

Create Mail Art at Bona Fide Books

The first Maker's Monday of the New Year will be Jan. 9 in Meyers.

The focus will be Mail Art. This art form, also known as postal art and correspondence art, is an artistic movement centered on sending small scale works, interesting/fun inclusions, and unique mailings through the Postal Service.

The free event starts at 6pm at Bona Fide Books, 1069 Magua St., No. 4, Meyers.

Potential growth in pari-mutuel based fantasy sports

By Richard N. Velotta, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Vic Salerno's bid to fill the gap created by the absence of daily fantasy sports play in Nevada has grown exponentially during the football season and is making even greater strides outside the state.

Salerno, president of USFantasy and a 38-year veteran of the gaming industry, said handle has grown roughly 10 percent a week through the National Football League season. The company hasn't publicly reported handle figures.

Salerno's version of fantasy sports is different from the

more conventional fantasy versions offered by FanDuel and DraftKings, companies that have tried and failed to convince the state's gaming regulators to allow them to operate in the state.

Read the whole story

Ranking the world's toughest outdoor sports

By Dan Roe, Outside

You have no idea how tough [insert sport] is.

Whether we say it out loud or just repeat it to ourselves, many of us share this sentiment. As American novelist Mary McCarthy once said, "We are the hero of our own story."

That said, some activities are legitimately harder than others, and in the realm of outdoor sports, a few are in a league of their own. Take rock climbing, for instance, which requires explosive upper-body strength, problem solving, and crux-time focus. Downhill mountain bikers regularly risk shattered bones, while open-water swimmers push themselves to the limit in unforgiving conditions. Nordic skiers force their bodies deep into oxygen debt, and ultrarunners—well, you get the idea.

But how can we quantify which one is actually the toughest? Here's how: we chose five competitive sports that we feel are tough to learn, can be dangerous to perform, and require a high degree of skill and fitness.

Read the whole story

More senior services coming to Incline Village

Washoe County commissioners this month allocated \$75,000 to expand senior services in Incline Village.

The old library on Alder Avenue will be remodeled to divide the area up a bit. New furniture will be ordered.

Services will include clinical programs, nutrition, and caregiver support. The county regularly budgets \$150,000 for senior services in the Incline-Crystal Bay areas.

The U.S. Forest Service office there will remain, though the remodel will make some changes to the access.

A start date on the construction has not been set.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- South Tahoe Refuse will pick up Christmas trees that are free of all decorations from Dec. 26-Jan. 6 on regular garbage days.

- Incline Village General Improvement District's board this month voted to change the policy for trash violators. First offense for residential customers requires getting a wildlife-resistant trash cart, second offense will be a fine

between \$100-\$999, three or more offense involves fines between \$500 and \$999. Commercial properties could face a \$999 fine the first time, with multiple infractions costing another \$500 to \$999.

- Caltrans District 3 employees donated \$21,391 in cash and 577 pounds of food to charities across an 11-county region, including Lake Tahoe.

- Here is the sierra roadwork schedule from Caltrans for the coming week.

- South Lake Tahoe Moose Lodge No. 1632 donated 51 boxes of food to the South Lake Tahoe Family Resource Center.

SLT warm room providing more than shelter

By Kathryn Reed

Homelessness has many faces, many circumstances, many reasons. It has only one definition – having no place to live.

It's expected to be in the single digits at 7:30am on Christmas Day in South Lake Tahoe. That's the hour dozens of homeless people will be turned out onto the street until the warm room reopens tonight at 7.

No one grows up with the goal of living on the streets.

A few of the people seeking aid from the warm room have jobs. They just can't pull together the necessary first and last month's rent, plus deposit. The scarcity of rental housing throughout the basin doesn't help.

Some no longer have the capacity to work. Mental and physical issues plague this population.



Steven Gurek is thankful to have the warm room for shelter. Photo/Kathryn Reed

For others like Steven Wayne Gurek, he is biding his time until after the first of January when his next Social Security check arrives and the price of a flight to Hawaii drops. The 62-year-old wants to return to the islands where he has family.

“Right now the warming room is doing me well,” he said last week while sitting at a bus stop a few feet from the shelter. (In the summer he camps near Fallen Leaf Lake.) The sun was shining and he was taking it all in. His next stop was Christmas Cheer to get some food.

Gurek said he used to work for Camp Richardson and Sierra-at-

Tahoe doing maintenance. He doesn't explain what keeps him from working now. His bright blue eyes are those of a man with good memories. His rough, dark skin, though, is weathered, telling a different story.

This is the second year the Tahoe Coalition for the Homeless has operated a warm room. And like last year, the building is on a seasonal lease. The nonprofit would welcome a more permanent facility, even if it still operated seasonally.

In winter 2015-16, the room was open 102 nights, with an average of 18 guests per night. In that time 107 people took shelter for a cumulative 1,820 bed nights.

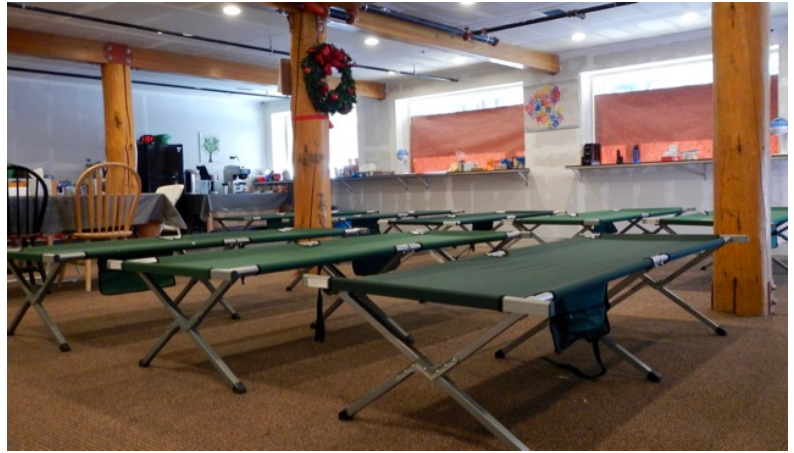
The 30 cots are available on a first come, first serve basis. In the 10 days the shelter has been open this season people have already had to be turned away.

Some of the same people from last year have shown up this year. There are also new faces.

The men and women sleep in separate areas. Mostly it's men in their 40s and 50s; the women tend to be in their late 20s through 40s. One night three adult women from the same family stayed at the warm room.

Families, though, are not permitted. If applicable, they may be entitled to a voucher for a week's stay in a local hotel. No one under 17 may stay at the warm room. No pets, either.

Everyone gets a Red Cross cot and blanket. Personal belongings are stored in a locked area. Clothing is available, as are travel size toiletries.



The eight cots for women are in what is also the kitchen area.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

Many came in soaked when it was raining so hard earlier this month. Some changed into donated clothing. The boot warmers were put into action. This tool is also used before they leave in the morning – a boost of warmth.

In the kitchen area are some basic foods like Cup of Noodles, trail mix, oatmeal, coffee and tea.

This is truly communal living. It's dry and warm. But then there's the snoring, people talking in their sleep, tossing and turning, or getting up to use one of the two bathrooms. Lights are off at 10pm. Lights are on at 6am. There is no TV. No shower. (Vouchers to use the city's recreation center are available and may be redeemed when no children are present.) Games are available, with Scrabble, Chess and Yahtzee the popular ones. Some people read. Others come in and immediately go to sleep.

There is nothing about the warm room that feels like home. It's not supposed to. It really is what it says it is – a warm room.

"We are stricter this year on rules," Nicole Zaborsky, THC board member, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "Last year we allowed smoke breaks that were free flowing. Now there is one, which

is monitored.”



Guests on Christmas Eve were waiting more than 30 minutes for the warm room to open. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Still, it's not just a free place to sleep out of the elements that these men and women receive. Last season 32 social work appointments were scheduled for guests, along with 28 case management follow-up appointments.

This help last year led to five people finding stable housing. One person was even reunited with their mom. Another handful had found a place to live but were not able to keep it.

“Although the warm room will technically close at 7:30am, most mornings we will really be open until 8:30am to offer enrichment programming for our guests,” Scott Weavil with the Homeless Coalition told *Lake Tahoe News*. “We plan to have two drug and alcohol groups a week, one Narcotics Anonymous group, one Alcoholics Anonymous group, one litter cleanup, as well as yoga and other enrichment activities. So, most days, services will be offered at the location until 8:30am. The police department suggested that we remain open later, and the stars aligned for us to make that possible.”

Only Kindness, a group in Placerville, will be sending people to the warm room starting in January. They can help with securing free cell phones, work on more stable housing and

coordinate with county services.

It takes a small army to make the warm room function. One hundred volunteers were trained last year; they put in 1,600 hours. Another 88 people have been trained this year, with an additional training planned for Jan. 9.

A variety of jobs are available, but the most important one is listening to the guests without judgment.

The guests also have jobs – from helping with cleaning to making the coffee. They understand the efforts being made to make their lives a little more comfortable. Thank yous and gratitude are the norm. They are not taking this warm room for granted. To them, it's a present they get to "unwrap" every night.

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Notes:

- Address – 2179 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe.
- More info is available **online**.
- The Jan. 9 training is from 7-8:30pm at Unity at the Lake. RSVP **online**.

Opinion: Trump may follow Schwarzenegger's lead

By Clay Russell

When newly-elected Donald Trump took his family to a restaurant for dinner without telling the public recently, the

press flipped out. Journalists issued thoughtful pleas about the importance of documenting a chief executive-to-be's movements.

I'm not here to defend the president-elect's behavior or suggest that his unwillingness to play by traditional rules of engagement with the press is not a big deal. I'm a newspaper reporter, after all. Covering City Hall for the only newspaper in McComb, Miss., I hardly find it remarkable when the mayor travels the three blocks from his office to the Dinner Bell restaurant without first notifying me.

I am here instead to suggest,—from unusual personal experience—that we all should prepare for a lot more breaking of protocol.

I was the personal aide, aka Body Man, to a governor of California who was one of the five most famous people on earth. Like Donald Trump, Arnold Schwarzenegger proclaimed himself an outsider, a non-politician. His first campaign, like Trump's, was a circus, with the sheer force of his persona flattening most criticisms and every opponent.

There is of course a vast difference of scale between a president and a governor. But I believe there are lessons to be learned from Schwarzenegger's behavior as governor that will help us understand Trump's as president.

Early in the Schwarzenegger era—like Trump, even before he took office—calls of “It's always been done this way” began to be tossed about.

One thing people didn't press the governor to do was move his family from Los Angeles to Sacramento. California was then one of just a few states with no governor's residence.

Instead he took up part-time residence in a two-bedroom hotel suite across the street from the Capitol. Several nights a week, he slept in one bedroom, I in the other. Between the

manly-man Republican action hero and the 40-something gay Democrat, we were an odd couple if ever there was one.

"What must people think ... the two of us living here like this?" he said one night as he switched off the lamp in our living room before heading to his bedroom.

In 2004, Schwarzenegger agreed to speak at a Bush-Cheney fundraiser in Santa Monica. Our advance people and the California Highway Patrol team warned, "Governor, the Secret Service says you have to be there 30 minutes ahead of the president or they won't let you in. They'll shut down access."

"Relax," Arnold said, just as I heard him say several times a day for the seven years he held office. "Let's go to Starbucks."

"But Governor, the Secret Service ..."

"Starbucks. Do you really think they'll keep me out?" And he was right. He knew the power of his celebrity.

There is shorthand for a politician's unplanned events or stops on a tour. An OTR, or Off The Record, is an unscheduled stop. There was the OTR at an H&M store in Philadelphia, where Arnold had seen interesting scarves in the window when driving past.

"What are you doing here?" the lady behind him in the checkout line asked.

"Buying scarves."

"Makes sense," she said.

Then there was the Jet Ski OTR in Miami Beach. We were there for a conference on climate change but, as at most conferences, Arnold didn't attend every plenary and roundtable.

"Let's get some Jet Skis."

"Uh, you're supposed to be in the reception at 3."

"Relax."

Several staff members made quick trips to the hotel gift shop for swim trunks. It had to be an odd picture, Schwarzenegger and his posse traipsing across the sand to the surf, flanked by a team of plainclothes highway patrolmen in dark suits. It happened that we were crossing a topless beach; if the rest of the posse was titillated, I was not.

More times than I can count, the governor visited construction sites or industrial facilities where hardhats were required.

"Not gonna happen," he would say, not breaking stride, to the man waving a hardhat in front of him.

"But it's required!" By then it was too late.

He acquiesced only once in the headwear department. At Yad Vashem, the Holocaust remembrance center in Jerusalem, a yarmulke is required when you enter the Hall of Remembrance to view the Eternal Flame. That time, the governor knew better than to quarrel.

Despite Donald Trump's thumb-your-nose approach to the traditional ways of doing things, I don't think we'll see him in H&M buying \$5 scarves or Sea-Doo-ing.

One thing we can expect from President Trump, is that "it's always been done that way" won't get us very far. We shouldn't be surprised when he defies protocol.

After all, breaking the rules of presidential campaigns is what got him elected.

Clay Russell is a reporter for the McComb (Miss.) Enterprise-Journal and prides himself on his non-linear life path. A

former professional chef, he lives with his husband and two cats in America's Deep South.

Reid leaves Senate with a legacy that will help Trump

By Erin Kelly and Seth Richardson, USA Today

When President-elect Donald Trump looks to the Senate for confirmation of his Cabinet nominees next year, he'll have outgoing Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid to thank for Democrats' powerlessness to block his choices.

The Nevada Democrat, a fierce Trump opponent who often referred to the president-elect as "a spoiled brat," took dramatic action in 2013 to end Republicans' ability to mount a filibuster to derail President Obama's judicial and Cabinet nominees.

Reid, who was majority leader at the time, used a parliamentary move known as the "nuclear option" to change a nearly 40-year-old Senate rule. The change meant that the Senate now needs only a simple majority of 51 votes – rather than a super-majority of 60 – to proceed to confirmation votes on Cabinet secretaries, agency directors and judges, except for the Supreme Court.

Read the whole story

In Christmas message, pope laments children in war, poverty

By Nicole Winfield, AP

VATICAN CITY – Pope Francis urged Christians to celebrate the birth of Jesus by thinking about the plight of today's children, bemoaning how some must escape bombs or flee in migrant boats and how others are prevented from being born at all.

Francis celebrated a somber Christmas Eve Mass in a packed St. Peter's Basilica, processing to the altar behind cardinals draped in golden vestments as the Sistine Chapel choir sang "Gloria" and the church bells rang out across Rome.

Francis has spent much of the year denouncing the Islamic extremist violence that has driven Christians from Mideast communities that date to the time of Christ. He has also demanded Europe in particular do more to welcome refugees, saying Jesus himself was a migrant who deserved more than being born in a manger. And he has called out the wasteful ways of the wealthy when children and the poor die of hunger every day.

In his homily, Francis urged his flock to reflect on how children today aren't always allowed to lie peacefully in a cot, loved by their parents as Jesus was, but rather "suffer the squalid mangers that devour dignity."

Among the indignities, he said, are "hiding underground to escape bombardment, on the pavements of a large city, at the bottom of a boat overladen with immigrants."

"Let us allow ourselves to be challenged by the children who

are not allowed to be born, by those who cry because no one satiates their hunger, by those who do have not toys in their hands, but rather weapons,” he added.

The Mass late Saturday was the first major event of the Christmas season, followed by Francis’ noon Urbi et Orbi (To the city and the world) blessing on Christmas Day.

In another appeal, Francis called for the faithful to not get caught up in the commercialization of Christmas – “when we are concerned for gifts but cold toward those who are marginalized.”

Materialism has “taken us hostage this Christmas,” he said. “We have to free ourselves of it!”

Truckers rely on pusher to get over Donner Summit

By Tony Bizjak, Sacramento Bee

With drought-defying snowstorms romping through the Sierra on a weekly basis, truckers once again are discovering how tough Interstate 80’s Donner Pass can be.

Commercial trucks carrying 80,000-pound loads are losing traction in the snow, officials say, even with tire chains on, getting stuck in heavy summit traffic, blocking lanes and threatening to close the highway.

That, officials say, is where the pusher truck comes in.

Read the whole story