‘Soil whisperer’ to speak at farm conference

Soil guru Ron Godin, known as the “soil whisperer”, will speak at the Nevada Small Farm Conference on March 11-12 at the Fallon Convention Center.

Godin will discuss soil life, plant deficiencies, weed and disease problems, and how to amend soils for maximum health and crop yields. He is the Extension Agronomist for Organic and Sustainable Agriculture at Colorado State University and 2010 New Mexico Organic Farming Conference Educator of the year.

The small farm conference includes a diverse program of topics including beekeeping, small fruit production, marketing local beef, hoop houses, soil fertility and composting, egg handling, business planning, urban and school gardens and more.

For conference details, registration information and fees, contact Ann Louhela at (775) 351.2551.

Ski report: Ton of sun



Wind may be an issue at higher elevations.

Here is the ski report from Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.

Alpine Meadows understands what true skiers want

By Susan Wood

TAHOE CITY – I felt a kinship skiing the slopes of Alpine Meadows. We're about the same age. We're both no frills. We're both a little rugged.

In its 50th year, Alpine's philosophy of "it's just the mountain" appeals to me in this day and age of carnivals, villages, casinos and caviar in relation to ski resorts.

The employees know this philosophy. So do the skiers and boarders. Both celebrated at a party Alpine threw on Jan. 8. It sounded like an understated gathering. More is in the works throughout the year, spokeswoman Rachael Woods hinted.



Alpine is full of bowls and steeps. Photos/Kathryn Reed

When I got on the mountain on Presidents Day, I soon came to

believe a mountain of this magnitude deserved more than one party.

The terrain is full of knobby, jagged peaks circling the base. It reminded me of Alta in Utah – which in effect also shows a different personality from its nearby, more glamorous neighbor Snowbird. Up the road, Alpine has the glitzier Squaw Valley – home of the 1960 Winter Olympics.

A quick ride up on Roundhouse Express chairlift at Alpine Meadows, down the Rock Garden run to the Scott lift over to the Lakeview chair gave way to some of the most stunning scenery available in the Lake Tahoe Basin. Several people gathered at the plateau on top to take pictures of the lake we call home.

A simple snow skate over the knoll below Ward Peak at 8,637 feet brought me to another mind-blowing view of wide-open faces and runs on the backside the Sherwood Express lift services. The snow was soft and even during a holiday weekend the crowds were sparse on this side.

There’s room for everyone here. And from the looks of the tracks cutting into cliffs, hillsides and runs between trees, everyone had thought of a variety of ways to schuss down the multi-angled mountain.

No boredom here at Alpine. This was downright fun, and I wondered what took me so long to get here after living at Tahoe for 10-plus years.

On the Scott chairlift, a New York tourist admitted to having impeccable luck to choosing his ski vacation week months ago. He flashed a smile as if all were right with the world.

Maybe timing is everything. The skiers and boarders seemed giddy with excitement after the series of recent storms a week ago had delivered 106 inches to the mountain with 400 acres of groomed intermediate and expert off-trail terrain and serviced

by 13 chairlifts. February’s windfall became the icing on the cake, after Alpine received its biggest opening day ever on Dec. 10. Mother Nature summoned many feet of snow in November and December to provide a hefty base.

The Outer Limits run off the Lakeview chairlift provides an incredible view before dropping into the backside. At the top of the Sherwood Express chair, a humbling double-black run called Our Father gave credence to prayers and ability for those who grace its slopes. Some of these runs drop so steep, you’d think you’re free falling.

From there, the wide-open expanse came into sight. The entire Sherwood Face was covered with fluffy white stuff. I traversed over to it from the groomed Robin Hood. Get the theme? Little bounces on the baby moguls, and I was in heaven. It was tame, but challenging at the same time. You have to love the Zen of a great ski day.

The front side is another experience in itself. The Summit Express whizzes riders from the 6,835 base to the 8,000-plus foot ridge where Idiot’s Delight marked double-black land off to the right. We ventured to the left where the Alpine Bowl allowed us to select our own fall line.

Alpine Meadows is generous with its space – especially when that space involves snow cold enough to stay soft.

While peering over the edge, I was reminded of a T-shirt I saw at Vail Village – “If it’s too steep, you’re too old.” I grinned, as all ages found the glee that day of powder in the steeps – whether it was chopped up or not by mid-afternoon.

For a ski area that prides itself on maintaining its primary “just the mountain” focus, it is making efforts to attract a younger demographic with its advertising campaign “Mountain Head,” and all that it implies. The Concept Farm of New York boasts a client list of TRW, American Heart Association, TNT, MSNBC, ESPN and Greenpeace.

“We think it’s an awesome campaign and one that will really connect with skiers across the West,” Alpine Meadows General Manager Kent Hoopingarner said in a statement. His tone said it all. You’re as young as you feel at Alpine Meadows.

If you go:

Alpine Meadows is tucked in the landscape off Alpine Meadows Road, which is south of the Squaw Valley turnoff off Highway 89 on the North Shore.

From South Lake Tahoe, it can be a long ride if Highway 89 is closed at Emerald Bay – but scenic, and worth a day of skiing.

The direct route from the South Shore calls for going north on Highway 89. Go to Tahoe City. Turn left at the Y in Tahoe City. Alpine Meadows will be on the left a few miles up.

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Ski report: Not enough superlatives to do it justice



Bring the sunscreen and plenty of layers today for what could be another epic day on the slopes of Lake Tahoe.

Here is the ski report from Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.

Vonn, Mancuso share podium in super G

By Ski Racing News Service

ARE, Sweden – It couldn't have been any closer on the super G track today. German overall leader Maria Riesch secured her sixth World Cup victory of the season just one-hundredth of a second ahead of friend and chief rival in the overall standings, Lindsey Vonn of Vail. Riesch now leads by 196 points (1,516 to 1,320).

Fellow American Julia Mancuso of Squaw Valley, the recently crowned super G world championship silver medalist, was 0.79 seconds back in third place for her third World Cup podium of the season.

"It's a lucky win but it's good to have luck on your side from time to time. It has not always been the case," Riesch, who finished second to Vonn in the overall standings the past two seasons, told Reuters. "I have great hopes now (for the World Cup), especially after this weekend in which I managed to beat Lindsey twice. I think I turned the odds on my side and if I cannot win more points, the goal is now not to lose any."

It was Riesch's first super G win in since 2008.

The World Cup's top duo had all the attention this weekend as the World Cup tour resumed following a two week "break" for the 2011 World Championships in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany. Riesch, a double bronze medalist at her home championships, got things going again on Friday with the win in the super combined thanks to a great showing in the afternoon slalom leg after Vonn had lead in the morning's

super G portion before finishing sixth. Yesterday it was Vonn, with a brand new downhill Worlds sliver medal in her pocket, on top of the downhill podium and Riesch in third.

Today, the two friends literally could not have been any tighter as the sunny skies that had graced the area all week were blanketed with overcast conditions as Riesch crossed the finish line in one minute, 13.24 seconds, a half a hair a head of Vonn. All Vonn could do was throw her head back in disbelief. The pair has finished 1-2 five times this season.

“I thought I skied a good race, unfortunately I lost by one hundredth of a second, which is a snap of your finger. That’s life,” said Vonn, who was on the right side of the hundredths in late January when she won a super G over Riesch by five hundredths. “It’s definitely frustrating, especially at this time of the year, with the overall World Cup so tight. One hundredth is twenty points. It would have been great if we could have just tied.”

Vonn, who maintains a 131-point lead over Riesch in the super G standings with three wins and two second-place finishes this season, came down the freshened up track following a TV break in the No. 16 bib to take the lead from Austrian Nicole Hosp (fourth today) by 0.80 seconds. Three racers later, Riesch had lost most of a 0.15-second advantage at the last split timer, but flicked her wrist across the finish line beam just in time to beat Vonn and claim her 14th podium of the season over all five disciplines.

Another three racers later, Mancuso was the last to come close, but didn’t quite have enough to unseat the top duo as she continues to have her best season in three years. Mancuso, Vonn and Riesch have shared three World Cup podiums this season. Mancuso, a four-time World Cup winner, has gone four years without a victory.

Nine races remain on this season’s women’s World Cup schedule,

four of those being speed races which Vonn has relied on this season as she has struggled in giant slalom and slalom races.

Led by their top guns on the podium, the U.S. squad had another strong day as Leanne Smith recorded the second-best result of her World Cup career in 12th and and Laurenne Ross just made the points in 29th. Stacey Cook, fifth in yesterday's downhill, finished 33rd.

Britt Janyk led the Canadians in 25th ahead of teammate Marie-Michele Gagnon in 36th.

It was a heartbreaking weekend for local hero Anja Paerson. After leading both downhill training runs on her home snow, the fourth all time winningest woman ski racer just missed the podium in fourth in the super combined and failed to finish the downhill. She was 15 seconds into today's race when she intentionally skied off course, clicked out of her skis and dropped to the ground clutching her right knee. The severity of the injury is not yet known. She was the only competitor not to finish today.

Sand Harbor boat launch to have limited spring hours

The boat launch facility at Sand Harbor will open March 3. Boating hours will be 7am-3pm, Thursday through Monday through the end of April.

Boat inspectors will be present during these hours.

Closures or delayed opening may occur due to weather.

Lake levels are still low and launch conditions may be

hazardous, especially for boats more than 16 feet.

Summer hours from 6am-8pm will begin May 1. Boaters only using Lake Tahoe are encouraged to get their watercraft inspected early this year prior to summer crowds.

Beginning May 1, watercraft inspections will take place only at roadside inspection stations. Please visit the Nevada State Parks website for locations, 2011 fee structures and other information.

Watercraft inspectors are provided by the Tahoe Resource Conservation District.

Disabled veterans prove their abilities on Sierra's slopes

By Jessie Marchesseau

TWIN BRIDGES – On the hill they looked just like any other snowboarders. But underneath the helmets, goggles and bulky snowboard gear, the riders at this weekend's Pipeline Learn to Ride and Race camp are truly unique.

Amy Purdy, a tall, slender young woman with long auburn hair explains that she is a double-leg amputee. She lost both legs to meningitis more than 10 years ago. Today, she is development director and co-founder of Adaptive Action Sports, the organization putting on the camp.

In the Aspen Café at Sierra-at-Tahoe's base lodge, Purdy explains the uniqueness of each member of the group. Jasmine, with the perky ponytail of dreadlocks, is an amputee, as is Tanner in the white jacket. Chris has limited movement and

feeling in his left arm. Gary suffers from a traumatic brain injury that left him blind in one eye and with no feeling in his left leg. And Beth, at 27, has several fused vertebrae in her lower back, nerve damage and is a two-time breast cancer survivor.



Former Army Ranger Gary Nolte doesn't let the lack of feeling in one leg stop him from taming Sierra's slopes. Photos/Jessie Marchesseau

They hail from all over the U.S., and all are disabled veterans.

Beth Wolf had always wanted to join the military, but waited until after college to do so. She joined as a combat medic, but was diagnosed with stage 1 breast cancer while still in training. She was 22. Wolf received surgery and radiation therapy, and continued on with her military career. Just a few years later, while serving in Iraq, she was carrying a wounded soldier on her back when an RPG hit a nearby building. The force collapsed the discs in her back and left her in a wheelchair for six months.

Doctors were able to fuse the vertebrae so she could walk again, but her range of motion is limited, and she has little feeling left in her right leg, except for the constant pain.

“It’s not too bad though,” she laughs. “I can walk. There’s these folks out here missing their limbs, and they’re rockin’ it. So I’m really lucky.”

Wolf, who finished five and half months of chemotherapy in January to get rid of a second round of breast cancer, said coming to the three-day camp at Sierra has really helped to change her perspective.

“To be able to do something where you’re going fast without feeling pain, or as much pain, and feeling the wind in your face …,” she said. “I can’t run down a basketball court anymore or go for a jog, but I can get that wind going and feel the mountain air. It’s wicked cool. I’m addicted to it; I want to do it every day.”

She is not the only participant who has experienced the change that this and programs like it can make.

“I can honestly say programs like this saved my life,” Gary Nolte said.

Nolte, 29, a former U.S. Army ranger, sustained a brain injury while serving in Iraq when a mortar struck the building he was in.

“We go from being the toughest and the best-of-the-best to being hurt and being what we consider in our minds nothing,” he said, “and this kind of stuff shows us we’re still alive. This kind of stuff shows us that no matter what, we can do whatever we want to do, we just have to try, that’s it.”

He feels so strongly about the benefits of programs like this that he now works for a company offering whitewater boating as a means of therapy for disabled veterans.

An avid skier before his injury, this was Nolte's first time on a snowboard. And having no feeling in his left leg or vision in his left eye did not make it any easier. However, by the end of the camp he was turning both ways with a smile on his face. He said he is hooked and hopes to make snowboarding a regular pastime.

This is just the outcome Purdy and partner Daniel Gale are hoping for. They want participants in their camps to fully embrace the sport and make it a part of their lives, not just a one-time experience. With the possibility of snowboarding becoming an event at the 2014 Paralympics, they want adaptive riders to look at the possibilities of competitive snowboarding as well.

Purdy, who snowboarded competitively before her illness, is currently the top-ranked female adaptive rider in the world, having won two back-to-back World Cups. It is this passion for competition that prompted AAS to schedule the camp to coincide with the United States of American Snowboard Association (USASA) regional race at Sierra on Saturday. Purdy competed in the race and encouraged the other riders to do the same, hoping to inspire at least some of them to join the world of competitive snowboarding.

Since it was his first week on a board, Nolte opted not to enter the race this time around, but admitted he is a competitive type of guy, and he considered it.

"You got to constantly remember that you're enabled, not disabled," Nolte said. "It's not what you can't do, it's what you can do .… It's about just getting out there and doing it and having fun with what I can do."

This is the second year AAS has had an adaptive snowboard camp at Sierra, something the organization plans to make an annual event.

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Truckee’s Carroll wins World Cup slopestyle

By Elizabeth Karam, U.S. Snowboarding

CALGARY, Alberta -– In only her first slopestyle snowboarding and third career World Cup, Allyson Carroll of Truckee clinched victory Saturday in Calgary. Austria’s Clemen’s Schattschneider won the men’s contest.

Carroll headed into the Saturday afternoon finals having qualified in fourth. The 22-year-old threw down big launching a frontside boardslide to boardslide, 50-50 backside 180 out, switch boardslide as well as backside grab, backside 360 and backside 540 in the kicker section to take the “W.”

“I didn’t expect this to happen. Not a tiny little bit,” said Carroll. “I dislocated my left shoulder twice in January so I was hoping to be strong enough for this event after not ridding for three weeks.”

Carroll was joined by Canada’s Brooke Voigt and Pia Mesuburger of Austria on the podium in second and third. Serena Shaw of Bondville, Vt., finished next for the U.S. in fifth.

Schattschneider topped the men’s field landing a cab 270 to frontside boardslide on the downrail, cab 360 bonk on the Oakley-O, blunt frontside 270 out, 270 on 270 off the canon pole into a backside 900 to switch backside 900 and frontside 720 melon in the kicker section. Finishing behind Schattschneider was Canada’s Robby Balharry and Zachary Stone in second and third.

U.S. Snowboarding rookie Matt Ladley of Steamboat Springs,

Colo., fronted the U.S. men in eighth.

Official results, FIS World Cup, Calgary, Alberta, Slopestyle Snowboarding

Men

1. Clemens Schattschneider, Austria

2. Robby Balharry, Canada

3. Zachary Stone, Canada

—

8. Matt Ladley, Steamboat Springs, CO

14. Paul Brichta, Burnsville, MN

16. Zack Black, Breckenridge, CO

Women

1. Allyson Carroll, Truckee, CA

2. Brooke Voigt, Canada

3. Pia Meusburger, Austria

—

5. Serena Shaw, Bondville, VT

6. Mikaela Casey, Mound, MN

9. Kelly Marren, Hillsborough, CA

Tahoe residents begin digging out

The National Weather Service in Reno has released snow totals for the greater Lake Tahoe area.

Here are some results:

• Heavenly Valley – 18 inches last 24 hours; 30 inches in 48 hours



More than a shovel will be needed to reach the front door of this house on Venice Drive in South Lake Tahoe. Photo/Kathryn Reed

• Homewood – 20 inches in 24 hours; 40 inches in 48 hours

• Carson City – 3 inches in 24 hours; 12 inches 48 hours

• Squaw Valley – 20 inches in 24 hours; 38 inches in 48 hours;

• Kings Beach – 18 inches in 24 hours; 24 inches in 48 hours

• Reno – 11 inches in 48 hours.

Expect the cold to stay around for the better part of next week in the Lake Tahoe Basin. The wind will be picking up too. Snow is likely on Tuesday and Wednesday.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Kashima 24th in dual moguls

By Freddy Perryman, U.S. Ski Team

MARIANSKE LAZNE, Czech Republic -– Overall World Cup leader Hannah Kearney of Norwich, Vt., celebrated her birthday Saturday winning her sixth World Cup of the season in Marianske Lazne beating rival Jennifer Heil of Canada. Jeremy Cota of Carrabassett Valley, Maine, took third, earning his second World Cup podium of the season.

With clear, cold skies, sugary snow and a crowd of several thousand, the stage was set in Marianske Lazne for a World Cup to remember.

The day began with Kearney qualifying first, something key to her strategy in giving her the choice of lanes throughout the finals. With convincing runs, Kearney blitzed the first heat and the quarterfinals. In the semifinals she earned payback against Canadian Chloe Dufour-Lapointe, who beat her at Worlds, in order to face Heil in the final.

Saturday’s World Cup final was a showdown of giants. Kearney, who has been nearly unstoppable this World Cup season finally had the opportunity to face off against her friend and rival the 2011 individual and dual moguls World Champion Jennifer Heil of Canada.

In the final run, Heil was the first across the line of the short and fast Czech course. Speed wasn’t everything, though, as Kearney’s run was cleaner and more technical. The judges rewarded her the win 19.16.

With her win Saturday, Kearney has firmly cemented her lead in both the overall and moguls World Cup standings. There are three moguls events remaining.

On the men’s side, Jeremy Cota led the USA in third adding to what has been his best season with two World Cup podiums and three fourths.

The U.S. put three men and three women in the top 10. Joining Kearney were Kayla Snyderman of Winchester, Mass., in eighth and Eliza Outtrim of Steamboat Springs, Colo., in ninth. For the men, Patrick Deneen (Cle Elum, Wash.) was eighth with David DiGravio (Farmington, Maine) ninth. In his first international World Cup, Jay Panther (Park City) was 15th.

Official results, FIS Freestyle World Cup, Marianske Lazne, Czech Republic, Dual Moguls

Men

1. Alexandre Bilodeau, Canada

2. Mikael Kingsbury, Canada

3. Jeremy Cota, Carrabassett Valley, ME

—

8. Patrick Deneen, Cle Elum, WA

9. David DiGravio, Farmington, ME

12. Nate Roberts, Park City, UT

15. Jay Panther, Park City, UT

17. Joe Discoe, Telluride, CO

24. Sho Kashima, Lake Tahoe, CA

Women

1. Hannah Kearney, Norwich, VT

2. Jennifer Heil, Canada

3. Chloe Dufour-Lapointe, Canada

—

8. Kayla Snyderman, Winchester, MA

9. Eliza Outtrim, Steamboat Springs, CO

11. Heather McPhie, Bozeman, MT

13. Heidi Klosser, Vail, CO