Poetry workshop

Award-winning poet and editor Ravi Shankar will be in Meyers on March 31 to give a poetry workshop from 3-6pm at Bona Fide HQ.

The cost is $25. Interested participants should bring 10 copies of a poem to the workshop.

Advance reservation is necessary, as space is limited. To sign up, call or email Suzanne Roberts at (530) 541.4660, ext. 708 or robertss@ltcc.edu.

All abilities and aesthetic stances are welcome.

In this workshop, “From Flarf to Cento: Using Multiple Sources to Find Your Voice”, participants will learn what is current in the field of contemporary poetry, taking on everything from the collage-form of the cento to the ancient Japanese form of the zuihitsu and the nonsense permutations of Flarf.

Shankar is the founding editor and executive director of Drunken Boat, one of the world’s oldest electronic journals of the arts. He has published or edited seven books and chapbooks of poetry, including the 2010 National Poetry Review Prize winner, “Deepening Groove”.

Bona Fide HQ is located at 1069 Magua St., No. 4, behind the Getaway Café in Meyers.

Debate reignites over private

entities doing work for California

By Jon Ortiz, Sacramento Bee

The debate over whether government runs best with civil service workers or privately contracted help is re-igniting in the Capitol over legislation that, among other things, would give state workers first dibs whenever the state has work to do.

Assemblyman Roger Dickinson, D-Sacramento, contends the civil service-first provision in his "Public Employees Bill of Rights" would produce better and cheaper government. Unions backing the measure agree.

Critics say the bill reads like a union wish list and could make government more expensive.

"If your goal is for the state to provide the best services and do it most efficiently, you shortchange yourself by limiting the ability of qualified individuals to compete for and earn the job," said Mitch Zak, a Republican strategist whose firm, Randle Communications, works with a number of trade organizations.

The tense business relationship between government and the private sector has existed since the Revolutionary War, said James Fossett, a senior fellow at the Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government.

"George Washington wrote memos griping about the poor quality of (military) clothing," Fossett said, "and how rations arrived spoiled."

Today, California state government writes checks to private business for a vast assortment of goods and services, from

lawyers to levee work.

Read the whole story

‘Why Wine is More Fun Than People Make it Seem’

Rick Kushman, wine and food writer and educator, will teach a Wine 101 class called “Why Wine is More Fun Than People Make it Seem” on May 12 from 1:30-3pm at Lava Cap Winery.

Kushman will cover how to get more out of a wine country experience and drinking wine. Learn tips on tasting – and practice with Lava Cap wines – discover keys to grape growing and winemaking, and why any of that matters.

He’ll also decode some of the more annoying “wine speak” and offers pointers on how not to be a wine snob, even accidentally.

Tickets are $25 per person. Seating is limited. To purchase tickets, call (530) 621.0175.

Guided painting sessions at Lava Cap

Aimee Rebmann, artist at Creative Juices Events, is offering two guided painting sessions – “Glass of Red” from 11am-1pm

and “Whimsical Picnic” from 2-4pm – at Lava Cap Winery in Placerville on March 24.

Cost is $45 per session. This includes all art materials (16×20 canvas and acrylic paints), wine tasting, and a spread of crackers and cheeses. Wine by the glass or bottle and assorted gourmet deli items available for purchase. Register online.

These are guided painting sessions. No experience needed.

Passport wine weekends

Tickets are on sale for the annual Passport wine event in El Dorado County.

The event often sells out. This year the dates are April 14-15 and April 21-22 from 11am until 5pm.

Wine lovers can enjoy 32 award-winning wineries. New to the event this year are Synapse, Shadow Ranch, Nello Olivo, Cielo Estates, Skinner and Grace Patriot.

Each winery will feature a wine and food pairing from a Mediterranean country and many will also have art, music and barrel tasting.

To purchase tickets and see a full list of participating wineries, go online. Tickets are $70 per passport weekend for unlimited wine, food and entertainment. Designated drivers can enjoy all the festivities without the wine for $26.62 per wristband.

Stateline aids state with surge in gaming revenue

Stateline casinos helped the state top the $1 billion mark in gaming revenues for the first time since September 2008.

South Shore's win in January was 2 percent higher than in 2011 at $17 million.

Overall, Nevada saw gaming revenue increase by 18.4 percent from one January to the next, with a total of $1.038 billion collected.



Stateline casino revenue is on the upswing. Photo/LTN file

The Gaming Control Board released the latest figures this morning.

Las Vegas has been boasting of a slight recovery from the recession. Gaming revenue from the Strip and downtown reflect this with the former posting a 29 percent year-over-year gain with $623 million in revenue, and the later a 14 percent gain with $47 million.

Those figures compare to the opposite end of the state where Reno's numbers dropped 16.5 percent or $69 million.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

STHS grad standing up for what he believes in

Alex Boyar, a 2008 graduate of South Tahoe High School, was in Sacramento this week making some noise about students' rights along with hundreds of other college students.

Boyar is president of Associated Students Inc. at Sonoma State. He is politically active, which includes being an advocate for students' and gay rights. At STHS he was instrumental in creating Ally and being a voice for gay students.



Alex Boyar with friends marching at the state capitol. Photos/Provided



Alex Boyar and Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom joke about their hair.

While in the state capital he ran into Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom – who shares Boyar's interests.

Boyar will graduate in May with a bachelor's in business, with a concentration in finance. He has applied for two fellowship programs – one at the state capitol and the other with the Human Rights Campaign. He has already gone through the Panetta Institute for Public Policy.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Book drive benefits young South Shore readers

By Kathryn Reed

Before the book drive officially started, the initial goal of 250 books was met. Now organizers want to double or triple that number by the end of the month.

With April being National School Library Month, one of the six Leadership Lake Tahoe groups decided to focus on literacy on

the South Shore. The goal is to collect new and used books this month that will then be redistributed next month to ages newborn to 16.

Local nonprofits and the libraries are likely beneficiaries.



Look for these boxes on the South Shore to drop books for ages zero-16. Photo/Provided

“We’re not focused on low income families. We are just trying to hit as many people as possible,” Peter Lavallee, one of the team members, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “We didn’t look into any background data as to whether there was a specific need for children’s books in the community. But the way technology is going, even with e-readers, people are getting away from hard copy books. We think getting books into children’s hands is a good way to go.”

The two chambers of commerce on the South Shore that eventually became Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce created Leadership Lake Tahoe in 2003. Now the classes are broken into groups, with each one having to do a project.

The Children’s Book Drive Team members are: David Landry (Tahoe Regional Planning Agency), Lavallee (South Tahoe Public Utility District), Nick Exline (Midkiff and Associates), Shelly Stalter (Barton Health) and Darcie Carpenter (Siemens Healthcare Diagnostics).

Books will be collected at: South Lake Tahoe branch library, what was known as the women's center, Choices for Children, El Dorado County Superior Court in South Tahoe, Tahoe Turning Point, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, Heavenly Mountain Resort Human Resources Department, Round Hill General Improvement District, Kahle Community Center, and Barton Memorial Hospital.

The group is connecting with people through its Facebook page, where more information can be found, or email Groupfor2012@gmail.com.

Opinion: Ski resorts not doing enough to protect children

By Dick Penniman

For some people, the idea of "safe skiing" is an oxymoron. Isn't skiing all about pitting your wits and skill against the raw mountain wilderness? Certainly that was true when skiing was first invented. And, it's still the case for the backcountry, but not at today's mountain resorts.



Modern mountain resorts are doing everything they can to make themselves into “family resorts;” theme parks where mom and dad can bring the kids and everybody has fun. But resort operators are not telling you about the real dangers, including those that can be easily fixed but aren’t.

Less than 50 percent of the chairlifts in California have safety bars.

Tragically, in December, a young boy was killed when he fell 60 feet from a chairlift at Sugar Bowl near Lake Tahoe. It is difficult to imagine how such a thing happened at a “family” resort.” But looking realistically, one can see that chairlifts are little more than park benches hung from a cable that bounce across steel towers high above the ground at 1,500 feet per minute.

Most of us wouldn’t deliberately put our child alone or with other kids on a park bench built for adults with no restraints whatsoever, and then allow a forklift to hoist it 60 feet in the air to cruise down the street at 1,500 feet per minute. But this is essentially what is allowed at most mountain resorts in California every single day.

As trusting parents, we often put our precious, young children in the hands of the mountain resort ski school assuming the “professionals” will watch out for them and not allow them to ride on the chairlift without an adult. But, this is exactly what can and often does happen because the resorts have no specific mandate to do otherwise. Even the most disciplined child has a hard time sitting still for more than a couple minutes. It’s not a question of “if” a catastrophe will happen; sadly, it’s a question of “when”.

Tips for parents

Given mountain resorts’ approach to chairlift safety, parents

must:

• Ensure the resort has chairlifts with restraint bars and a mandatory policy to lower the bars.

• Ask the resort to see its child chairlift safety policy.

• Learn and teach your child how to ride the chair safely. Make sure they know never to ride up without an adult.

• If you put your child in ski school, inform the instructor about your child's abilities and challenges, including behavior and special needs. And make sure their policy is to always have an adult ride the chair with the child.

• Make sure your child is properly dressed for the weather and wears his or her helmet properly and at all times.

• Visit SnowSport Safety Foundation for an assessment of safety practices at the resort you intend to visit.

Dick Penniman is the chief research officer of the SnowSport Safety Foundation.

Game devices become tools in education, business

By Andy Vuong, Denver Post

Elliott Anderson loves his Xbox and Nintendo, though it's not all fun and games.

Navigating a Professor Layton adventure on his Nintendo DSi

recently helped the Denver sixth-grader breeze through a math problem in class.

In the game, Anderson had to divide a circle filled with numbers into three pieces so that each totaled the same amount.

“If I hadn’t played that part of the game, I wouldn’t have been able to do it as easily,” he said. “It was pretty much the same as the math problem, except different numbers.”

It is one example of the blurring line between gaming and education, as iPads and social media sites such as Facebook are now incorporated into classroom instruction. Beyond that, some experts say kids may be paving the way for education and business training by hammering away on those joysticks.

Termed “gamification,” the trend refers to the application of elements typically tied to gaming, such as virtual role playing, for business and school use.

More than 70 percent of top 2,000 publicly traded companies worldwide will have at least one gamified application by 2014, according to a study released last year by research firm Gartner.

Read the whole story