# Nonprofit gives free ski trip to disabled vets

**By Brad Branan, Sacramento Bee**

Accidentally shot by a fellow U.S. Army soldier, Larry Celano suffered a spinal cord injury that left him unable to walk. After earning a Purple Heart for his service in the 1989 Panama invasion, Celano worked as an accountant for five years before continued medical problems led to an early retirement.

Despite the setbacks, Celano said he tries not to let his disability get in the way, including going on ski trips in the Sierra the last two years.

“Last year the goal was not to get hurt,” the Chandler, Ariz., resident said as he got ready for a run at Alpine Meadows ski resort. “This year the goal is to go a little bit faster.”

Celano was one of 17 veterans who received an all-expenses-paid trip last week from Achieve Tahoe, a nonprofit organization based at Alpine Meadows and a national pioneer in helping the disabled ski and participate in other “high-challenge” sports.

**Read the whole story**

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# Injured skier rescued from Donner Pass area

A backcountry skier had to be rescued from the Flora Lake area on Friday.

The skier, whose name has not been disclosed, was one of four who left from the Donner Pass rest area on Interstate 80 on Jan. 27. An injury to the man's leg prevented him from continuing.

A California Highway Patrol helicopter retrieved him from the back country at about 1pm. An ambulance took him to Tahoe Forest Hospital in Truckee.

*– Lake Tahoe News staff report*

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# Hight snares gold in X Games halfpipe

**By USSA**

ASPEN, Colo. – California women took two of the three podium spots in halfpipe at the X Games on Saturday night. Elena Hight (South Lake Tahoe) won her first X Games gold medal and Chloe Kim (Torrance) earned bronze.

In a contest where only six of 18 runs were landed, Hight rose above the field by being the only athlete to land both of her passes. She put down a highly technical run that included a back-to-back 900 combo and an alley-oop backside rodeo. The 27-year-old already owns three silver and two bronze medals, but it was her first gold in 13 appearances.

Kim, who was the three-time defending gold medalist, also put down a technical run full of switch tricks but it wasn't

enough to top the field in 2017. Kim and Hight were joined on the podium by Xuetong Cai of China, who earned silver.

Seven-time X Games halfpipe champion Kelly Clark (West Dover, Vt.) finished just off the podium in fourth. Arielle Gold (Steamboat Springs, Colo.) was sixth; Maddie Mastro (Wrightwood) was seventh; Hannah Teter (Meyers) was eighth.

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# Icy Emerald Bay a treat to Hwy. 89 foot traffic



Emerald Bay is frozen at the west end. Photo/Kathryn Reed

**By Kathryn Reed**

EMERALD BAY STATE PARK – Splintered ice on the bay's edge gives way to a deep sapphire hue. Inviting, mesmerizing, magical. Emerald Bay.

With Highway 89 closed, now is the time to explore this area on foot. For decades it was the norm for the South and West shores to be cut off all winter. Now, with modern technology,

the highway is rarely closed more than a few days in the winter.

But this has not been an ordinary winter.

“The amount of snow and the timing of the storms are what have made this season challenging so far to keep it open. We have snow piled up as high as 30 feet on the highway in some locations,” Steve Nelson, spokesman for Caltrans, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “There are about a dozen slide areas in that 4-mile section of the highway, and it’s not just snow that falls down – it’s large boulders, tree limbs, entire trees in some cases.”



A large amount of snow still on Jan. 28 covers Highway 89, making it off-limits to vehicles. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Compounding the problem is that three blowers are in the shop for repairs and crews have not even reached the main slide.

The good news is that the scar from last fall's Emerald Fire is remaining in place. Kit Bailey, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit's chief fire officer, told *Lake Tahoe News*, "The Emerald Fire area is holding up great." He has been making periodic visits to that section of Highway 89. "It's a testament to the excellent post-fire mitigation that took place on a slope with a high-use transportation route."

When the original highway was built in 1930-31 it was to link Highway 70 on the north to Highway 50 on the south.

"With the construction methods available at that time, the road closely followed the lay of the land, following ridge lines and older wagon trails along the edge of the lake. This resulted in a number of very dramatic vistas from the route, particularly in the area around Emerald Bay," according to the Federal Highway Administration.



According to Caltrans, profile grinding on the highway

makes the road level. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Sixty years later this stretch of highway was overhauled a bit. Slope stabilization was a main part of the $9.2 million, 18-month project that started in April 1992. The entire road was closed for six weeks, with alternating traffic the rest of the time.

On Saturday people in all types of footwear were walking along the road. On the south side it is pavement – though slick in some locations –  from the gate to just past Inspiration Point. After that a fairly worn path is accessible without the need for snowshoes. Those coming from the D.L. Bliss area to the north had snowshoes on.

Others took off into the trees to make fresh tracks on their skis and snowboards.



Cascade Lake looks like an ice rink in need of a Zamboni machine. Photo/Kathryn Reed

We stopped as the trail narrowed and the path went up a bit. One slip and that would have easily been a fatal fall. After all, this is prime avalanche area.

We had seen what we came for – Emerald Bay in all her glory. And the views were not going to get any better.



Most of the road signs near Emerald Bay are at least partially buried. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Most of the area between the western shore and Fannette Island is a layer of ice. It's obvious a boat has plowed through it. Chunks of ice float near the mouth of the bay. A sailboat barely enters before deciding to turn around.

The last time the entire bay froze was January 1993 when the mercury hit minus 28 degrees in South Lake Tahoe. Prior to that the bay was solid ice in February 1989; the temperature in South Lake Tahoe was minus 29.

With not a whisper of wind, the bay is like glass. The few clouds seem to dance across the water, looking more like steam rising than a reflection.

# Anderson takes silver at X Games

Jamie Anderson of Meyers added some hardware to her trophy case on Jan. 28.

She took home silver in slopestyle at the X Games in Aspen. This was her 12th X Games medal.

Nineteen-year-old Julia Marino, making her X Games debut, was on top of the podium. Taking third was Katie Ormerod.

*– Lake Tahoe News staff report*

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# Brutal winter has been tough on animals

**By Andrew Selsky, AP**

Antelope injured while falling on ice. Horses stranded in snowy mountains. Cougars descending from their wilderness lairs to forage in a town.

It’s been a beastly winter in the American West, not just for people but for animals too. One storm after another has buried much of the region in snow, and temperatures have often stayed below freezing, endangering a rich diversity of wild animals.

In southern Idaho, about 500 pronghorn antelope tried to cross

the frozen Snake River earlier this month at Lake Walcott, but part of the herd spooked and ran onto a slick spot where they slipped and fell. Idaho Fish and Game workers rescued six of the stranded pronghorn, but 10 were killed by coyotes and 20 had to be euthanized because of injuries suffered when they fell down.

Another 50 pronghorn were found dead in the small western Idaho city of Payette after they nibbled on Japanese yew, a landscaping shrub that's toxic. Tough winter conditions have forced some wildlife to feed on the plant in urban areas.

Heavy snow has forced Idaho's fish and game department to begin emergency feeding of big game animals in southern Idaho.

In eastern Oregon, state wildlife officials are feeding elk, but the weather makes accessing them difficult. When highways and the Interstate are closed because of the snow, the workers must still get to the rural feeding stations where they feed the elk alfalfa hay.

"When you run feed programs, you can't take a day off because of bad weather. If you take a day off, the elk wander away," said Nick Myatt, district manager of La Grande office of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Wandering elk tend to feed on haystacks that ranchers have left for their cattle, and congregate in low-elevation sites along Interstate 84 in northeastern Oregon, where cars have hit them in recent weeks, Myatt said.

In western Wyoming, supplemental feeding of elk wintering on the National Elk Refuge near Jackson started the first week of January, three weeks earlier than usual because heavier than normal snowfall buried the natural forage the thousands of elk graze on at the 24,700-acre refuge.

Mule deer, which are smaller than elk, have not only been prevented by a layer of ice from pawing through powdery snow

to reach their natural forage, but that ice also makes them easier prey. The deer break through the ice and stumble while animals like coyotes can stay on top of the surface.

“With conditions that we have, we do anticipate higher mule deer mortality,” Myatt said.

John Stephenson of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service said wolves are also more agile in deep snow than deer or elk because their lighter bodies and big feet help them stay on the surface better. Stephenson said he is amazed that a wolf he’s tracking south of Crater Lake, Oregon, traveled roughly 30 miles through 6-foot-deep snow in less than 12 hours recently.

Some animal lovers have been taking matters into their own hands by feeding deer, but experts warn they will likely do more harm than good and could end up killing the animals.

“What they’re feeding the deer is an improper diet,” said Rick Hargrave, a spokesman for the Oregon wildlife department. “They have a complex digestive tract, and they require the right mix of crude protein, fat, carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals.”

The deep snow likely caused a group of normally elusive cougars to come to the woodsy community of La Pine in recent days, where they preyed on pets and chickens, the Oregon wildlife department said. Authorities on Thursday killed a fifth cougar in the central Oregon town. Four others were shot dead on Saturday and Monday, raising an outcry among some conservationists.

Amid the grim news, there were some bright spots.

In central Idaho, volunteers earlier this month rescued a horse stranded on a snowy mountain by tranquilizing it, placing it in a sling and then attaching it on a long line to a helicopter. It was flown, dangling from the belly of the

chopper to safety. A second stranded horse was not found and is believed to have died.

The experience was emotional for the rescuers.

“You get your adrenaline going and everyone gets all excited and choked up,” Robert Bruno, president of Idaho Horse Rescue, told KTVB-TV of Boise.

In California, some of the heaviest snow and rain in decades should prove a life-saver for threatened native salmon, whose numbers have dropped during the state’s five-year drought that is now easing.

Flooding this winter has greatly expanded the bug-rich wetlands where young salmon can eat and grow strong on their way to the ocean, said John McManus of the Golden Gate Salmon Association, a fishing-industry group.

“They eat like little pigs, and they love it,” McManus said. “It’s a little smorgasbord for them.”

*AP journalists Rebecca Boone in Boise, Idaho, Bob Moen in Cheyenne, Wyo., and Ellen Knickmeyer in San Francisco contributed to this report.*

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# Ganong top American in downhill

**By USSA**

GARMISCH-PARTENKIRCHEN, Germany – Travis Ganong (Squaw Valley) was again the top American down the dark Kandahar downhill, this time finishing 12th.

Saturday’s race was the official Audi FIS Ski World Cup downhill day in Garmisch, as Friday’s race was a makeup race from Wengen. While Ganong won in Friday’s attempt, he skied the rough and bumpy course to finish just outside of the top 10 in 12th Saturday.

Hannes Reichelt of Austria was untouchable in the final downhill before the World Championships in St. Moritz kicks off in February, taking the win. Peter Fill of Italy was second and Beat Feuz of Switzerland third.

The rest of the American Downhillers finished in the points, with Bryce Bennett (Squaw Valley) 22nd, Jared Goldberg (Holladay, Utah) 26th, Tommy Biesemeyer (Keene, N.Y.) 27th and Andrew Weibrecht (Lake Placid, N.Y.) 28th.

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# Demo event proves all gear is not the same




Jenn Sheridan of the women's line Coalition Snow sets up a pair of SOS all-mountain skis. Photo/Jessie Marchesseau

**By Jessie Marchesseau**

ALPINE MEADOWS – New ski and snowboard gear can set you back hundreds or even thousands of dollars. Most of the time we're expected to spend this money based solely on the recommendations of salespeople, friends and gear reviews.

Occasionally you can catch a ski or snowboard company doing a demo day at a local ski resort, allowing you to try out their lineup. While a side-by-side comparison of different brands would often prove more useful, it's not generally an option.

However, on Jan. 21, Tahoe City's Alpenglow Sports hosted North America's largest backcountry gear demo event. More than 20 vendors came out to share their wares with the skiers and riders at Alpine Meadows.

For 11 years running, the Lake Tahoe Backcountry Demo Event has provided skiers and riders the opportunity to ride this year's top-of-the-line telemark, alpine skiing, touring and snowboard gear.

Testing out the gear is totally free, and hundreds of snow sports enthusiasts took advantage, as did I. Mixed in with the major ski companies like Blizzard, Salomon, and Volkl was a selection smaller, less mainstream ski companies. Those were the ones which piqued my interest.




More than 20 vendors set up shop at Alpenglow Sports' 11th Lake Tahoe Backcountry Demo Event at Alpine Meadows on Jan. 21. Photo/Jessie Marchesseau

**The gear test**

My first stop was Coalition Snow. I've heard of the women-run ski and snowboard company, but had never seen any of the gear in person. Based in Truckee, Coalition Snow was started by a group of women fed up with riding skis and boards designed for men. Their lineup of snow sticks is engineered specifically with women in mind. Coalition's creative director Lauren Bello

assured me there is no reason men can't ride their gear, they even had a few men demo it that day, it's just designed with a focus on the way females ride.

I'm not usually one to judge a ski by its cover, but I have to admit, the stuff was pretty. I think I may have drooled a little over the peacock feather topsheet of the Abyss powder ski. Ultimately though, Bello suggested I test out the SOS. It's a solid all-mountain design and what their website calls a "one-quiver" ski. I normally ski on a 166 length, but she put me on a pair of 173s, assuring me they ski shorter. She was right.

A full 7 centimeters longer than what I'm used to, the skis didn't feel too long at all. In fact, after a couple runs, I was thinking maybe I could go even longer. They smashed through the crud with a little help from the rockered tip and tail, and even though I didn't test them out on a groomer, I have no doubt the traditional camber underfoot would arc a nice turn there, too.

Next, I made my way over to the Moment tent. I've been dying to try a pair of handmade skis from the Reno-based ski company for years, but always seem to miss the local demo days. Colton Shaff, and intern with Moment, put me on the Hot Mess in a 172. The women's version of the popular PB&J, it's an all-mountain ski with camber in the center and rockered tip and tail.

At first glance, I thought the Hot Mess may be a little too narrow for the afternoon's chopped up crud. On the contrary, they charged right through. I didn't find myself being tossed or bounced around, but instead felt like I was in four-wheel drive, crushing everything in my path. Not bad for a ski that was only 91mm at the waist.

For my final test ride of the day, I asked Alpenglow manager Jeff Dostie to hook me up with a ski. He grabbed one from a

collection of brightly-colored skis all the way at the other end of the aisle. I wasn't familiar with the company, but they seemed to have the largest presence at the event. The ski brand was DPS.

Based out of Park City, DPS has been around for a decade, constructing skis out of materials such as carbon, bamboo and even balsa wood. Dostie handed me a pair of Foundation Nina 99s in a 168 and I was off to the chairlift. Much like the other skis I had been riding all day, DPS considers this a middle-of-the-road, all-mountain women's ski. I admit, having never heard of the company before, my expectations for the skis were not high. They proved me wrong.

The choppy crud I had been skiing all afternoon suddenly felt like butter. Smooth sailing all the way to the bottom. I thought perhaps the wind had just filled in the ruts, so I tried again on a slightly more bumped out slope: the same thing. Cut, camber, construction or some combination of all three, the skis managed to practically cancel out any unevenness underfoot. I was smitten.

While all the skis I rode were fun and legitimate contenders for my next ski purchase, the DPS took the cake for me. More of a boutique ski company, and, according to Dan Benshoff, director of marketing and PR, the pioneers of the carbon fat powder ski, DPS has the prices to reflect the exclusivity, ranging from $799 to more than $1,200.

"When they can get out there and ski and have fun, that's what it's all about," Benshoff said of giving people the chance to demo their skis. "It's not easy to sell a $1,200 ski, but once they ski and experience and see what it's all about, they get it."

And while that price tag may be a lot to swallow, I totally get it.



Colton Shaff works on a pair of Moment Hot Mess skis at the Moment demo tent. Photo/Jessie Marchesseau

**The event**

I was far from the only one testing out gear last weekend. The annual event averages more than 500 participants a year, both resort and backcountry riders.

I rode the chairlift with Monica, a local who was excited to be trying out a new pair of Scarpa boots she'd had her eye on. She was riding them with the same DPS skis she had at home, but with a different binding. She explained how she has been skiing with A/T bindings but was considering switching to telemark. Trying the new boots and bindings on skis she already owned was a great way to see if she would like the new setup with her existing skis.

A few chair rides later I met Chris from Folsom. He had on a pair of Salomon skis, his fourth pair of the day. It was his

first time at a demo event, and he readily declared the Moments and Black Diamonds his favorites so far. Accustomed to riding relatively narrow skis, he was enjoying the opportunity to try out some fatter more powder-oriented ones.

Both the conditions of the day and the available terrain provided an ideal opportunity to test a variety of ski types. Known for its backcountry and sidecountry access, Alpine Meadows is a "natural fit" for this demo event, said Brendan Madigan, owner of Alpenglow Sports.

Madigan explained that backcountry snow sports is the only growing segment of the snow sports industry right now. This is part of the reason he believes the event is so important, and so successful. The way Madigan sees it, everyone benefits.

Alpine Meadows benefits from hosting the largest consumer backcountry event in North America. Ski companies get the chance to have hundreds of people try their gear. And, most important, skiers and snowboards have the opportunity to try myriad gear before they purchase.

This was Moment's sixth year as a vendor at the Lake Tahoe Backcountry Demo Event. Dane Dacus, event coordinator and ski builder for Moment, said the consumer is the biggest winner of the day. "Otherwise they're buying something on a hope and a dream and a prayer," he said.

Alpenglow even added non-gear companies to the list of partners at the event this year such as Sierra Avalanche Center, Clif Bar and Alpenglow Expeditions. Their booths stood alongside companies including DPS, Black Crows, Dynafit, Tecnica, Blizzard, G3, Scarpa, NTN, Salomon, Scott, Marker, Volkl, Twenty-Two Designs, La Sportiva, Voile, Moment, Julbo, Fly Low, Jones Snowboards and more.

With so many options in one place, the event is a goldmine for anyone considering new backcountry, alpine, telemark or snowboard gear.

Madigan said Alpenglow hosts the annual demo day, not so much for the shop, as for the community. “We’ve been doing it because we want to share the passion behind the sport,” he told *Lake Tahoe News.* “We feel we want to support the community who supports us.”

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# Ganong ends U.S. World Cup drought

**By Nick Zaccardi, NBC Sports**

Travis Ganong ended the U.S.’ longest drought between men’s World Cup wins since 2000, while teammate Steven Nyman‘s season is over after he was airlifted off the downhill course after crashing in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, on Friday.

Ganong prevailed by 0.38 of a second over Norway’s Kjetil Jansrud to notch the first U.S. men’s World Cup win in any discipline since Oct. 25, 2015.

Ganong and Nyman are the only U.S. men to make a World Cup downhill podium the last three seasons. In 2016, the U.S. went a calendar year without a men’s World Cup win in any discipline for the first time since 1999.

**Read the whole story**

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# Race to benefit Wildland Firefighter Foundation

Registration is open for the May 13 Northern Nevada Wildfire Awareness Multi-hour Trail Event in Reno.

The race is hosted by University of Nevada Cooperative Extension's Living with Fire Program in partnership with the Bureau of Land Management and Desert Sky Adventures. All proceeds from the race will be donated to the Wildland Firefighter Foundation.

The event is at Bartley Ranch Regional Park, 6000 Bartley Ranch Road in Reno. Participants can choose to run either one, three or six hours, and then they see how many laps around the one-mile flat, dirt trail loop that they can run in the chosen amount of time. Participants can register as solo runners or as teams. The six-hour race begins at 7am the three-hour race at 8am, and the one-hour race at 9am.

Cost is $25 per person by Jan. 31, $30 between Feb. 1 and April 1, $35 between April 2 and May 11, and $40 on May 12 and 13. Cost includes a tech T-shirt, goodie bag, finisher's medal, snacks, a downloadable race photo and refreshments, including refreshments courtesy of the Brewer's Cabinet. To register or for more information, go **online**.

The Wildland Firefighter Foundation is a nonprofit organization that provides assistance to fallen firefighters' families and to firefighters injured in the line of duty.