

LTN Book Club: 'Dying Words' full of life

By Kathryn Reed

It's been a long time since I've read a book that I didn't want to end. And for someone who isn't much of a fan of fiction, that speaks volumes.



"Dying Words" (NaCl Press, 2012) by K. Patrick Conner is a novel that takes readers into the life of an obituary writer at the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Those jobs don't exist anymore. Newspaper jobs barely exist, let alone such a specialty.

Conner was a reporter at the *Chronicle*, so he was able to accurately capture some of the nuances of the paper, and certainly The City. (Since I was an editor there, I can vouch for much of the authenticity.)

"Dying Words" is much more than life at a newspaper. It's about life itself.

Grayden Hubbell is the main character. Now in his 70s, his sole job at the paper is to write obituaries. The love of his life died decades ago, and yet there is still love to be had even in his dying days.

Conner has a way with words that is poetic, as well as captivating. He makes you care about the characters and

connect to them.

It's hard for me to know if the tears I shed were for the story or the reality about the state of newspapers or both.

No matter your feelings about newspapers, this is a story about people, and the importance of the connections people have in their lifetimes.

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- Please join in the discussion via commenting. Feel free to pose questions.

- **Questions:** If you knew you were dying, would you change your life and how? Should Grayden have been let go when he was given bad information? Have you thought about what you would want your obituary to say?

- The next book is "Tribe: On Homecoming and Belonging" by Sebastian Junger. The review will be posted April 1.

Opinion: This generation of teens cares about gun violence

By Jean Twenge, *The Conversation*

When 17 people were killed at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla., it was just the latest in a tragic list of mass shootings, many of them at schools.

Then something different happened: Teens began to speak out. The Stoneman Douglas students had a press conference appealing

for gun control. Teens in Washington, D.C., organized a protest in front of the White House, with 17 lying on the ground to symbolize the lives lost. More protests organized by teens are planned for the coming months.

Teens weren't marching in the streets calling for gun control after the Columbine High School massacre in 1999. So why are today's teens and young adults – whom I've dubbed "iGen" in my recent book on this generation – speaking out and taking action?

With mass shootings piling up one after another, this is a unique historical moment. But research shows that iGen is also a unique generation – one that may be especially sensitive to gun violence.

Keep me safe

People usually don't think of teenagers as risk-averse. But for iGen, it's been a central tenant of their upbringing and outlook.

During their childhoods, they experienced the rise of the helicopter parent, anti-bullying campaigns and, in some cases, being forced to ride in car seats until age 12.

Their behavior has followed suit. For my book, I conducted analyses of large, multi-decade surveys. I found that today's teens are less likely to get into physical fights and less likely to get into car accidents than teens just 10 years ago. They're less likely to say they like doing dangerous things and aren't as interested in taking risks. Meanwhile, since 2000, rates of teen binge drinking have fallen by half.

With the culture so focused on keeping children safe, many teens seem incredulous that extreme forms of violence against kids can still happen – and yet so many adults are unwilling to address the issue.

“We call on our national and state legislatures to finally act responsibly and reduce the number of these tragic incidents,” said Eleanor Nuechterlein and Whitney Bowen, the teen organizers of the D.C. lie-in. “It’s essential that we all feel safe in our classrooms.”

Treated with kid gloves

In a recent analysis of survey data from 8 million teens since the 1970s, I also found that today’s teens tend to delay a number of “adult” milestones. They’re less likely than their predecessors to have a driver’s license, go out without their parents, date, have sex, and drink alcohol by age 18.

This could mean that, compared to previous generations, they’re more likely to think of themselves as children well into their teen years.

As 17-year-old Stoneman Douglas High School student David Hogg put it, “We’re children. You guys are the adults. You need to take some action.”

Furthermore, as this generation has matured, they’ve witnessed stricter age regulations for young people on everything from buying cigarettes (with the age minimum raised to 21 in several states) to driving (with graduated driving laws).

Politicians and parents have been eager to regulate what young people can and can’t do. And that’s one reason some of the survivors find it difficult to understand why gun purchases aren’t as regulated.

“If people can’t purchase marijuana or alcohol at the age of 18, why should they be given access to guns?” asked Stoneman Douglas High School junior Lyliah Skinner.

She has a point: The shooter, Nikolas Cruz, is 19. Under Florida’s laws, he could legally possess a firearm at age 18. But – because he’s under 21 – he couldn’t buy alcohol.

Libertarianism – with limits

At the same time, iGen teens – like their millennial predecessors – are highly individualistic. They believe the rights of the individual should trump traditional social rules. For example, I found that they're more supportive of same-sex marriage and legalized marijuana than previous generations were at the same age.

Their political beliefs tend to lean toward libertarianism, a philosophy that favors individual rights over government regulations, including gun regulation. Sure enough, support for protecting gun rights increased among millennials and iGen between 2007 and 2016.

But even a libertarian ideologue would never argue that individual freedom extends to killing others. So perhaps today's teens are realizing that one person's loosely regulated gun rights can lead to another person's death – or the death of 17 of their teachers and classmates.

The teens' demands could be seen as walking this line: They're not asking for wholesale prohibitions on all guns. Instead, they're hoping for reforms supported by most Americans such as restricting the sale of assault weapons and more stringent background checks.

In the wake of the Stoneman Douglas High School shooting, the teens' approach to activism – peaceful protest, a focus on safety and calls for incremental gun regulation – are fitting for this generation.

Perhaps iGen will lead the way to change.

Jean Twenge is a professor of psychology at San Diego State University.

How Olympic athletes grapple with life once the thrill is gone

By Edward Etzel, *The Conversation*

Hundreds of Winter Olympians around the world are saying farewell to the thrill of a lifetime. While a handful will leave as delighted medal winners, the majority leave empty-handed.

Whether they won the medal or not, some find themselves navigating uncharted waters into an uncertain future. In many cases, they've trained and devoted themselves to their sport for years.

Suddenly, the lights go dim.

As a former Olympian who's now a sport psychologist, I know from firsthand experience that it's not easy. Being an athlete is central to the identity of most Olympians, and transitioning away from training and competing can be daunting.

Daily life upended

In the early 1980s, psychologist Nancy K. Schlossberg developed her transition theory. It recognizes that people are prone to stress whenever they experience shifts in routines, relationships and roles, and changes that can happen at home, at work and at school.

For Olympians, a transition back to everyday life represents a break from months of highly structured routines. No longer are

they expected to be accountable to their teammates or coaches. And no longer do they have an impending competition to motivate them.

Some of the most immediate challenges involve making a decision: Should an athlete continue his or her studies? Or search for a job? Most Olympic athletes receive very little funding and need to find a way to financially support themselves outside of their sport.

Many also need to decide whether they even want to continue participating in their sport. This might seem like no-brainer for some, especially those who are young, healthy and still at the top of their game, like 17-year-old snowboarders Chloe Kim and Red Gerard.

But for those whose physical prowess is waning and who have growing families it's a distressing decision. After three-time Olympic medalist Lindsey Vonn won a bronze medal in the downhill ski event, she acknowledged that she was at a different point in her career – perhaps the end – because her body was breaking down.

“I wish I could keep skiing,” she told the *Los Angeles Times*. “I wish my body didn't hurt as bad as it does.”

A flimsy sense of self

For athletes who have invested years of their life to get to the Olympics, they have to contend with what sports psychologists call their “athletic identity,” which is the extent to which being an athlete is entwined with their sense of self.

For athletes who have a strong athletic identity, the lifestyle of being an athlete is central to how they see themselves and how others may see and treat them. When they're competing, it can serve as a source of great strength, meaning and perseverance. But when age, injury or failure occur, it

can become an Achilles heel: All of a sudden, they're unmoored.

Retiring from playing a sport is as weighty a decision as retiring from a job or changing career paths. It can create a huge void and can force athletes to reflect on their careers and question their performance: Am I weak or strong? Was my athletic career a success or a failure? How resilient am I? How do I craft the next chapter in my life?

When the music's over

As a psychologist, I've had the privilege of working with many ex-Olympic athletes who have struggled with this transition.

I've also personally been through a post-Olympic transition.

In my case, before the end of the 1984 Olympic Games, I returned home to Morgantown, W. Va., with a gold medal in the men's English match rifle shooting event. But I was also saddled with the memory of a mediocre 15th-place finish in a different event.

All of a sudden, my years-long journey of preparation, sacrifice and competition was over. Luckily, I had a job waiting for me as a shooting coach and was enrolled in a graduate program in professional psychology. I decided that I needed to retire in order to focus on work and school, and was able to move on from being an Olympic athlete with little, if any, regret.

But each athlete's path and story differs. For every Michelle Kwan, who went on to become an author and a public diplomacy ambassador for the United States, there's a Debi Thomas, the former figure skater who declared bankruptcy in 2014 and is grappling with mental health issues.

Those who struggle the most post-games are perhaps those who had high expectations that went unfulfilled, which can lead to

a lifetime of “what-ifs” and second guessing.

But the Maasai people of Kenya have a saying about life: “Everything ends.”

It’s a maxim that every Olympic athlete – medal winner or not – should take to heart.

Edward Etzel is a professor of sport and exercise psychology at West Virginia University.

Sandoval: ‘We can’t have students living in fear’

By Siobhan McAndrew, Reno Gazette-Journal

Gov. Brian Sandoval said he will bring together school superintendents across the state to talk about safety.

His announcement Tuesday comes after]Sandoval was at a meeting with the National Governors Association and President Trump on Monday.

He told the group that the issue of the day is school safety and public safety, and shared that he was the parent of a middle school student where there was a recent rumor of a school threat.

Read the whole story

Will cloud seeding reduce droughts?

By Sophie Quinton, Washington Post

Machines that prod clouds to make snow may sound like something out of an old science fiction movie. But worsening water scarcity, combined with new evidence that “cloud seeding” can work, is spurring states, counties, water districts and power companies across the thirsty West to use the strategy.

Last month, a study funded by the National Science Foundation tracked for the first time how the technology works in nature. The evidence for cloud seeding has been scarce, but recent research has encouraged officials and companies desperate to increase the amount of water in rivers and reservoirs.

Read the whole story

SLT elementary school locked down on false threat

Updated: March 1, 7:42am:

Tahoe Valley Elementary School was on lockdown the afternoon of Feb. 28.

Lake Tahoe Unified School District officials called it a “false alarm.”

“It was a planned drill started at LTCC in which Tahoe Valley

was inadvertently called as part of the LTCC automated phone tree. After the drill, Tahoe Valley's phone number was removed from LTCC's automated phone tree," police Lt. David Stevenson told *Lake Tahoe News*.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Dangberg Ranch history coming to SLT Library

Friends of the South Lake Tahoe Library have two events scheduled for March.

The first is on March 3 at 1pm. Mark Jensen, curator at Dangberg Home Ranch Historic Park in Carson Valley, will share Fritzi Dangberg's adventures, accompanied by some show-and-tell of her possessions, that give a glimpse into making the most of life in the first half of the 20th century. Dangberg was not a typical rancher's daughter. Born in 1907, her family was one of the most influential in Nevada's Carson Valley, with a stake in several businesses and a livestock ranch that included tens of thousands of acres and animals. Her family's prosperity made life comfortable and gave Dangberg many opportunities: college, travel and notable friends.

The next event is the book sale on March 17 starting at 10am.

Both events are free and at the library on Rufus Allen Boulevard.

Double-digit revenue gain for Stateline casinos

January was a good month for Stateline casinos, which posted revenue gains of 14.83 percent over 2017.

The state win was up 2 percent. The \$1.015 billion figure represents the first time in a year the gain has hit the billion-dollar mark.

The *Las Vegas Review-Journal* reports, "It was the 36th time the state has recorded more than \$1 billion in monthly win, a level first achieved in March 2005. The highest monthly win ever came in October 2007, when the state recorded \$1.165 billion. January's win total wasn't among the top 10."

North Lake Tahoe and the Vegas Strip were the only sectors reporting a decline in January.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Mountaintop camera network tracked 240 fires in 2017

By Mike Wolterbeek

Mountaintop cameras from UNR spotted or tracked 240 fires in Nevada and California in 2017. This helped to keep firefighters more situationally aware and able to mount

appropriate responses more rapidly over tens of thousands of square miles of forests and rangelands, including rural communities.

This is a new and expanding tool for fire managers who oversee the wildland and wildland urban interface.

“The success of our system lies in our ability to deploy wireless, microwave technology to enable high-speed internet out in the wilderness,” Graham Kent, director of the Seismological Laboratory Lab in the College of Science, said. “We call it the internet of wild things or wilderness internet.”

The high-definition near-infrared night-capable fire cameras are part of the AlertWildfire network, conceived, developed and implemented at the Nevada Seismological Lab. The network has grown from the AlertTahoe system that began with a three-camera pilot project at Lake Tahoe in 2015 to four networks with more than 55 cameras. The cameras cover areas of Nevada and California’s Sierra Nevada, and includes San Diego County and Santa Barbara with an eye to Oregon and Idaho coming online soon, with several more states making inquiries.

The prototype AlertWildfire system uses the backbone of the Nevada Seismo Lab’s earthquake monitoring network, with its 200 seismograph stations in Nevada and eastern California, leveraging technology for public safety with the high-tech mountaintop cameras linked into the network.

Fire managers can manually rotate, tilt, pan and zoom the cameras. YouTube channel, [nvseismolab](#), has a library of videos captured from the network.

Mike Wolterbeek works for UNR.

Dry winters cost ski industry \$1 billion

By J. Weston Phippen, Outside

It's been a bad winter for skiing. And more than just being a drag on weekend plans or limiting some resorts to operating with only a few runs (if any), less snow on the mountains is a big hit on the economy. People make fewer trips to the resort, which means resorts hire fewer staff. The local restaurants, bars, and hotels all feel a little empty.

A new report by Protect Our Winters (POW), a climate advocacy group based in Colorado, says a low-snow year can cost the ski resort industry more than \$1 billion and 17,400 jobs, compared to an average season. These numbers result from comparing snowfall records with spending habits from 2001 to 2016, so they don't even account for this winter, which has been the worst along the Rockies since the 1960s, when researchers started keeping detailed snowpack records. POW's data has serious implications for the snow-sports industry. As climate change worsens and snowfall becomes less reliable, resorts see less business. If it gets too bad, some resorts might close altogether, which would have economic consequences far beyond the slopes.

[Read the whole story](#)