

Olympic torch runner gearing up for historic honor

By Susan Wood

Few people would admit to improving their skiing ability without the use of their legs.

But Bill Bowness isn't just anybody. The 51-year-old disabled skier from Truckee turned a tragic car accident in 1977 that rendered him a paraplegic into an opportunity — a journey of sorts in the building of personal character and a rewarding career.

“I’m a much better skier than I ever was standing up,” he said of his accomplishment. “It’s hard to know what my life would have been like (if not for the accident).”



Bill Bowness

He runs the adaptive skiing program at Alpine Meadows, where he started as a student, later a volunteer and now serves as an instructor. His latest venture involves being asked to run the commemorative torch from his home ski resort to the base of Squaw Valley, which is marking its 50th anniversary of hosting the Winter Games with a slew of activities for Olympic Heritage Week.

The torch relay slated for Jan. 8 starts at Sugar Pine Point State Park and is scheduled to arrive at Alpine about 1:15pm.

It ends at the Olympic Village at the base of Squaw Valley at about 3:30pm, when an Opening Ceremony is set to commence.

Bowness told *Lake Tahoe News* he plans to cherish the 1.5-mile run. He figures it will last 10 minutes.

“This is another huge milestone in my life. As it gets closer, I expect to get very excited,” he said.

This isn’t the first time the Winter Olympics have placed Bowness in the spotlight. The paralympian represented the United States in Lillehammer, Norway, during the 1994 Games. He took home three medals in the four events he competed in: downhill, giant slalom, slalom, and super-G.

“That was an awesome experience,” he said.

Bowness insists he’s never missed the Winter Olympics “even though he enjoys summer sports, too. He and his wife split their time between Truckee and a small town near Jackson, Miss., where he teaches at a water ski school. Unlike many snowbirds, the couple leaves the Lake Tahoe region in the summer because they prefer it here in the winter.

“It’s white gold around here,” he said.

Although Bowness knows his work involves play, he’s not afraid to get down to business when he needs to. He lives up to his commitments with zeal and looks forward to the latest “honor” that is in some respects quite nostalgic.

“I’m looking forward to giving back to a sport that has taken care of me,” he said, adding even more affection for his Truckee community.

Bowness and all the spectators aren’t the only ones enthusiastic about the upcoming festivities.

Linda Williams, project manager for the Squaw Valley Ski Museum Foundation and Olympic Heritage week executive

producer, sounded giddy when she pointed out how the commemorative torch participants “will each be carrying a replica of the 1960 Olympic torch.”

More details on the activities will be featured in an upcoming article focusing on the Olympic Heritage Week organized by Squaw Valley and affiliates.

Publisher’s note: *Read about Olympic hopeful Andy Finch on Jan. 3.*

Reno-Tahoe airport not ‘Up in the Air’

By Bill O’Driscoll, Reno Gazette-Journal

George Clooney brings the life of a top-tier frequent flier to movie screens this month in “Up in the Air,” showing what a gazillion miles get you in perks on the ground and in flight.

What’s offered at Reno-Tahoe International Airport for air warriors?

Not what you might see in “Up in the Air” or at many major airports across the world. No “Admiral’s Club” or other posh, members-only digs where you’re pampered before your flight.

Read the whole story

Gypsy moves onto another stage – retirement

By Denise Sloan Smart

STATELINE – For more years than many of us have been alive, James Haake has been basking in the glow of stage lights, then movie lights, then TV camera lights and back to stage lights.

Tonight, when the lights go dark on “Carnival Cabaret” at the Horizon Casino Resort, Haake – who is just as well known as Gypsy – will call it quits.



James “Gypsy”
Haake

The 78-year-old Gypsy is retiring after 59 years in show business.



James “Gypsy”
Haake

“I’ve talked about retiring before, but now it’s really time,” Haake said after the Dec. 27 show.

“I’ve loved performing so much and have had a wonderful career, but I’m really looking forward to spending time with friends and family.”

Haake “- pronounced Hawk “- began his career nearly six decades ago as a dancer on Broadway. His first job was working along side a very young, pre-“Brady Bunch” Florence Henderson in a musical titled “Wish You Were Here,” which starred Jack Cassidy.

Moving from Broadway to the cabaret, Gypsy was the original host of the first “La Cage Aux Folles” show, which took the country’s rich and famous by storm. It was in Beverly Hills on stage in an upscale cabaret 30 years ago that Mel Brooks “discovered” Gypsy and his movie and TV careers were born.

“It was like being an instant celebrity once Mel Brooks takes you by the arm,” Haake said in an earlier interview. “And I had such a blast working with Mel and Ann Bancroft.”

Brooks cast Gypsy in his classic film “To Be Or Not To Be,” starring himself and his real-life wife, Bancroft.

Gypsy went on to co-star with Jane Fonda in “The Morning After,” with Shelly Long in “Troop Beverly Hills,” and in the movie “Clifford.”

His TV roles included characters on “Matlock” and “Dynasty” and his recurring role as Uncle Otto on “Married With Children,” which is still in reruns.

On a cabaret stage, in front of a live audience is where Gypsy’s star has shined the longest and the brightest. Between his wry sense of humor, his gorgeous legs, his stunning designer wardrobe and his hilarious banter with the crowd, Gypsy is as much at home on stage as an emcee, as he’ll ever be lounging in a recliner in retirement.

Gypsy, lounging in a recliner? Never! Heâ€™ll be out there somewhere, entertaining someone and making every one laugh. Just as he did last Sunday evening.

Gypsy sauntered on stage wearing a sexy one-shoulder siren-red gown with black stockings and black designer stilettos. A gentleman in the front row â€œeyedâ€ him a little too long.

â€œGet over me man! I ainâ€™t a real chick,â€ Gypsy belted out in a deep Bronx accent.

His banter with the audience is part history lesson, part jokes and part insults. When the audience members donâ€™t â€œgetâ€ the insults, itâ€™s all the funnier.

His self-deprecating humor is peppered throughout the show while three beautiful women â€”- who are also really men â€”- impersonate the likes of Barbra Streisand, Dolly Parton, Reba McIntyre, Bette Midler and Beyonce.

Gypsy claims his â€œgown is by Bob Mackie. Face by Forest Lawn.â€ The crowd roared.

Under the talented production and direction of Dan Gore, â€œCarnival Cabaretâ€ opened at the Horizon in February 2000. This reporter and Gypsy became friends that same month.

â€œCarnival Cabaretâ€ is the longest running cabaret show in the South Shoreâ€™s history. For Gore and the rest of the cast, the show will go on and itâ€™ll still be good, but theyâ€™ll never find another Gypsy to emcee. When we say â€œGypsy leaves big shoes to fill,â€ weâ€™re not just talking about the size 13 stilettos.

Denise Sloan Smart has been covering entertainment at Lake Tahoe since the 1970s. She remains friends with many of the performers she interviewed over the decades.

Bringing Northern Italy to Lake Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – Looking at the photographs mounted on the wall it makes one want to make sure their passport is valid.

People strolling through Dirk Yuricich's studio on the opening weekend of his Northern Italy Photo Exhibition could be overheard talking about their travels to this region of the world and ohhing and ahhing over his work.



Dirk Yuricich

He captures the people, the buildings and the scenery in an array of photographs – some small, some large – all captivating.

The exhibit runs through Feb. 16 at the Dirk Yuricich Photography Gallery, 171 Shady Lane, Stateline. The studio is open 11am-5pm Friday-Tuesday and by appointment. It will be closed Jan. 27-Feb. 4.

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

Embracing Squaw Valley's Olympic heritage

By Susan Wood



When enthusiasts of the Winter Games mark a half-century milestone during Squaw's Olympic Heritage Week at Lake Tahoe next month, few will boast a national and regional pride like Martin Hollay.

The 89-year-old native of Hungary escaped his war-torn country in 1956. He has lived in South Lake Tahoe for more years than Squaw's milestone – 52. He has made the most of his time by advancing his passion for skiing.

Among other volunteer duties, he helped build the 20-kilometer 1960 Olympic Nordic Trail system



Martin Hollay

near Sugar Pine Point State Park, a course designed by former U.S. Olympian Wendall "Chummy" Broomhall and Dartmouth

University ski team coach Allison Merrill. The trails are considered part of the first cross country ski area in the United States and run between the park, Quail Creek Meadow and McKinney Rubicon Road. They've been resurrected in time for the historic Olympic ceremony slated for Jan. 8-17.

During that time, the Nordic ski trails' home base – Granlibakken Resort near Tahoe City will host a special dinner featuring a multi-media presentation with rare footage of the winter that shaped Tahoe in honor of the cross country ski and biathlon participants, coaches, groomers and supporters.

"Our Olympic roots run deep, tracing back to the 1932 Olympic ski trials held here at Granlibakken," resort manager Kay Williams said of the Jan. 15 event.

Hollay plans to take part in the Heritage Week festivities at Squaw Valley and the North Shore, which also include a commemorative torch relay from Sugar Pine Point to Squaw and an "Opening" ceremony of sorts complete with fireworks and live music on Jan. 8. The next day features a re-enactment of the sport of biathlon, and with good timing. It has just received its due recognition at Northstar-at-Tahoe. The Truckee ski resort installed the West Coast's one official course this year.

In addition, a cross country ski expo is set for Jan. 10 at Granlibakken. There, the first-sanctioned Scholastic Nordic Race held since the Winter Olympics and other events at Squaw will round out the week of activities.

Parties, events and venues aside, Hollay has another motive for taking part in the historic ceremony that for him is a bit more nostalgic.

"I'm wondering who's still going to be alive," he said one recent afternoon, while glancing around his home located a few steps from Heavenly Mountain Resort.

Outside his humble abode, Hollay mounted cross country skis to the cabin. Inside, a large, framed photograph hangs high on the wall to showcase him skiing the official Olympic torch at Heavenly when it made its way through South Lake Tahoe in 2002 on its way to the Salt Lake City Games. A book – “Snowball’s Chance” by Tahoe resident David Antonucci on Squaw’s long shot to host the 1960 Winter Games sits on his end table.

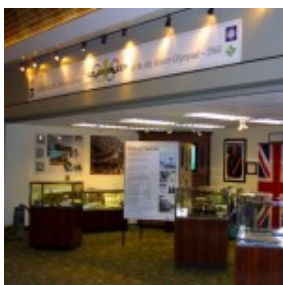
Hollay reflects fondly on his 35 years of skiing at Heavenly, where he worked a dozen years as a ski patroller. In the early days, he recalled being impressed when he met the little-known ski school director – Stein Eriksen, now a legend in long-time skier circles.

Hollay still skis the slopes about every day with his signature knickers and wool sweater.

Upon asking to be his native homeland’s guest, Hollay dreams of making it to the Opening Ceremonies in Vancouver, British Columbia, for the Winter Games’ return to the West Coast in February.

“I’m very excited about that,” he said.

“Fifty (plus) years ago I came to Tahoe. Squaw had one lift. I carried a telephone box around to the aid station,” he said of his volunteer work leading up to and during the Games. The technology was lacking – but not the piercing drive of the athletes and community pride of their supporters. A humbled Hollay gingerly pulled out a medal for volunteers like he won gold.



Reno Tahoe
International
Airport
Olympic
exhibit.
Photo/Squaw
Valley

Hollay hasn't given up skiing or a zest for life, but he has surrendered his skis and boots from the era of the eighth Olympic Games for an upcoming Squaw Valley Ski Museum. For now, Squaw foundation organizers have erected a temporary version at the Reno Tahoe International Airport until the permanent facility goes up near the Ehrman Mansion in May. The 500-square-foot display at the airport is adorned with international flags and other memorabilia including a uniform from U.S. Ski Team member Bev Anderson.

"It's received amazing attendance," said Carolyn Wallace Dee, the Squaw Valley manager of business administration and mayor of Truckee.

Catch the spirit

Those wanting to get up close and personal with the Olympic Heritage commemorative torch relay



Re-creating
the Olympic
torch run will
be Jan. 8.
Photo/Kathryn

may view the spectacle during the lighting at and departure from Sugar Pine Point State Park at 9am Jan. 8, at Homewood Mountain Resort at 10:45am or Sunnyside Resort at 11:40am.

From there, it will continue to Granlibakken at noon, Heritage Plaza at Tahoe City at 12:35pm, Alpine Meadows Ski Resort at 1:15pm, Resort at Squaw Creek at 2:25pm. The torch will be skied down Squaw's Red Dog run at 3:05pm. One may also get a glimpse of it at the Village at Squaw at 3:30pm, where the ceremonies will kick off. All times are approximate.

During the 10-day celebration, ski enthusiasts may simulate the challenge of negotiating the original 1960 Olympic men's and women's downhill courses on Squaw's slopes. The festivities culminate with a 1960 Olympic Legends Ball at the Resort at Squaw Creek.

[Click here for more information.](#)

Publisher's note: *On Jan. 1 read about adaptive skier Bill Bowness' story as it relates to Olympic Heritage Week.*

\$750,838 – a bargain by Tahoma standards

By Francesca Levy, Forbes

In most areas, \$750,838 – the median list price in Tahoma – would seem like a lot of money to spend on a home. Not for discount luxury vacation home seekers. Tahoma, a high-altitude resort town on the shores of Lake Tahoe, is priced on the very

low end of Forbes' 500 most expensive ZIP codes. Only 19 markets have lower prices.

Read the whole story

Illusionist keeps audience guessing

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE — It was hard to applaud when all I wanted to do was figure out what just happened.

I never figured it out.

Joseph Gabriel, the 2009 Best Stage Magician, dazzled a nearly full house Saturday on opening nightÂ of his nine-day stint at MontBleu.



Joseph Gabriel
is at MontBleu
through Jan.
3.

Birds are something this illusionist is known for. They kept appearing and disappearing without any rhyme or reason.

Why they don't just fly off is a mystery unto itself.

Audience participation is a huge part of the night. Don't sit up front if you are shy.

Ashley, who lives on the South Shore and isn't fond of birds, was selected to hold a box. She looked "nothing" in it. Before she knew it a bird flew from the container she was holding.

She told her tablemates she didn't feel any movement in the box, nor did the weight of it change.

Hmmm.

Head scratching was a big part of the evening as Gabriel and the women he works with, including his wife, Katalin, kept pulling off one illusion after another.

People seemed to be cut in half and stuffed in boxes. Just when Gabriel walked into a box he came out under a drape of sorts. How he got from Point A to Point B is still a mystery.

One woman ended up in the audience "even though the audience thought she was in a box on stage.

Gabriel brought a guy from the Bay Area on stage who was supposed to mimic his every move and voice command. The guy did OK right until the end. Gabriel was able to turn shredded paper into a hat for the guest. The participant could only place pieces of paper on Gabriel's head.

Juggler Bryson Lang added to the show with his ability to bounce, toss and spin various size balls.

This is one of those shows where sitting close is a good idea. Gabriel isn't Siegfried + Roy of Las Vegas and white tiger fame, but he is good. The price for the 90-minute show is worth it. Plus, it would make for a good family outing.

Things to know:

• Joseph Gabriel will be at MontBleu in Stateline through Jan. 3

• Adult tickets \$29.95, \$12.95 for those 17 and younger

• www.tickemaster.com, 800.648.3353

• Show starts at 8pm, doors open at 7:30pm

Creative writing workshops in Truckee

Tangled Roots Creative Writing Workshops in Truckee.

If you want to connect with a writing community and improve your writing practice, the instructor says you'll find inspiration and motivation in this fun and supportive group.

You will read, write, discuss, and generate new material each week (no homework).

This workshop offers tips and technique for all experience levels and is designed to explore any genre of writing.

Karen Terrey has an MFA in creative writing and teaches writing at Sierra Nevada College.

Four-week sessions run:

• Jan. 11-Feb. 1

• Feb. 8-March 8 (no class 2/15)

• March 22-April 12

Classes are Monday nights from 6:30-8 in downtown Truckee, \$60/session.

Contact Karen Terrey at (530) 386.3901 or email tangledrootswriting@gmail.com to sign up or for more information.

New Year's lineup in Reno-Tahoe area

By Neil Baron, Reno Gazette-Journal

Made it through a rough 2009? Had a great year? It's time to toast the potential of new beginnings in 2010. There's reason to celebrate in downtown Reno, where the midnight fireworks show will return after being cancelled in 2008. Whether you're heading to Tahoe or sticking around Reno and Sparks, there's plenty to choose from for a night out on New Year's Eve. Here's what we found.

All places have Champagne toasts at midnight, unless otherwise specified.

[Read the whole story](#)

Extreme outdoor websites

merge

Rider-Exchange LLC of Incline Village completed its acquisition of REELcomp Inc. this week.

REELcomp provides a rich consumer experience for online users in snowboard, skate and surf communities with a new ski community, ladies competitions and marketplace planned for early 2010. The combined force of REELcomp and Rider-Exchange strengthens the company's ability to provide a premier destination to upload original footage, compete in online competitions and watch live webcasts of popular extreme sports events, according to a press release.

"We will keep the brand and image that REELcomp has established in the industry, but the underlying philosophy will slightly change," Bob Witty, CEO and co-founder, said in a press release. "Rider-Exchange plans to release a cutting-edge social network with instant messaging, mobile applications and group chat in mid-2010."

Tresten Sweigard, Rider-Exchange founder said, "The other key point for us is to not look like every other extreme sports website. I grew up snowboarding in Lake Tahoe and the people and the culture are so important to me. Rider-Exchange will focus on the youth and the culture of these sports we love so much. Riders, photographers, videographers, teams, artists, musicians will all be featured, basically, anything that touches our lifestyle. We are an Internet platform not a website, a platform that showcases the talent that creates our culture."