Christmas Eve torchlight parade at Granlibakken

Staying true to its Norwegian roots, Granlibakken welcomes Santa and his elves for the resort's 30th annual torchlight parade on Christmas Eve at 6pm.

Hailing from the Scandinavian region of Northern Europe, Santa Claus (or Sinterklaas in his native Holland) and the Granli'Barbarians (the resort's three Viking ambassadors from Norway) will join forces during the resort's annual holiday celebration welcoming children and the young at heart for a festive evening at Granlibakken's ski and sled hill.

Santa will deliver gifts to kids staying in Granlibakken's lodging while sharing hot chocolate, hot mulled wine, and holiday cookies after the parade.

To join the torchlight parade, skiers should be intermediate or better. Complimentary lift tickets will be provided to parade members.

Granlibakken Resort Conference Center & Lodge is in Tahoe City. Visit www.Granlibakken.com for directions.

Ski report: A storm is coming in Tuesday



Get on the slopes today before the storm rolls in on Tuesday.

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

Unsettled weather moving toward Lake Tahoe

The spring-like weather that has settled into the Lake Tahoe Basin is about to disappear.

The National Weather Service in Reno has issued a winter storm watch for the region from late Tuesday morning through late Tuesday night.

The agency is calling for possible snow accumulations of about a foot above 7,000 feet, with 5 to 10 inches below 7,000 feet. The white stuff should be coming down at lake level by the afternoon.



Storm on the horizon for Lake Tahoe.

Photo/Kathryn
Reed

Wind could be an issue by making whiteout conditions. Ridgetops could see gusts of 90 mph, while other areas may sustain gusts of 35mph.

With the storm come cooler temps. Highs today will remain in the 50s, dropping to the low 40s on Tuesday, and high 30s on Wednesday and Thursday.

Wednesday is calling for a 30 percent of snow, Thursday mostly sun, with the chance of snow that night.

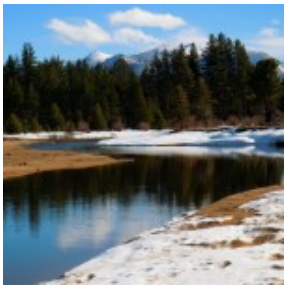
– Kathryn Reed

Gliding along Baldwin Beach in a blissful state of mind

By Kathryn Reed

CAMP RICHARDSON – I'm confused. The snow under my skis clearly means it's winter. But the temperature makes me wish I were in short-sleeves and has me reminiscing of summer days at the beach at Tahoe. The few feet of sand next to the lake have me thinking a towel and book would be a good thing to bring along next time.

It's one of those December Sundays when it feels more like a warm spring day. The snow has softened enough by late morning to have a little give and make gliding pleasurable.



Taylor Creek's tranquility is mesmerizing. Photos/Kathryn Reed

Lake Tahoe is like glass – beckoning anyone foolish enough to come play with her. But we know better. She is no friend this time of year – this icy bowl of water.

We park at the turnout for Baldwin Beach off Highway 89. The U.S. Forest Service does not plow the access road. It's OK to park there, but pay attention to areas along this stretch of the South Shore because there are "no parking" signs in certain places.

Outdoor enthusiasts have laid several tracks. An etiquette reminder – if possible, don't walk in the tracks of cross country skiers. Even more important, pick up after your dog – especially because dogs aren't allowed at Baldwin.

Meandering down what feels like a forested tunnel of sorts because of the thick conifers on either side has altered my state of mind. I'm lost in this wonderland. Inhaling, exhaling. Oh, that mountain air.

Less than a mile in the terrain opens and Lake Tahoe's deep blue waters are just a few glides away.

We head north along the beach. Mount Tallac is to our left all covered with snow. It looks like February. It seems too early – and technically it's not winter – for this icon to be awash in white.

No one is in sight, yet the tracks prove plenty of people have beaten us to this little slice of Tahoe splendor. We go as far as we can. A creek prevents us from crossing. Although the water level is low, there is no way not to get our feet wet. No matter the outside temperature, wet feet are a recipe for frostbite.

At times this inlet can be crossed on the ice. But crossing any ice in Tahoe is tricky because of the freeze-thaw factor. When the area is a crossable, it becomes a bit of an architectural tour with all the shoreline homes.

This Sunday we turn around and head toward Taylor Creek. A large predator bird is circling in the distance – perhaps a hawk of some sort.

A couple is on the other side. They, too, have reached Mother Nature's barrier.

Back we go. Taking it all in.

It's one of those incredibly easy cross country ski outings because it's all flat. No chance of getting lost with the lake on one side. But it is one of the most scenic places to visit – even more so in the winter than summer.

Getting there:

From South Lake Tahoe, take Highway 89 north. Pass Camp Richardson. Go about one mile. Park on the right where the sign says "Recreation Area Closed for the Season." If you hit Cascade Properties, you went too far.

ngg_shortcode_0_placeholder (Click on photos to enlarge.)

Curling clinic at South Tahoe ice rink

The South Lake Tahoe Ice Arena is offering curling events to prepare participants for the upcoming leagues. These clinics are offered Sundays. The next clinic is Dec. 19 from 2-4pm.

Curling is a similar to shuffleboard, but played on ice. Although it is often played with significant strategy and skill, it can be enjoyed by all ages after a short lesson.

Prepare yourself by going online to learn the fundamentals of the game. Look for up coming clinics after the holiday here.

Cost is $12 and enrollment is limited so sign up soon by stopping by the arena at 1176 Rufus Allen Blvd. or calling (530) 542.6262.

Vonn, Mancuso place 7-8 in GS

By U.S. Ski Team

ST. MORITZ, Switzerland – Defending Audi FIS Alpine World Cup overall champion Lindsey Vonn of Vail and a surging Julia Mancuso of Squaw Valley finished 7-8 in the St. Moritz giant slalom as the second run was delayed an hour due to high winds. Tessa Worley of France took the come-from-behind victory, just 0.01 over Tanja Poutianen of Finland when German favorites Kathrin Hoelzl and Viktoria Rebensburg faltered in the second run.

“The snow conditions were perfect, it was a little windy for a while there and they delayed it and then we kept going,” said

Vonn, who gained back a few more points toward the overall lead as German Maria Riesch finished 19th. “It was nice to get a race in that was more like my training. The first run I felt like I was a little bit too relaxed. I skied conservatively and too round, but the second run I skied much more aggressively and was really happy with it.”

Vonn produced the fourth fastest second run to hurdle nine places after opening the day in 16th, while Mancuso, who was sixth after an impressive first run, dropped two slots to eighth after getting hung up in the grippy snow lower on the pitch.

Mancuso wasn’t the only racer to have trouble in the second run as Hoelzl, the defending World Cup GS champion, hit a rut and skied over her pole to go out while Vancouver GS gold medalist Rebensburg fell off line into the soft snow on multiple occasions to drop to 10th after leading the first run.

“I made a mistake because I wasn’t respecting the conditions,” said Mancuso, who was on the World Cup podium last weekend in the Lake Louise super G. “I still don’t know what happened I just got stuck and a little back and lost a lot time.”

Sarah Schleper of Vail barely missed making the final, despite controlled skiing to finish 32nd in the opening run.Vonn and Mancuso now roll to Val d’Isere, France for a series of three speed races opening with super G on Dec. 17, replacing the wind scrapped race from Saturday in St. Moritz. Val d’Isere will also feature a downhill and the season’s first super combined.

Official Results, Audi FIS Alpine World Cup, St. Moritz, Switzerland, Dec. 12, Giant Slalom

1. Tessa Worley, France, 2:10.70

2. Tanja Poutianen, Finland, 2:10.71-

3. Tina Maze, Slovenia, 2:11.01

4. Anemone Marmottan, France, 2:11.22

5. Marie-Michele Gagnon, Canada, 2:11.49

—

7. Lindsey Vonn, Vail, CO, 2:11.77

8. Julia Mancuso, Squaw Valley, CA, 2:11.88

—

Did not qualify for 2nd run: Sarah Schleper (Vail, CO), Megan McJames (Park City, UT), Stacey Cook (Mammoth Mountain, CA), Laurenne Ross (Klamath Falls, WA)

Ski report: Lots of sunshine



Bring the sunscreen to the slopes. It is expected to be in the 50s and sunny today.

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

Tahoe athletes near the bottom in mogul competition

By Freddy Perryman, U.S. Ski Team

RUKA, Finland – Patrick Deneen (Cle Elum, Wash.) and Hannah Kearney (Norwich, Vt.) started off the 2011 World Cup moguls season capturing both top spots for the U.S. Ski Team near the Arctic Circle in Ruka, Finland. It was the first career World Cup win for Deneen, the 2009 World Champion, and 11th for Kearney.

Setting aside all the jitters that come with the first competition of the season, Olympic champion Kearney threw down her first heli mute grab in competition to claim victory.

Kearney's winning run started with a back layout off the first jump and a clean exit allowed her to carry her speed through the middle bumps.

A new jump package also allowed Deneen to have the fastest run of the night on his way to victory, besting Canada's Mikael Kingsbury and Guilbaut Colas of France.

Conditions in Ruka were chilly, just above 10°F, but the course was in great condition, allowing the athletes to showcase their talents unencumbered.

Eliza Outrrim (Steamboat Springs, Colo.) finished just outside the podium in fourth. Four U.S. women and two men made the top-16 finals including World Cup Rookie of the Year Heidi Kloser (Vail) in 10th and Heather McPhie (Bozeman) in 13th for the women and Jeremy Cota (Carrabassett Valley, Maine), who finished 14th for the men.

This Wednesday, freestyle competition resumes in Meribel, France, with dual moguls. Then it's off to Beida Lake, China.

This event marks the first time a World Cup moguls competition will have been held in China.

Official results,FIS Freestyle World Cup, Ruka, Finland, Moguls

Men

1. Patrick Deneen, Cle Elum, WA, 25.23

2. Mikael Kingsbury, Canada, 24.89

3. Guilbaut Colas, France, 24.78

4. Dmitriy Reiherd, Kazakhstan, 24.61

5. Cedric Rochon, Canada, 23.99

–

14. Jeremy Cota, Carrabassett Valley, ME

19. Bryon Wilson, Butte, MT

22. David Digravio, Farmington, ME

24. Jimmy Discoe, Ridgway, CO

26. Joe Discoe, Telluride, CO

28. Sho Kashima, Lake Tahoe, CA

Women

1. Hannah Kearney, Norwich, VT, 24.09

2. Jennifer Heil, Canada, 24.02

3. Kristi Richards, Canada, 23.52

4. Eliza Outtrim, Steamboat Springs, CO, 22.97

5. Justine Dufor-Lapointe, Canada, 22.76

–

10. Heidi Kloser, Vail, CO

13. Heather McPhie, Bozeman, MT

24. Laurel Shanley, Squaw Valley, CA

---

3 Californians in top 5 at halpipe competition

By Lindsey Sine, U.S. Snowboarding

COPPER MOUNTAIN, Colo. – The hillside was illuminated and the music kept the crowd moving as Cheryl Maas and Zak Hale clinched the win by pumping out some stylish tricks during the Paul Mitchell Progression Session on the nighttime slopes Saturday.

The setup included an in-run to a wall feature, followed by either a gap jump, or a rail transition. The night started out in a jam session format, and after 50 minutes the field was whittled to five men and three women. Each then got three runs and were placed in order.

Maas, who hails from the Netherlands, threw a stylish flip off the wall, but the run that won her the event was a backside wallride to backside 3 over the railing.

As far as she was concerned, the night was a success that included a nice outcome in the form of Paul Mitchell hair care products as one of her prizes.

On the men’s side, Hale of Big Bear City, Calif., was clearly

putting out progressive moves as he cleared the gap and styled down the rails.

“Front one sameway on the closeout rail, a couple tricks off the wall and I guess that’s what got me this check, so I’m pretty stoked,” Hale said.

The event marked the close of the Copper Mountain stop of the Visa U.S. Halfpipe Grand Prix. Relive all the fun Dec. 12 starting at 11am on NBC.

Official Results, Visa U.S. Halfpipe Grand Prix, Copper Mountain, Colo, Paul Mitchell Progression Session

Men

1. Zak Hale, Big Bear City, CA

2. Austen Sweetin, Seattle, WA

3. Forest Bailey, Lake Tahoe, CA

4. Yale Cousino, Sugarbush, VT

5. Tyler Flanagen, Mammoth, CA

Women

1. Cheryl Maas, Netherlands

2. Colleen Quigley, Waterville Valley, ME

3. Darrah Reid, Canada

‘Holiday on Ice’ in South Tahoe

The Tahoe Figure Skating Club and the South Lake Tahoe Ice Arena are hosting a “Holiday on Ice” Dec. 18 from 5:30-6:30pm at the South Tahoe Ice Arena located at 1170 Rufus Allen Blvd.

Admission is free.

See local and regional skaters perform to their favorite Christmas songs. There will also be performances by the Hockey League, Skate School and a special appearance by Santa and Mrs. Claus.

Dress warm.

For more information, call (530) 542.6262.