Nordic legends glide back in time to 1960

By Susan Wood and Kathryn Reed

TAHOE CITY – Medals won decades ago, patches that show little wear despite being 50 years old, ski bibs from the eighth Winter Olympiad – they were all in vogue Friday night at the Nordic Legends Dinner.

Some of these athletes, groomers, patrollers and other participants from the 1960 Squaw Valley Games seemed to have the bravado that would allow them to compete next month in Canada if they wanted to.



Nordic Legends Dinner at Granlibakken in Tahoe City on Jan. 15. Photos/Kathryn Reed

But on this particular night it was all about Squaw – what it meant to these men and women.

Granlibakken, which had a rich history before these nearly 250 people came together, was full of chatter as people recalled what it was like to bring the Games to the North Shore. The dinner was just one of many events during Olympic Heritage

Week, which ends today, in honor of Squaw Valley's 50th anniversary of hosting the Games.

The dinner featured various stations dishing out international food and a heavy-hitter lineup of skiers, competitive athletes, groomers, coaches and volunteers sharing stories about an event steeped in history, unity and goodwill.

Three large screens depicted still photos and film shot at the VIII Winter Olympics as well as crews making it all a reality.

Here are a just a few of the people from the dinner and their stories:

Chummy Broomhall

It's hard to believe Chummy Broomhall was born in 1919. His enthusiasm for Nordic



Chummy Broomhall

events is practically contagious. He didn't compete in the 1960 Games, instead, he is credited with designing the cross country trails for those Games and 20 years later in Lake Placid.

But he knows a thing or two about the sport. He competed in the 1948 and 1952 Games, and was in the 10th Mountain Division during World War II.

Squaw's owner, the late Alex Cushing, brought Broomhall out to determine where best to put the cross country course.

Broomhall had it all figured out – the valley between Squaw and what is now Alpine.

“I told the Olympic Committee they used up all my terrain,” Broomhall said after he came back to Squaw and saw the development in preparation for the Games. He came up with Plan B – near McKinney Creek in what is now Sugar Pine Point State Park.

Broomhall told *Lake Tahoe News* after the dinner he’s excited to see the Olympics return to the West.

“I’ve heard they have nice facilities, but bad weather can jinx the Games,” he warned.

He should know. Broomhall is known for his uncanny ability to battle the weather and move snow around with one of the earliest grooming machines.

Broomhall is a saint of sorts among the sports competitors. He was considered the “chief of the course” of the 1960 Olympic Games.

Mother Nature aside, Broomhall beamed when he spoke of how skiing and working at the Olympics changed his life forever. That’s why he admitted to feeling so connected to the people in the room – even if he didn’t know everyone. Dinner attendees swarmed him like they do a rock star.

He put the attendees in stitches with his colorful stories and his rendition of a cautionary ode to skiers.

Although cross country skiing doesn’t receive the attention in the United States as it does in Europe, Broomhall isn’t convinced it’s a dying sport. He’s comforted by the youth taking it up. A group tried out the course he originally groomed for the Squaw Games, the first to test the restored tracks near Tahoe City.

Hart Axley

Hart Axley, a member of the 1960 Winter Games ski patrol, launched the dinner with a toast, wearing his original ski patrol jacket and distinctive hat.



Hart Axley

Its 105 pins on one side are dedicated to Rocky Mountain destinations, with one noting he's a member of the Colorado Ski Hall of Fame. The Coloradan rarely misses the tight-knit National Ski Patrol reunions in Winter Park, Colo. On the other side of the hat, a row of Olympic pins made it obvious why the evening was important to him. The rest mark ski resorts from everywhere beyond Colorado, including one of Heavenly Valley.

In addition to working on the ski patrol of the Tahoe Olympics, Axley managed the flag detail.

He's also a heck of singer – he led the audience in a rousing rendition of "God Bless America."

Joe Pete Wilson

Joe Pete Wilson competed on the U.S. Nordic team in 1960 and says Squaw is still special to him.

"The Olympic Field House was awesome. It provided part of the mystique of Squaw Valley," Wilson said. "Squaw Valley set the standard for all future Winter Olympic sites."



He remembers Walt Disney choreographing entertainment every night. Disney also created the Opening Ceremonies.

He said the media was great, joking that, “Even the *New York Times* could locate California.”

Camaraderie was a huge part of his experience in 1960 and later as a coach.

After Wilson laid out a beautifully crafted story of the experience of the 1960 Winter Games at Squaw, he told *Lake Tahoe News* the event and subsequently this dinner were “the high point of my life.”

Laszio Fono

At age 81, competitive skier Laszlo Fono recalled escaping war-torn Hungary with



Laszio Fono

wife Paulette and two pairs of cross country skis in pursuit of a better life in the United States. He won the National Nordic Championships in 1959. He wore that medal Friday night.

“It’s my love. It’s in my blood,” he said of skiing, as images from 1960 flashed behind him.

Fono donated those 210cm wooden Nordic skis for the Olympic

museum that will be built near the Ehrman Mansion on the West Shore.

“It’s the memory of this,” he said of why he came.

He remembers going to the gold medal hockey game and losing his voice as he cheered for the U.S.

The Fonos ended up in Atherton, south of San Francisco. They have maintained a 69-year friendship with fellow skier and Hungarian Martin Hollay of South Lake Tahoe.

A cast of hundreds

Hollay, who helped design the Nordic trail, was at the dinner, saying he enjoyed seeing his old friends.

U.S. Olympic hockey team right wing Weldon Olson agreed.

“We always like to see each other,” he said.

It was the 1960 hockey team that is the true Dream Team — having beat Russia at a time when it was only amateurs on the ice.

Olson came to the dinner wearing his Olympic team jacket.

Paul Johnson, another member of the gold medal hockey team, remembered the stadium was almost empty by the time the final game was over because it was played so late at night.

People affiliated with Sierra Nevada College got many of the jobs in 1960. One dinner attendee talked about being responsible for keeping the women from using the sauna that was on the men’s side and the funny stories associated with that.



Candace Cable,
Chummy
Broomhall,
Martin Hollay

Candace Cable, a well decorated Paralympian, has a wealth of praise for Broomhall. She reminded the crowd that it was 1960 that the Paralympics started to be staged in the same city as the Olympics, though that didn't happen until the 1970s for winter sports.

She made sure sit skis were on the Nordic trail the next day when many from this gathering re-enacted the biathlon race (with lasers, not guns) at Sugar Pine Point.

Peter Lahdenpera, who was on the Nordic relay and competed in biathlon, talked about having two left skis waxed just before he was to ski the anchor lap. A screwdriver was found at the last minute so bindings could be changed.

Mac Miller, a fellow teammate, said it was incredible to walk into the stadium, just being there to represent your country.

Bill Lindemann, interpretive specialist with the Sierra District of the California State Parks, emceed the event.

He said the tiller Broomhall used to groom the Nordic tracks should be restored by this summer. It was the state parks system that inherited much of what was built for the Olympics.

That evening it was mentioned that only 1 in 500,000 U.S. residents will become an Olympian. That makes Lake Tahoe all that more special with the contingent that is likely to

descend upon Vancouver, British Columbia, next month.

Thirty flags hung in the dining hall to honor each country that had been at Squaw. Lindemann reminded the audience that the five rings making up the symbol of the Olympics represent the continents coming together in peace for peaceful competition.

Publisher's note: *On Jan. 20 read about the memories one South Lake Tahoe resident has from running the Olympic torch in 2002.*

Free swine flu vaccinations in Placer County

Placer County Department of Health and Human Services will have free, public H1N1 vaccine clinics through the month of January. Clinics will be offered as follows:

* Jan 19, Placer County Clinic, 8665 Salmon Ave., Kings Beach; 9:30-11:30am and 1-4pm;

* Jan 26, Placer County Clinic, 8665 Salmon Ave., Kings Beach; 9:30-11:30am and 1-4pm;

* Jan. 26, William Jessup University, 333 Sunset Blvd., Rocklin, from 2-6pm; and

* Jan. 28, Adventure Christian Church, 6401 Stanford Ranch Rd., Roseville, from 2-6pm.

The community clinics, which in some cases are in coordination with cities, are open to Placer County residents. There is no cost for any of the vaccinations. Children who need a second

dose may also attend the community clinics, or may hear from their schools that clinics have been planned for them.

Free swine flu clinics in EDC

Additional H1N1 (swine) flu community vaccination clinics have been scheduled in El Dorado County. The clinics are open to all El Dorado County residents.

The vaccine is free and will be administered subject to availability.

The community flu shot clinics in the Placerville area are sponsored by the El Dorado County Health Services Department, Public Health Division; the clinics in South Lake Tahoe are organized by Barton Health and co-sponsored by the Health Services Department and the Lake Tahoe Unified School District.

The dates and locations of upcoming community H1N1 vaccination clinics include:

Jan. 28 from 12:30-3:00pm at the Mother Lode Lions Hall, 4701 Missouri Flat Road, Diamond Springs.

Jan. 28 from 4-6:30pm at Bijou Community School in the multipurpose room, 3501 Spruce Ave., South Lake Tahoe.

Feb. 3 from 3-6pm at South Tahoe Middle School in the multipurpose room, 2940 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe.

Feb. 18 from 1-3pm at Light of the Hills Lutheran Church in the Fellowship Hall, 3100 Rodeo Road, Cameron Park.

Winter Film Series returns to Tahoe City

Alpenglow Sports and Alex Honnold’s third free show of their annual Winter Film Series is Jan. 21 in Tahoe City

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, 877 N. Lake Blvd., Tahoe City

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.

LTUSD receives $1 million grant

The state Department of Education has awarded a three-year, million dollar grant to Lake Tahoe Unified School District which will create opportunities for enhanced and ongoing professional development for teachers in grades three through eight.

The California Mathematics and Science Partnership (CaMSP) program seeks to establish partnerships to improve the academic achievement of students in mathematics and science.

LTUSD, in partnership, with Salida District and Modesto City Districts in Modesto, and Lincoln District in Stockton, applied for the grant, called Summit to Sand. The grant was awarded in the amount of $339,201 per year for three years, totaling $1,017,603.

More than 30 teachers have been recruited for a unique three-year professional development program that draws upon the diverse geography of California to educate teachers and motivate students. Teachers will receive instruction in life, earth, and physical science, focusing on the natural environment of California in order to positively impact studentsâ€™ English language arts and science achievement.

Faculty from Lake Tahoe, Columbia, and San Joaquin Delta community colleges will provide instruction at three summer institutes from 2010-12.

Summit to Sand brings together key partners to improve teacher quality, contribute to the research base on â€œplace-based learningâ€, and pioneer much-needed partnerships with community colleges.

Additional partners include UC Davisâ€™ Tahoe Environmental Research Center, the San Joaquin County Office of Education in Stockton, CSU Monterey Bay, and the Monterey Bay Aquarium.

International workers get crash course in mountain living

By Kathryn Reed

Outside the college theater conversations were taking place about where each other is living on the South Shore, what country they are from and what their job is.

Being an international worker is what they have in common. With that designation also comes the unfamiliarity of living in a mountain town, not knowing how to get around, where things are, or the nuances of the ski industry vocabulary.

On Friday night, 122 workers filled Lake Tahoe Community College's theater to get a dose of reality about what the South Shore is all about.



Mauricio Travassos and Txai Santiago,

both from Brazil, are excited to be working in South Lake Tahoe. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Txai Santiago attended the free event put on by the Sierra Human Resources Association (SHRA) to better understand South Lake Tahoe and meet people. She is working in the rental shop at Sierra-at-Tahoe.

A fellow Brazilian, Mauricio Travassos, works at Sierra as a cashier in one of the restaurants. He said he came to Tahoe to live in the mountains and experience cold weather.

Friday's gathering attracted workers from Sierra, Kirkwood, Powder House and Heavenly Sports. Home for them is Chile, Brazil, Peru, Argentina, South Africa and Australia. Most are in their late teens or early 20s.

"Clearly they get a good orientation into their own resort's culture and the job, but they don't get to connect with kids from other countries," explained Laura Moriarty, president-elect of the nonprofit SHRA.

This is the second season the group has put on the orientations. Two North Shore events were in December. Between the three workshops, more than 400 workers were reached. Moriarty believes that's about 85 percent of the international workers.

Topics on Jan. 8 included:

Ski-town and Resort Terms 101

Living in and getting around the Lake Tahoe/Truckee Community

Ways to save money

Banking at Wells Fargo Bank

Common American Customs

Partying and Night Life

Fit for Work and Health and Safety

College Classes

But it went deeper – explaining what verbal and sexual harassment are, where free Internet access is, how to get around without a vehicle, what tipping is all about, rules about drinking alcohol, and what there is to do outside of work.

The college had a table explaining the classes and resources available during their short stay. Tahoe Regional Planning Agency had information as well and gave a short presentation about what it means to be a good steward of the land.

Fewer international workers are working at Lake Tahoe resorts compared to past years because more people living in the United States are applying for those same jobs.

Moriarty said there was a time when about 25 percent of resort's seasonal employees were from outside the United States. That percentage is down to 7.

"The main reason we hire international workers is it brings an international flavor to the resort,"Kirstin Cattell, Sierra's spokeswoman said.

In California, almost 20 percent of the tourists are from outside the country. With skiers-boarders being from all over the world, having a diverse work force adds to the international experience.

The workers want a world experience, too.

“It’s better than I thought it would be,” Santiago said of working and living in the States.

Charities continue to benefit from celeb golf tourney

By Kathryn Reed

Christmas is coming late to a number of charities on the South Shore â€“ and they are fine with that.

Carol Chaplin, executive director of Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority, has been making calls to let organizations know they are going to share $77,000.

The money is from last summerâ€™s celebrity golf tournament at Edgewood Tahoe in Stateline. American Century, the title sponsor of the annual event, and the Lance Armstrong Foundation are providing the funds. This is in addition to the $90,000 that was given shortly after the tournamentâ€™s conclusion.

â€œThey have a strong relationship with this community,â€ Chaplin said of the golf tournament organizers.

The initial cash was divvied up between the South Lake Tahoe Boys & Girls Club, Tahoe Youth & Family Services and Bread & Broth.

The latest checks will be written to a slew of entities. With the Armstrong Foundationâ€™s focus on cancer, the initial directive was for the cash to go to cancer related programs on

the South Shore.

Barton Healthâ€™s mammogram screening, Relay for Life, the community clinicâ€™s pap smear program, and the Cancer League will share $28,000.

The remaining $49,000 will be divided among CASA, South Lake Tahoe Womenâ€™s Center, Family Resource Center, Tahoe Arts Project, Christmas Cheer, South Tahoe and Whittell high schools, and Lake Tahoe and Douglas County education foundations.

South Shore Olympic reporter tells stories from 1960

By Kathryn Reed

â€œI was too naÃ¯ve to understand it was special,â€ Del Laine says. â€œI was excited to be there. The internationality of it.â€

Now, 50 years later, Laine appreciates the work she did as a journalist covering the Winter Olympics at Squaw Valley from Feb. 18-28, 1960.

She was 29 years old, with the byline Del Wright. *Lake Tahoe News* was an eight-column weekly newspaper that was transformed into a daily for two weeks during the Olympics at Squaw Valley. Flip Brandi owned the South Lake Tahoe paper at the time.



Squaw's Alex Cushing answers questions from South Lake Tahoe's Del Wright during the 1960 Olympics. Photo/Sarah Link

(The paper ceased to exist years ago â€“ but the name was resurrected last year as this online news source.)

Following the lead of *Sports Illustrated* writers kept Laine in the know of what to cover.

â€œIâ€™ll never forget the hockey team. They were the real miracle on ice,â€ Laine said. The United States won gold in 1960. The college athletes beat Canada, Russia and then Czechoslovakia. This was in the middle of the Cold War and the Eastern Bloc was expected to dominate the ice.

Laine remembers the â€œeggâ€ position â€“ something no one had seen a skier do before. We call it a tuck now. Jean Vuarnet of France is credited with creating the tuck position as he showed it off to the world on Siberia Bowl.

Laine talks about how the athletes all stayed in the village together, which was not something that had happened before or since. A camaraderie of sorts was evident.

She had access to Squaw Valley founder Alex Cushing, as well as the athletes â€“ winners and losers.

On some days seven Olympic stories covered the entire front page of *Lake Tahoe News*. Features about the athletes, that beef was the primary food served to them, the use of metal skis for the first time, how the Europeans were skeptical of the timekeepersâ€™ abilities, the records that were smashed â€“ all of this was memorialized in the pages which are now tattered and a bit yellow.

Laine has other memorabilia from those days â€“ her press pass, items from *Sports Illustrated*, information distributed by the U.S. Olympic Committee, a calendar from Harrah's Club.

South Lake Tahoe had hoped to capitalize on the Olympics being on the North Shore, but that never transpired, Laine said.

It was a hectic time to be a reporter â€“ no laptops, no cell phones, no four-wheel drive. She remembers Highway 89 around Emerald Bay being closed once in those two weeks.

Laine and fellow *Lake Tahoe News* writer Jeanne Ireland would type their stories at Squaw, edit them on the drive back to the South Shore and have them cleaned up for the pressmen to convert their words into hot type.

Publisher's note: *Read Del Wright's reprinted synopsis of the 1960 Olympics on Jan. 15.*

Ex-LT art gallery owner

making news in Palm Springs

By Terria Smith, Desert Sun

The Palm Springs VillageFest Board lost a member after its meeting on Dec. 22.

Jill Beede, a Desert Hot Springs High School teacher and former Lake Tahoe art gallery owner, submitted a letter of resignation dated the same day as the meeting.

With Beede’s resignation and the absence of Sally McManus, who resigned for medical reasons last fall, the board now has two vacant positions. Five members remain.

Read the whole story

Souers sworn in as president of STAR

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – Itâ€™s a much different real estate market today compared to when Theresa Souers began her first stint as president of the South Tahoe Association of Realtors in 2006.

2005 was a heck of a good year for those in the real estate market. The same cannot be said of 2009.



Theresa Souers

Still, Souers chose to take the helm of the nearly 300-member organization when Mike Phillips backed out of the job a month before he was to be installed.

The installation dinner was Jan. 8 at Edgewood Tahoe.

The other officers are: Amanda Adams, president-elect; Jill Teakell, vice president; Ken Daley, secretary-treasurer; and Barb Childs, immediate past president.

The directors are Pamela Francis, Judith Hanson, Michael Mulligan, Kathy Southern, Michelle Keck, Cindy MacLean, Jim Wire and Ginger Nicolay-Davis.

Awards given out Friday included: Barb Childs, Realtor of the Year; Doug Clymer and Amanda Adams, Distinguished Service Award; and Cindy MacLean, Community Service Award.