

South Shore garden tour tickets on sale

The UCCE Master Gardeners of Lake Tahoe will host the Tahoe in Bloom Garden Tour on July 25 from 9am-2pm.

Six gardens will be featured, each with its own theme. Effective use of native plants, having a garden using less water, attracting wildlife and pollinators to the garden, and how to remove lawn area and still achieve an enjoyable landscape are just a few of the examples people will see on this tour.

Tickets are \$20. They are available at Nel's Garden Center, Aspen Hollow Garden Center, Tahoe Outdoor Living, and Sun Basin Nursery. Tickets are limited.

In the past, this event was sponsored by the Lake Tahoe Historical Society.

For more information about Master Gardener events and other gardening information, call 530.621.5528.

Prescription drug abusers turn to heroin

By Lisa Girion, Los Angeles Times

Standing in the pulpit above Austin Klimusko's casket three years ago, his mother used his death to draw the connection between pills from a pharmacy and drugs from the street.

“When his prescriptions dried up, he turned to heroin,” Susan Klimusko said in a frank eulogy meant as a warning to the young mourners at Simi Valley’s Cornerstone Church.

Last week, the nation’s top public health official used the bully pulpit to sound the same alarm. The prescription drug epidemic is stoking the nation’s appetite for heroin with disastrous results, Dr. Tom Frieden, director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, told reporters in a teleconference.

“We are priming people to addiction to heroin with overuse of prescription opiates, which are, after all, essentially the same chemical with the same impact on the brain,” he said.

Read the whole story

Peaches: Smaller, sweeter, quicker harvest

By Russ Parsons, Los Angeles Times

Peaches and nectarines are two of the most glorious prizes of summer, but this year you’d better grab them while you can. Blink and you might miss your favorites.

Because of the warm winter we experienced – the winter that wasn’t – harvests are much smaller than usual and are coming much earlier. Some farmers I’ve talked to say they’ll be winding up their picking within the next two weeks – that’s mid-July for a season that for some varieties normally can last until October.

As if that wasn’t bad enough, this year’s peach and nectarine

crop is running much smaller than normal. As compensation, the fruit is exceptionally sweet.

[Read the whole story](#)

Double amputee swims across Tahoe for charity

By Ryan Canaday, KTVN-TV

On Sunday in Lake Tahoe, a double amputee swam across the lake while towing his son in a kayak.

The 12 mile trek across the lake began at Sand Harbor and finished near Tahoe City.

Leading the swim was Harry Boucher, a 44-year-old double amputee.

[Read the whole story](#)

Donner Lake water level well below average

The fourth year of drought has finally caught up to Donner Lake.

This body of water that is fed by snowmelt is nearly 3 feet below average for this time of year. There is no way it will

reach its maximum capacity. This hasn't happened in 20 years.

The lake is at 5,932.57 feet; where as the high water level is 5,935.8 feet.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Maple

Maple is a very sweet Boston Terrier/Chihuahua mix who just arrived at the Tahoe shelter from Placerville along with three other little dogs. She is 3-years-old and seems to get along with everyone. There is also a cute 10-week-old cocker spaniel/Jack russell terrier puppy at the shelter, named Hans Solo.

Maple is spayed, microchipped, tested for heart worm, and vaccinated. She is at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many other dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes. Go to the Tahoe animal shelter's Facebook page to see photos and descriptions of all pets at

the shelter.

Call 530.573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet.

For spay-neuter assistance for South Tahoe residents, go online.

– Karen Kuentz

Hundreds groove to bluegrass at Tahoe



Lake Tahoe's Dead Winter Carpenters play July 11 at the inaugural Bluegrass Festival at Lake Tahoe Hard Rock. Photos/Terra Breeden

By Terra Breeden

STATELINE – It was all fun and fiddles Saturday at the inaugural Bluegrass Festival on the South Shore, part of the Hard Rock's summer concert series.

Thousands of people came to enjoy the all-day event and dance to the twanging tunes of an all-star lineup of bluegrass bands, which included New Monsoon, Dead Winter Carpenters, Del McCoury Band, Greensky, David Grisman Sextet, and Earls of Leicester.

New Monsoon kicked off the show with upbeat jam music and tons of vitality.

Dead Winter Carpenters from North Lake Tahoe played next, bringing heavy bluegrass music to the stage. The Dead Winter Carpenters have had a busy year touring throughout the United States and Brian Houston, a member of the band and Tahoe native said, "We are very excited for the show, it's nice to be back in Tahoe after so much time on the road."

Later in the afternoon, big-name bluegrass groups such as Earls of Leicester, which won the 2015 Grammy Award for best bluegrass band, dominated the stage and crooned to the audience. Earls of Leicester showcased a traditional bluegrass sound defined by banjo fingerpicking and soaring fiddles. Their music is inspired by the classic songs by Earl Scruggs and Lester Flatt, and the Foggy Mountain Boys.

"The Earls of Leicester is the band we came to the festival to see," said concert-goer and fan Robert Glover. "Their music is good ol' honky-tonk twang and it's the original bluegrass sound."

Many people came to the outdoor festival for the atmosphere.

High-stepping energy and good vibes abounded at this event as the sound of bluegrass filled the air. Families and friends spread their blankets out in front of the stage and joined in conversation and laughter, sipping drinks and munching on good

food. Laughing children darted around their legs, hula-hooping and dancing to the tunes at this family-friendly concert.



Hundreds of people congregate at Hard Rock to listen to bluegrass.

The Bluegrass Festival is the brainchild of PR Entertainment, a company that puts on other bluegrass events like Hangtown Halloween in Placerville and Winter Wondergrass in North Lake Tahoe.

Ryan Kronenberg of PR Entertainment said that, “I had the thought that we should just get a Tahoe bluegrass show going that’s more of a summer event, something that would bring bluegrass music to South Lake.”

The plan is for it to be an annual event.

“It’s fun to get outside and listen to music,” Kronenberg said, “and I am glad the weather worked out.”

After a week of gray skies and rain, July 11 was the first clear, blue-sky day Tahoe has seen in a while. Concert-goers

lazed on blankets, soaking up the sun and jamming to the music.

“This is a great venue and the Hard Rock staff has been amazing,” Bluegrass Festival attendee from North Lake Tahoe Samantha Gruetchemach said. “I think this festival is great. Everyone is super nice, the food is good, everyone is having fun, and the weather is perfect after all that rain.”

Opinion: Peer pressure can be a positive

By Philip Hoy

In every classroom, there is a kind of tipping point when the unmotivated students either get pulled along by the high achievers, or the unmotivated students hold the high achievers back.

I see this all the time teaching English at Coachella Valley High School in Southern California’s Inland Empire. Most of my students come from low-income households, have had to learn English as a second language, and hope to be the first in their families to go to college. They’ve been told since they were in elementary school that higher education is their ticket to a better life, and many have come to believe this.

But high school is a big place, full of distractions. For many, school becomes about socializing, partying and striving to fit in. Other students are stressed by balancing school with a relationship, by responsibilities at home, or by a part-time job. Added to these pressures is the anxiety caused by the daunting cost of higher education. As a result of all

these pressures – and low expectations – too few students are truly prepared for college by the time they graduate.

One way to keep our students focused on college is to make them aware of advanced placement courses as early as possible. Currently, we offer 14 AP courses at Coachella Valley High, from calculus to Spanish literature. While I know that our very highest achievers are going to take these courses and succeed, I believe that for the majority of students, the cultural mindset of their classmates is just as important as the educator in the front of the classroom. The sooner students with college ambitions take such courses the better they'll be prepared for the rigors of college. And the more we can grow the AP program at our school, the more students will share goals and values – and this high-achieving mindset.

So this last November we formed the Coachella Valley High School Advanced Placement Club to support AP and future AP students and encourage more people to take these classes. How we would do this, I wasn't quite sure at first, but I agreed to be the advisor anyway. Maybe we could use my room as a study hall after school. Maybe club members would want to raise money for college field trips. Maybe we could all get T-shirts.

Mostly seniors and juniors – along with a few sophomores – packed into my classroom after school for our first meeting. We elected officers, approved our constitution, and formed our first committees: fundraising, T-shirts, and freshman awareness. We decided to meet on a weekly basis and then adjourned so that the committees could meet separately to discuss ideas and plans.

And then this wonderful thing happened. About 20 of the students who'd stayed for the freshman awareness committee gathered in a rough circle of chairs. Itcelia, a senior in my AP English literature class and our newly elected vice president, asked, "What do you know now that you wish someone

had told you as a freshman?"

And then they all started sharing. I sat at my desk in the back of the room and just listened. They discussed the benefits of honors and AP classes, the importance of homework and time management, and the need to balance academics with activities, clubs, sports, community service, and so on. It was amazing. Here was a cross section of our school's highest achievers made up of a diversity of personality types and interests – not just the "nerd herd" but the drama kids, the artists, the athletes, the cheerleaders, the class officers, and students from career academies – building a master plan for high school success.

They decided to bring that plan to the freshmen themselves. By the next meeting, Itcelia had contacted an administrator and gotten freshman teachers' permission to give presentations in their classrooms. She and the other freshman awareness committee members created a PowerPoint slideshow. Club members volunteered to present based on which of their own classes they could afford to miss.

After the presentations, the students gathered to debrief. Some of them had spoken to the freshmen about resisting the pressure to dumb down in order to stay popular, or to get someone to like you. Itcelia was thrilled that during one of her presentations a freshman girl had shared that she liked a boy until she found out he didn't know the difference between your and you're. "Smart is the new sexy," someone in the group said, defining the moment and themselves.

Surprisingly, one of the groups met resistance from a teacher who thought they were being unrealistic in encouraging students to take as many AP classes as possible. But Itcelia, presently enrolled in four AP classes, active in several clubs and community service projects, and in rehearsals for the school's production of "Grease", passionately disagreed. She remembered that when she was a freshman, some upperclassmen

tried to discourage her from taking AP classes, saying they were too demanding and wouldn't leave room for anything else.

"But that just isn't true," she said. "It's all about setting priorities and managing your time."

The success of the presentations inspired me to create a club website with links to information on AP courses, colleges, careers, admission tests, financial aid, and scholarships.

The site also includes a weekly blog featuring essays from teachers, counselors, alumni, community professionals, and fellow students. Many wrote about their own paths to college and the fears and obstacles they had to overcome, and others about the importance of reading or the value of stories in the community. One student wrote about the need for academic rivalries and another published a poem on immigration. We gave away T-shirts that display our blog address alongside inspirational quotes from authors and civil rights leaders or witty slogans like, "You had me at your proper use of you're." We got more freshmen to join the club, and at meetings we had great discussions that often began with questions for seniors from underclassmen, particularly juniors looking ahead at their last year of high school.

This next year, with new seniors and a clearer sense of direction, we will build on these successes. We want to increase membership, raise money for college field trips, and encourage more students to interact with and write for our blog.

High school peer pressure can work in positive as well as negative ways, and individual success is often the result of a community of support. With the help of student leaders like Itcelia, who, by the way, graduated as class salutatorian and will attend UC Berkeley in the fall, I believe we can continue to tip the scales of academic motivation in the right direction.

Philip Hoy is a high school English teacher by day and short-story author, novelist, and blogger by night. When he is not creating lesson plans or grading essays, he is writing. He lives in Southern California with his wife, Magdalena, also a teacher. This article was written for Zócalo Public Square and is supported by a grant from the California Wellness Foundation.

Western diet contributes to malnutrition

By Leigh Weingus, Huffington Post

Seventy percent of the world's population is expected to live in a city by 2050, according to a University Of Minnesota study. But with urbanization comes the spread of the Western diet – and that's not a good thing.

Developing countries have generally relied on vegetables, fruits and legumes as their main food sources. But as these countries gain more access to more calorie-rich foods like red meat, salt, sugar and processed foods, malnourishment is paradoxically on the rise.

“People around the world, as incomes go up, choose more calories and meat in their diet,” study author David Tilman said, according to CNN. “We have a whole new group of people who are malnourished because they eat foods that are no good for them, that have no nutritional benefit.”

Read the whole story

Eco-friendly pest control in the garden



Floating row covers allow air, light and water through, but prevent insects like bean beetles and cabbage worms from reaching and damaging the plants.

Photo/Melinda Myers

By Melinda Myers

Spots on tomatoes, holes in hosta leaves and wilting stems mean insects and diseases have moved into the garden. Don't let these intruders reduce the beauty and productivity of your landscape. Work in concert with nature to prevent and control these pests and you will be rewarded with a bountiful harvest

and landscape filled with beautiful blooms.

Monitor. Take regular walks through the landscape. Not only is it good exercise, but it will improve your mood and you'll discover problems earlier when they are easier to control. Look for discolored leaves, spots, holes and wilting. Inspect the underside of the leaves and along the stems to uncover the cause of the problem.

Identify. Once you discover a problem, identify the culprit. Your local extension service, garden center or reliable internet resource can help. Once identified, you can plan the best way to manage the culprit.

Invite the good guys. Toads, lady beetles and birds help control many garden pests. Attract them to the garden by planting herbs and flowers to attract beneficial insects, adding a house for the toads, and birdbath for songbirds. Avoid using pesticides and learn to tolerate a bit of damage. A few aphids or caterpillars will bring in the lady beetles, lacewings, birds and toads that are looking for a meal.

Clean up. Many insects and diseases can be managed and prevented with a bit of garden cleanup. A strong blast of water from the garden hose will dislodge aphids and mites, reducing their damage to a tolerable level. Or knock leaf-eating beetles and other larger insects off the plants and into a can of soapy water.

Pick off discolored leaves, prune off diseased stems and destroy. Be sure to disinfect tools with 70% alcohol or one part bleach to nine parts water solution between cuts. This will reduce the risk of spreading the disease when pruning infected plants.

Adjust care. Reduce the spread and risk of further problems by adjusting your maintenance strategies. Avoid overhead and nighttime watering that can increase the risk of disease. Use an organic nitrogen fertilizer which encourages slow steady

growth that is less susceptible to insect and disease attacks.

Mulch the soil with shredded leaves, evergreen needles or wood chips. This will keep roots cool and moist during drought, improve the soil as they decompose, and also prevent soil borne diseases from splashing onto and infecting the plants.

Non-chemical controls. If the problems continue, try some non-chemical options for insects. A yellow bowl filled with soapy water can attract aphids, a shallow can filled with beer and sunk in the ground will manage slugs, and crumpled paper under a flower pot for earwigs are just a few ways to trap and kill these pests.

Or cover the plants with floating row covers. These fabrics allow air, light and water through, but prevent insects like bean beetles and cabbage worms from reaching and damaging the plants.

Organic products. Organic products like insecticidal soap, horticulture oil and *Bacillus thuringiensis* can be used to control specific pests. And even though these are organic, they are designed to kill insects or disease organisms, so be sure to read and follow label directions carefully.

Take note. Make notes on the problems and solutions in this season's garden. Refer to these next year to help you do a better job of monitoring and managing garden pests. And when shopping for new plants, select the right plant for the location and choose resistant varieties whenever possible.

A little eco-friendly gardening can go a long way in creating a beautiful and productive garden.

Gardening expert, TV/radio host, author and columnist Melinda Myers has more than 30 years of horticulture experience and has written more than 20 gardening books.