wolf installed at the Summit are on the route.



The hot tub and pool invite weary skiers.

“I am very excited to be a part of the ArtWalk during the Olympics. The Summit is the perfect place to be displayed being so close to everything in the village” Pocklington told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The local government commissioned artwork of black bears to represent the natural spirit of the mountain town. Prints will be gifted to visiting delegates and VIPs of the Olympic Games.

Where to Go:

The Summit Lodge and Spa is located on Main Street steps away from the Whistler Village off the Sea to Sky Highway about 90 miles north of Vancouver. Rooms – which include 81 suites and studios – start at $169, with romance packages involving dinner, spa treatments and chocolate.

For more information, call 888.913.8811 or (604) 932.2778 or go to www.summitlodge.com.

Haiti becomes a lesson in

giving and then some

By Kathryn Reed

Irene Kaelin couldnâ€™t control her students â€“ and that was a good thing.

The Tahoe Valley Elementary School fifth-grade teacher turned the tragedy of the Haiti earthquake into a lesson plan. But it started with her students. They wanted to raise money to help those in need.

â€œWhat an incredible experience,â€ Kaelin told the Lake Tahoe Unified School District board Tuesday night. â€œThe kids were so excited we had to run with it.â€

The goal was to raise $421 â€“ or $1 per student. A check was written this month for $1,265 to Doctors Without Borders.

Students Tianna Guerrero and Misty Parsh gave a short presentation to the board, too. They said talking in other classrooms and making announcements on the intercom were the hardest part of the project.

The students debated where to give the money. They did the research. They did the work.

Through it all, Kaelin was able to use the January tragedy in her reading, writing and social studies lessons.

Other schools in the district have also raised money for Haiti relief efforts, with a couple sites continuing to do so.

Squaw’s Heuga dies at 66

By USSA

LOUISVILLE, Colo. – Olympic medalist Jimmie Heuga, a star of the 1964 Olympic Winter Games and one of the U.S. Ski Team’s greatest ski racers, died Feb. 8.

His death came on the eve of the Olympics in Vancouver and 46 years to the day after his medal. Heuga, who was bronze behind Billy Kidd’s silver in the 1964 Olympic slalom, was 66.

“Jimmie Heuga was a champion in every sense of the word,” said U.S. Ski Team President and CEO Bill Marolt, who skied with Heuga on the 1964 Olympic Team. “He was a champion as an athlete, as a person and any way you want to measure him.



Billy Kidd with teammate and bronze medalist Jimmy Heuga. Photo/U.S. Ski Team/Tom Kelly

“We always talk about toughness – you heard about it in the Super Bowl this weekend,” added Marolt. “When I look back at all the athletes I’ve known, pound for pound, Jimmie Heuga was the toughest I’ve ever met. He was a 5-foot-6, 140 pound guy who didn’t back down from anybody. That’s the kind of toughness you need to be a champion.”

Heuga gained worldwide acclaim for his 1964 Olympic medal. But his real mark on society came after he was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis and dedicated his life to research and innovative treatment of the disease.

“Jimmie Heuga was one of our greatest Olympians and one of our greatest Americans,” said U.S. Olympic Committee CEO Scott Blackmun from Vancouver. “As a skier he was among the best in the world. But, as a human being later in his life, he made a difference for those suffering from a terrible disease. He will be sorely missed by our Olympic family and by everyone he touched in his life.”

Heuga grew up skiing in Squaw Valley and became a U.S. champion in 1960 at the age of 16. He came in the 1964 Games as one of the favorites at just 20 years old.

As a 13-year old, Heuga moved to Colorado to train in the Aspen Ski Club program. He later became a star at the University of Colorado under Coach Bob Beattie, winning an NCAA title in 1963. Heading into the 1964 Games, Heuga was part of a powerhouse team that included Kidd, Bill Marolt, Chuck Ferries, Buddy Werner and more with hopes of the first U.S. men’s alpine skiing medal in history.

Going into the final event, the slalom, the men were still without a medal. Heuga and Kidd combined to make history, with Heuga taking bronze and Kidd silver. The two became lifelong friends.

After a pair of top-six finishes at the 1966 World Championships in Portillo, Chile, Heuga went on to become the first American to win the prestigious Arlberg-Kandahar in 1967 in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany. That same year he began to notice symptoms of what would later be diagnosed as MS. A year later he was named to his second Olympic Team, gracing the cover of Sports Illustrated together with Kidd.

At only 26, at the peak of his ski racing career, Heuga’s MS

diagnosis was confirmed. While the conventional medical wisdom of the time was for MS victims to avoid physical or emotional stress, Heuga went about his life differently. He found that his physical health greatly improve with his own program of exercise, nutrition and mental motivation.

In 1984, the Olympic medalist took what he had learned personally to the world, founding The Heuga Center in Edwards, Colo. For over a quarter century, Heuga spread his “can do” philosophy with others. Today the Center, renamed Can Do Multiple Sclerosis, continues the legacy he established as a passionate advocate for other MS patients and for new treatment therapies which are now the medical standard for MS care.

“He was the personification of determination and never giving up – he inspired so many people,” said Kidd. “Jimmie’s accomplishments on the race course will forever be remembered. But it’s his accomplishments and drive in the fight against MS that will continue to help so many people live their lives. His life is an inspiration.”

Born to Lucille and Pascal Heuga, a Basque immigrant who ran the cable car at Squaw Valley, Heuga began skiing at 2 and three years later, he was competing on the junior circuit. He appeared in a Warren Miller film at age 9. In 1958, at 15, he was named to the U.S. Ski Team. He remains the youngest man ever on its roster.

He has been honored by the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, and is an awardee of the U.S. Ski Team’s Texaco Star Award. He has been on the President’s Council on Physical Fitness, and was inducted into the World Sports Humanitarian Hall of Fame two years ago. He is an honored member of the U.S. Ski and Snowboard Hall of Fame, inducted in1976, and the Colorado Ski and Snowboard Hall of Fame in 1987. He was named to the Colorado Athletic Hall of Fame in 2000.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the Jimmie Heuga Endowment Fund, 27 Main Street East, Suite 303, Edwards, CO 81632. Details on services are pending.

EDC autism registry helps law enforcement

By Cathy Locke, Sacramento Bee

A new registry is aiding law enforcement and providing some peace of mind to families of autistic children and adults in El Dorado County.

The registry through the Sheriff's Office "is unique in Northern California and maybe in the state," said Ron Huff, director of clinical and intake services for Sacramento-based Alta California Regional Center.

The center helps secure services for children and adults with developmental disabilities.

Read the whole story

Feds supply Placer County with foreclosure relief funds

Placer County is set to launch a program that seeks to reduce the number of vacant, bank-owned houses in unincorporated

neighborhoods while helping residents with low or moderate incomes purchase homes.

The initiative is part of a federally funded effort known nationwide as the Neighborhood Stabilization Program.

Placer County has been awarded a $750,000 grant for its program.

The federal government designated which areas are eligible to participate in the program, using data on such factors as foreclosure rates and the numbers of sub-prime mortgages in each area.

In Placer County, unincorporated areas eligible for participation include North Auburn-Bowman, Foresthill, Kings Beach, Tahoe Vista and Sheridan.

The primary goal is stabilizing communities hard hit by foreclosures by acquiring vacant, bank-owned houses; renovating them if necessary; and helping residents with limited incomes purchase the houses. Loans also can be made directly to homebuyers to purchase houses already listed for sale directly from banks.

In Placer County, the home-purchase assistance will be available to residents with low or moderate incomes. To meet moderate-income limits, a four-person household must have annual income of no more than $87,350.

Each participating household will be required to make a 3 percent down payment and line up financing from a private lender for part of the home-purchase price.

The Neighborhood Stabilization Program will provide gap loans up to $150,000 to cover the rest of the purchase prices. The loans will be shared-equity, second deeds of trust that do not require monthly payments and generally will not be repaid until homes are sold.

Participants do not have to be first-time buyers.

To be eligible for acquisition, bank-owned homes must have been vacant at least 90 days.

More information is available by calling (530) 745.3150.

Northen Italy exhibit to close

A five-day closing reception is planned for Feb. 12-16 from 11am-5pm (with Italian desserts) for the Northern Italy Photo Exhibition by Dirk Yuricich.

Dirk Yuricich Photography Gallery is at 171 Shady Lane, Stateline.



Dirk Yuricich

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

Fairmont Chateau Whistler – luxurious mountain lodging

By Susan Wood

WHISTLER, British Columbia – On first impression, second impression and lasting impression, the majestic nature of the Fairmont Chateau Whistler comes across as striking.

Outside the slopeside window, in particular from the 10th floor, the views invigorate and excite.

Opening the small, standing-room-only balcony door offers mountain breezes off the Wizard Express chairlift runs, which is just steps away from the resort.



Chateau Fairmont Whistler Photo/Provided

Directly below, a hot tub and drink at the Mallard Lounge fire pits beckon the weary. There are even poolside cocktails from the lounge if going for a longer soak in hot water. Expect a crowd in late afternoon.

The hotel comes with the grand distinction of being the first with ski-in, ski-out access to Whistler Blackcomb.

The hotel's grandeur complements the mountain whose base it sits at. It is practically a village unto itself. One never

needs to leave the premise – it's like an inclusive resort without one bill. This isn't a resort just for skiers and snowboarders. Non-hotel guests can also enjoy the restaurants, shops and spa.

The management and staff have thought of everything in the world of hospitality. And their enthusiasm to please guests is evident in every level of staff. Listening to them interact with customers proved the importance they put on guest relations.

And now, the biggest international sporting event will be staged in their backyard. They're booked for the occasion. The Olympics are Feb. 12-28.

"We are welcoming the world during the 2010 Winter Games to Whistler – this incredible year-round destination. We will be looking to maximize how we can benefit from the exposure of the 2010 Winter Olympic Games and being on the world stage," General Manager Roger Soane told *Lake Tahoe News*.

By most standards, the Fairmont Chateau Whistler is more than a hotel. It's an experience.

The lobby has that grand hotel, high-ceiling architectural style that gives the visitor a sense of arriving in luxury. Accents of art and antiques dot the common areas and deck the halls. One hallway leads to 28,000 square feet of conference- and meeting-room space – with a new 12,000-square-foot ballroom for events.

The hotel was last remodeled in 1997.

Being a four-season resort, the patio also features a lap pool with underwater music. Another swimming pool starts outside and spills indoors to the spa and workout area. Inclement weather and chilly Canadian temperatures have a way of bringing people in swimsuits inside to a balmy room where steam billows from the sauna and the inside hot tub. A full

fitness center and spa with a variety of treatments provide places to work the muscles then work out the kinks. (See more on that in a future *Lake Tahoe News* story.) Recommended: a hot stone massage can be just the answer for muscles wanting to succumb to heat and pressure.

Ideas abound for those who stay in for the day to eat, drink, be pampered, shop and wander to their heart's delight.

One hallway meanders past the Mallard Lounge and Terrace, with inside seating flanking a dual-sided wood fireplace with cushy chairs. Settling in by the fire on the cozy sofa is certainly an option if one is accustomed to eating at a coffee table. Recommended: the mountain burger with French fries and a razzle dazzle drink rarely mixed at home. (You won't be hungry the next morning until viewing the menus again.)

A full breakfast buffet including an omelet bar is set up in the Wildflower restaurant, which is transformed into a fine dining option for dinner. Fondue is served in the Wildflower entryway in mid-afternoon. Recommended: the seafood chowder is a perfect complement to the wild salmon with maple syrup glaze accompanied by local British Columbia wines.

Light meals can be picked up at the Portabello Market and Fresh Bakery downstairs.

On this level are also the ski valet, shops and galleries.

And aside from a comprehensive adults and kids in-room dining menu, even Fido can get food. The Fairmont is pet-friendly. All shapes, sizes and pedigrees can be found stepping in and out of elevators and rooms.

Along with a slew of amenities, views come standard in the 550 rooms at the Fairmont Chateau Whistler – of the Upper Whistler Village, valley and slopes.

The touches of creature comforts and convenience are important

here.

Spacious closets allow room for ski boots and extra clothing that comes with winter travel. A coffee and tea maker pulls out on a shelf from the television cabinet with a refreshment rack close by.

When lounging on the comfy bed or on the Internet at the work desk, use the fluffy bathrobe to live in and expect to be plenty warm.

Note: careful with the heating controls because you could be sweating by the time you wake up. The towels are a bit worn and should not be laundered with the standard hotel detergent that has a distinct chemical smell.

And bring your wallet. Rooms start at $337 a night, and luxury goes up from there.

The Fairmont Chateau Whistler provides a la carte romance plans and multi-day skier packages. The resort can arrange activities designed to fill an outdoor enthusiast's day in winter and summer – including playing at the resort's 18-hole golf course and scheduling mountaintop barbecues and glacier picnics.

Other notables:

The hotel features a rooftop wedding chapel.

They grow herbs on-site.

Singer Seal gave an impromptu performance after his marriage proposal to model Heidi Klum.

The hotel was featured on the "The Bachelor".

Where to go:

The Fairmont Chateau Whistler is located on Chateau Boulevard at the base of Blackcomb Mountain in the Upper Village of

Whistler, about 90 miles north of Vancouver off the Sea to Sky Highway. The Chateau is part of the Fairmont’s chain of luxury hotels situated on the beaches from Hawaii to Bermuda and the urban digs from New York to San Francisco.

Reservations:

Call 800.606.8244 or (604) 938.8000

Email chateauwhistler@fairmont.com

Website – www.fairmont.com/whistler

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Nevada casinos betting on better Super Bowl take

By Case Keefer, Las Vegas Sun

As far as Nevada is concerned, the 2006 Super Bowl comes in as the greatest ever.

Super Bowl XL, which paired the Pittsburgh Steelers and the Seattle Seahawks, generated a record $94.5 million worth of sports wagers in the state. At least one prominent sports book director in town thinks this yearâ€™s game between the Indianapolis Colts and New Orleans Saints could surpass that total.

â€œI believe that the total handle for the state will be a nice number,â€ said John Avello, race and sports book director at Wynn Las Vegas. â€œIt could be the biggest number of all time.â€

Read the whole story

Super Bowl Betting Totals

2009-$81.5 million

2008-$92 million

2007-$93 million

2006-$94.5 million

2005-$90.7 million

2004-$81.2 million

2003-$71.6 million

2002-$71.5 million

2001-$67.6 million

2000-$71 million