Win at Harveys secures seat at WSOP in Vegas

By Tom Travis, 777 Poker

Poker player Stanley Quinn has become the latest star to pick up a coveted World Series of Poker (WSOP) gold ring by winning the circuit's main event at Harvey's resort in Lake Tahoe.

The 51-year-old, who previously worked in IT before taking up the card game, takes home $86,789 (£55,076) as a reward for his triumph and is also guaranteed a seat at the WSOP Circuit National Championship in Las Vegas next May.

Arguably the highlight of Quinn's career prior to this victory was a 549th-place finish at this year's WSOP Main Event, which allowed him to cash in on the biggest stage.

Read the whole story

Search for missing Reno hiker called off

By Reno Gazette-Journal

The Washoe County Sheriff's Office has suspended the search for a Reno hiker missing since Sunday, KOLO-TV reported, saying it is unlikely he is still alive after four days in the snowy wilderness.

The search could continue next week if the weather permits, but deputies said it will be a recovery effort, not a rescue

mission, KOLO-TV said.

Rick Gentry, 55, used his cell phone about 5:20 p.m. Sunday to call 911, reporting he was lost and was wearing only jeans and a windbreaker, Washoe County sheriff's Deputy Armando Avina said. However, Gentry was extremely physically fit and had great endurance, Avina said.

Read the whole story

Slot makers listening to gamblers

By Liz Benston, Las Vegas Sun

Slot machine manufacturers, beaten up by gamblers who often complain about tight machines, have redirected their marketing campaign.



Three years into a recession that has decimated discretionary spending, slot makers at last week's premier trade show eagerly showed off their newest creations – and explained how the games aim to offer players more bang for their buck.

Aristocrat Technologies, for example, is developing games that offer a chance to win smaller amounts of money more frequently, allowing wagerers to play longer.

Many of these new games are programmed for more frequent bonus rounds – free side games. The company's upcoming "Reel Tall Tales" machines will hit one of five bonus sequences every nine or so spins. Its "Rockin' Olives" machine, designed by

Las Vegas pop artist Michael Godard, hits a bonus about one every three spins.

Read the whole story

South Tahoe to mandate property owners plow sidewalks

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe's sidewalks – the few that are in the city – are about to be cleared of snow.

This is assuming the City Council OKs the idea Dec. 14. And assuming property owners give a hoot because they sure haven't seemed to care without the threat of being fined.

"The goal through this ordinance is to give us the authority to cite people," City Attorney Patrick Enright told the council this month.



Property owners will have to plow sidewalks in

South Lake Tahoe starting in 2011. Photos/Kathryn Reed

The current council heard the first reading of the ordinance earlier this month and approved it on a 3-1 vote. Councilman Bruce Grego was absent and Councilman Bill Crawford abstained.

The new council that will be sworn in Dec. 14 will be asked to make the final approval.

The maintenance part of the ordinance reads, “It shall be the duty of all owners, and their tenants, of real property within the city whose property borders, or is in an easement, any improved sidewalk or walkway to maintain the sidewalk or walkway in a safe condition for its use by pedestrians and other members of the public. The duty created by the ordinance shall include the duty to keep the sidewalk or walkway free and clear of all dirt, sand, gravel, filth, rubbish, ice and snow.”

Staff recognizes people cannot be shoveling around the clock, but it will have to be done when needed.

Linda Borge, who is co-owner of the property on Highway 50 where Ken’s Tires is, said Caltrans piles snow in front of the store. With the store being closed from noon Saturday to Monday morning, she said no one would be there to clear the snow from the sidewalk.

John Runnels is all for clearing sidewalks, but wanted the city to create a panel to discuss the issue because there has been no outreach to the business community.

Enforcement will be complaint driven. It will be considered a nuisance if the property owner has not cleared the sideway. The city could clear it and charge the property owner the fee

to do so or put a lien on the property if necessary.

The earliest the policy will take affect is January. Enright told the council this winter warnings would primarily be issued and that the city plans to do outreach to the public and chambers of commerce.

“It’s what state law requires. It’s putting people on notice,” City Manager Tony O’Rourke told *Lake Tahoe News* of the proposal to tweak City Code Chapter 26 to have city law conform to state law.

O’Rourke realizes this means the city is going to have to come through with better maintenance of areas it is responsible for.

Currently Caltrans is liable for the sidewalks along the highway. However, as improvements are made in the coming years, the liability transfers to the city.

Next building season Caltrans is expected to start its multi-year project to improve the Ski Run to Trout Creek area along Highway 50. This includes installation of sidewalks, curbs and gutters.

Now Caltrans is proposing doing the same from Trout Creek to the Y. This will be before the council to approve soon, according to Public Works Director John Greenhut.

“This is maybe the beginning of a whole series of self-improvements. If we don’t take care of ourselves, why would others want to be part of it as residents or guests?” O’Rourke asked. “We need to take care of our own house, to make it safe, to make it reliable.”

Like other things that have gone on in South Lake Tahoe for years that make him scratch his head, O’Rourke hasn’t uncovered a reason as to why the clearing of sidewalks has not been enforced.

The storm that started last weekend had him baffled as he watched traffic on Highway 50 reduced to one lane while someone walked in the street because that was the pedestrian's only choice.

"And people in wheelchairs. I don't know how they survive. There is either a lack of sidewalks or the sidewalks are crumbling or not being maintained," O'Rourke said. "This is not inviting for the community or tourists. Being a tourist based economy it has struck me that the first impression is not a good one."

Although what he is pointing out is not news to anyone who has lived in South Tahoe or visited the area, what is news is someone is doing something about it.

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Study: Motorists most fear aggressive drivers

By Tony Bizjak, Sacramento Bee

What do California drivers consider the most dangerous behavior on the road? Despite the notoriety and horror stories of the last few years, it's not drivers on cell phones.

Motorists most fear speeding and aggressive driving, a state Office of Traffic Safety survey found. More than one out of five drivers surveyed said they worried more about speeders than cell-phone chatters or any other erring drivers. Cell phone use came in second, followed by bad road surfaces and drunk driving.

Read the whole story

Douglas County rancher dies in SoCal traffic accident

By Steve Timko, Reno Gazette-Journal

A Douglas County rancher who knew Bill Harrah and played a prominent role in the founding of the National Automobile Museum in Reno died Tuesday in a head-on collision with a fire vehicle in Southern California.

People involved with the National Automobile Museum were grieving the death of Milton Edward “Ted” Bacon, 83, who ran the Jubilee Ranch south of Genoa.

Bacon met Harrah in the 1960s and Harrah got him involved in car collecting, said Jackie Frady, executive director of National Automobile Museum.

After Harrah’s death Bacon helped get the museum formed to house what was left of Harrah’s automobile collection. A Carson Valley rancher who raised angus cattle, he served on the original building committee and on its board of directors for many years, Frady said.

Read the whole story

Tahoe Keys sign put up illegally

By Kathryn Reed

A sign on Tahoe Keys Boulevard reads like the South Shore neighborhood doesn't want anyone to set foot or drive on the streets except for owners.

South Lake Tahoe officials, when told about the sign by *Lake Tahoe News*, contacted the Tahoe Keys Property Owners Association and told them to take down the sign.

For starters, it's on a pole that belongs to the city. Permission was never sought by the TKPOA to erect the sign. The ordinances cited have to do with parking, which is not what the message is trying to convey.



The sign on Tahoe Keys Boulevard before Venice Drive.

Plus, all those streets are city owned – not private.

Mike Marek, architectural control coordinator for the TKPOA, said, "The sign has been there forever. They keep stealing them."

However, people in the neighborhood disagree, saying they

first saw the sign last weekend.

Bob Albertazzi, South Lake Tahoe community police officer, said this is the first he's seen such a sign.

Marek said one of the TKPOA board members wanted the sign up. He wouldn't divulge her name.

But another board member, who didn't want her name used, said the sign issue never went before any committee and never had board approval.

Without a general manager at TKPOA, it appears no one is really in charge. Interviews of general manager candidates will begin soon.

In the mean time, the sign must come down.

S. Tahoe discloses actual salary, benefit figures

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe officials have provided *Lake Tahoe News* with exact dollar amounts for how salaries and benefits are broken down. This intervention was needed because the figures could not be ferreted out based on published documents provided by the city.

Total salaries for 2010-11 are $16,851,913; benefits total $9,849,239; making for a grand total of $26,701,152, according to the city.

There are 205.75 full-time employees in the city. The dollar figures account for the part time and seasonal employees as well.

Lake Tahoe News had come up with nearly $33 million for the total. This is because the budget says the personnel services encompass health, dental, vision and so on.

“We checked the calculation and the difference results because the consultant you had do the calculation included benefits budgeted in the Health Self Insurance and Workers Compensation funds,” South Lake Tahoe Finance Director Christine Vuletich wrote to *Lake Tahoe News*. “Then the actual expenses paid out for health insurance premiums and claims, and workers compensation premiums and claims are paid from these two internal service funds [Health Self Insurance and Workers Compensation]. So the consultant essentially counted these expenses twice.”

LTN admits to having counted them twice and apologizes to readers for first publishing inflated salary-benefit totals. But the exercise points to the convoluted budgeting and reporting processes the city continues to use which in turn makes it impossible for the public to know exactly where its tax dollars are being spent without continued dialog with city staff.

Budgets are not normally so complex.

Tornado hits El Dorado County

By Bill Lindelof, Sacramento Bee

A damage analysis by the National Weather Service has confirmed that a tornado did indeed hit near El Dorado Hills on Tuesday.

The damage assessment by the Sacramento office showed that at 1:17pm a tornado developed near the community of Latrobe, about 4 miles south of El Dorado Hills.

The tornado reached speeds of 100 mph, damaging the roof of a building and a power pole, moving a heavy water tank and snapping trees.

Read the whole story

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4 BlueGo stops to have shelters erected

By Kathryn Reed

INCLINE VILLAGE – Shelters for bus riders, or the lack of them, has been a legitimate complaint for years. Gradually, there will be less to complain about.

Federal stimulus money is paying for four shelters in Nevada – three in the basin, one in valley – all served by BlueGo.

The Tahoe Transportation District board this month approved a

basic shelter like what is used at some South Lake Tahoe locations. (Ron McIntyre abstained.) It is enclosed, has a roof, benches and is completely see through. A gap at the bottom lets air through, which makes is not become a sauna on hot days. The openness provides a modicum of safety.



The bench on the other side of the sign will be a covered bus shelter soon.

Douglas County does not have a typical or standard shelter that is already approved, thus the reason the board needed to pick a design. Several options were presented to the board. The design Mammoth has chosen costs close to $100,000. That was quickly nixed.

The South Tahoe version costs about $8,000 each.

Staff suggested what was approved be used for the more urban areas and possibly have a more alpine look for outlying areas. As more money for shelters comes in the board will tackle the design issue then.

TTD board member and Douglas County Commissioner Nancy McDermid wanted her board to give input on which shelter to pick, but the TTD board went ahead with its vote.

It was suggested that in more rural areas where bears are a problem bear boxes should be installed at the shelters like

what the North Shore did.

The shelters will be put in front of Horizon and Harveys, on Kingsbury Grade at Market Street, and at the bottom of Kingsbury Grade at Foothill Road. These are sites the Nevada Department of Transportation identified as priorities.

There was talk about shelters South Lake Tahoe has but is not using. No one at the TTD meeting knew who owned them. South Tahoe City Councilman Bruce Grego is on the TTD board and was at the meeting.

An email by *Lake Tahoe News* to Assistant City Manager Rick Angelocci produced an answer. He said the eight shelters are not assembled. One was bought by ABHOW for the Kelly Ridge project and the rest by the now bankrupt South Tahoe Area Transit Authority when John Andoh was transit administrator.

“Mr. Andoh was in the process of obtaining the required TRPA permits and assistance to install them when he parted ways with STATA. TTD staff has now committed to complete the process of obtaining permits through TRPA and getting the shelters installed at the highest priority sites,” Angelocci wrote.

But that can’t really be happening since TTD doesn’t even know who owns the shelters.

Angelocci went on to say, “Based on the infrastructure [or lack thereof] each of the shelter sites will need a platform of pavers or concrete to secure the shelters to. In most cases this will require additional land coverage. The shelter locations must also be coordinated with the Caltrans Highway 50 project so there are no conflicts. Site design has to also comply with ADA access.”