Literary figures come to life at haunting poetry slam

By Jennifer Eddy

MEYERS – Party-goers watched in terror as pill popping alcoholic confessional poet Anne Sexton scanned the crowd for Valium, and Bertha Rochester contemplated which part of the venue was the most flammable.

That's what happens when the ghosts of literature come out to play Halloween weekend.



Slam winner Janet Smith as Anne Sexton. Photos/Suzanne Roberts

The 2nd annual Scary Slam emceed by Reno slam poet Benjamin Arnold at Bona Fide Books in Meyers on Oct 29 was an opportunity for local writers and literary aficionados to play dress up as creepy literary greats as they battled each other for a cash prize for scariest poem and costume.

Jan Smith came dressed as the deceased, mentally ill, mid-century Sexton. Suzanne Roberts was Charlotte Brontë's "madwoman in the attic" of Jane Eyre.

It was safe to assume Smith won the slam, not from the

screams, but from the gasps, followed by a moment of uncomfortable silence in the room as she read Sexton's lines from the poem addict: "My supply of tablets has got to last for years and years. I like them more than I like me. It's a kind of marriage. It's a kind of war where I plant bombs inside of myself."

The costume winner of the slam was Rita Geil as the sparkling, voluptuous citrus colored Little Mermaid.



Costume contest winner Rita Geil as the Little Mermaid.

After winning the slam Smith stayed in character while summing up the event. "It was a nice little provincial crowd and the casinos here are like the third circle of hell."

The competition was $5 to enter, winner take all.

"The Scary Slam is like a poetry slam where people come to read, but instead of slamming a poem, they're here to scare us with a scary story," said Kim Wyatt, owner and editor of Bona Fide Books. "It's a Halloween party for literary geeks."

This scary slam differs from the inaugural Scary Slam by replacing the use of a psychic with a Tarot card reader. The original Scary Slam hosted by Wyatt has also been revved up by the addition of Arnold, a professional poetry slam host who encourages guests to read everything scary whether it meant,

“your mortgage contract, the Department of Defense budget analysis or anything you want.”

Each of the eight competitors had five minutes to read, with the winner chosen based on the audience’s highest decibel level in screams by iPhone. The slam was followed by guests sashaying across the room while yelling out the literary figures and characters they were portraying as the Gothic musical stylings of Morrissey and New Order blared in the background.

The festive crowd enjoyed black licorice flavored absinthe, three dimensional decapitated werewolf cupcakes with black and white scary pops, frosted into day of the dead skulls. Guests also had the opportunity to have a Tarot card reading so they might gain insight into the future.

“This has really become a community event here in Meyers and Bona Fide Books is here to build that community in addition to publishing books,” Wyatt said. “That’s why we have these parties.”

Holiday bazaar in Tahoe City

The Tahoe City PUD and Recreation Department’s annual Holiday Craft Bazaar is Nov. 5 from 10am-3pm inside the Rideout Community Center, 740 Timberland Lane, Tahoe City.

The event will feature a variety of artists and craftsmen from around the Lake Tahoe Basin selling fine handmade products. Included will be fine jewelry, photography, handmade wood products, pottery, glass items, and much more.

For more information, contact Shaunat (530) 583.3440, ext. 14.

Hospital auxiliary putting on holiday fair

Barton Memorial Hospital Auxiliary's Holiday Fair is Nov. 6 from 9am-3pm at St. Theresa's Grace Hall, South Lake Tahoe.

The Attic is selling its finest "treasurers" that have been collected throughout the year. Clothes, books, linens, purses, toys, glassware, silver, dishware, jewelry and Christmas items will be available.

Santa will visit from 10:30am-1pm.

Food and drinks will be available to purchase.The bake sale will feature the auxiliary's famous cheese balls.

Report: High number of Nevadans without health insurance

By David McGrath-Schwartz, Las Vegas Sun

A quarter of Nevadans under 65 did not have health insurance at some point in 2009, making the Silver State the third most uninsured state per capita in the United States, according to U.S. Census data released this month.

Nevada's low rate of insured, which is not a surprise to state

experts, is primarily the result of a lean state health care system compared with the rest of the country. Namely, Nevada has restricted access to Medicare to the poorest of the poor, while other states offer public health care coverage to more residents.

The statistics also highlight a looming problem the state is facing: how to get all those uninsured people covered by the beginning of 2014. That's when the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act mandates individuals have health insurance.

The cost facing states with a high number of people who are uninsured, like Nevada, has many state health officials concerned.

In 2009, soon after President Barack Obama signed the federal legislation, a state analysis found that Medicaid expansion would cost $636 million from 2014 to 2019. The state's board for the Silver State Health Care Exchange is scheduled to have its first meeting this month to prepare to implement the rules. (States including Nevada are seeking to throw out parts of the federal legislation, calling unconstitutional the mandate that all be covered.)

Read the whole story

UC Davis study questions link of fast food to lower-income

obesity

By Carlos Alcalá, Sacramento Bee

Fast food alone cannot be blamed for high obesity rates among people with low incomes, according to a new UC Davis Center for Healthcare Policy and Research study.

The research calls into question stereotypes that have led some cities in Southern California to cite obesity when passing laws limiting or banning new fast-food restaurants in poorer communities.

Nutritionists and food policy experts, however, said that doesn't let fast food off the hook – and at least one of the UC Davis researchers agreed.

"I'm not a big fan of fast food," said J. Paul Leigh, lead author of the study, which will be published in Population Health Management in December. "I'm sure that fast food in general has a big effect on obesity. This research does not contradict that."

It does challenge the notion that those with low incomes eat more fast food than those with higher incomes.

Health economists Leigh and co-author DaeHwan Kim analyzed data from the mid-1990s and compared household income with visits to fast-food and full-service restaurants.

Rather than finding fast-food visits going down with income, they found visits peak at $60,000 in income, before falling slightly.

Read the whole story

Earth continues to shake in N. California

A 3.8 earthquake rocked just about the same area where a 4.8 temblor struck last week.

The 6:25am shaker Sunday was about nine miles south-southeast of Whitehawk – the same epicenter as four days ago.

People around Lake Tahoe felt it.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Free flu shots in S. Lake Tahoe for children

To help the Lake Tahoe community stay healthy this season, Barton Health is providing free seasonal flu vaccines to children ages 3 to 18 who reside in South Lake Tahoe.

The shots will be given Nov. 5 from 9am-1pm at Barton Family Medicine (1090 Third Street, South Lake Tahoe).

Anyone 19 and older may receive the flu vaccine for $20 and the pneumonia vaccine for $35.

There is no appointment necessary to receive the vaccination(s); individuals will be treated on a walk-in-basis.

Both vaccines are reimbursable for standard Medicare patients. Medicare HMOs cannot be billed.

Questions can be emailed to publicrelations@bartonhealth.org or call (530) 543.5615.

‘Cassette tape’ being erased from some dictionaries

By Kara Rose, USA Today

The editors of the Concise Oxford English Dictionary decided to remove the term “cassette tape” from its pages this summer to help make room for 400 new words including “cyberbullying” and “retweet.”

Jesse Sheidlower the editor-at-large for the dictionary, said the term was considered “so past its prime that it was not worth keeping it in.”



For those who don't know, these are cassette tapes.

It’s starting to look like that move may have been premature.

The 2.5-by-4-inch compact cassette that overtook vinyl albums and passed by eight-track tapes in the 1970s and ’80s is

experiencing a bit of a comeback, which some say is being fueled by the growth of indie music popularity.

A growing number of indie bands are turning to the format to get their music out more quickly and inexpensively, according to Rob Mason, the owner of Old Flame Records.

The Brooklyn-based record company released the band Total Babes' album Swimming Through Sunlight on tape before the full-length album was formally released Aug. 30 on CD and vinyl.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Putting the climate-change debate to rest

By Eugene Robinson, Washington Post

For the clueless or cynical diehards who deny global warming, it's getting awfully cold out there.

The latest icy blast of reality comes from an eminent scientist whom the climate-change skeptics once lauded as one of their own. Richard Muller, a respected physicist at the University of California, Berkeley, used to dismiss alarmist climate research as being "polluted by political and activist frenzy." Frustrated at what he considered shoddy science, Muller launched his own comprehensive study to set the record straight. Instead, the record set him straight.

"Global warming is real," Muller wrote last week in The Wall Street Journal.

Rick Perry, Herman Cain, Michele Bachmann and the rest of the neo-Luddites who are turning the GOP into the anti-science party should pay attention.

“When we began our study, we felt that skeptics had raised legitimate issues, and we didn’t know what we’d find,” Muller wrote. “Our results turned out to be close to those published by prior groups. We think that means that those groups had truly been careful in their work, despite their inability to convince some skeptics of that.”

In other words, the deniers’ claims about the alleged sloppiness or fraudulence of climate science are wrong. Muller’s team, the Berkeley Earth Surface Temperature project, rigorously explored the specific objections raised by skeptics – and found them groundless.

Muller and his fellow researchers examined an enormous data set of observed temperatures from monitoring stations around the world and concluded that the average land temperature has risen 1 degree Celsius – or about 1.8 degrees Fahrenheit – since the mid-1950s.

Read the whole story

Heavenly tuning up its ski school, upgrades trails

By Kathryn Reed

While it’s fall at lake level, the top of Heavenly Mountain Resort is covered with white stuff. Snowmaking usually begins Nov. 1, but with the overnight temps well below freezing last

week, the guns were fired up Tuesday night.

All that snow will bode well for the anticipated opening day of Nov. 18.

Visibly, the newest addition to the mountain is the permanent ski school building that is to the right of Tamarack Lodge. Considering the general manager of the resort rose through the ranks via ski school, it seems logical Pete Sonntag would want something more than a yurt to represent his roots.

It’s a short walk (or snow skate) from the top of the gondola. It looks much like a mini version of the year-old lodge. (SMC Contracting built both structures.)

About 100 kids can have lunch at any given time. Instructors will be able to show video of their charges to assist with learning.

Food used to be brought to the two yurts from an outside vendor. Now lunch will be made by Heavenly’s staff, which allows more control – with the goal of serving something a bit more nutritious.

“We make sure there is a heavy focus on fun.” Mike Allen, director

# of snow surfaces

Heavenly's ski school started with the legendary Stein Erikson. This year's crop of instructors includes three members of the Professional Ski Instructors of America's National Demonstration Team and six who belong to the Western Demonstration Team.



Mike Allen, director of skier services, has seen plenty of changes to the ski school in the 20 years he has worked for Heavenly.

"We are seeing a little trend to parents being more open to kids starting snowboarding at a younger age," Allen told *Lake Tahoe News*.

He said Heavenly's instructors are trained to teach kids – not just teach a sport.

"We make sure there is a heavy focus on fun," Allen said. After all, a parent's first question is often, "Did you have fun?"

Teaching comes in many forms. When playing in the snow kids are learning why it's important to keep their gloves on – frostbite, that sort of thing.

A new learning component this season for kids' ski school is Black Bear Hollow. But it's open to everyone and might be something big kids would have fun visiting, too.

"It's a low-angle, low-risk boardercross trail for kids," explained Josh Spoelstra, who designs the ski school curriculum. "It creates a lot more adventure for kids."



Ski school isn't always just about time on the slopes, according the Heavenly's philosophy. Photos/Kathryn Reed

Groomed rollers through the trees are what this trail is all about.

Carved wooden animals dot the landscape, with information about them so kids are learning a bit about the environment. Plus, there is a play structure that can be used even with ski boots on.

Safety, fun, learning – that’s the mantra of ski school.

“If it’s safe and fun, you are probably learning,” Spoelstra said.

Other upgrades

Heavenly has made improvements for older, non-rookies, too.

While the painfully slow two-seater Galaxy lift will still be churning this season (it’s in the master plan to eventually upgrade it), there will be new trails in that area. Called the Galaxy Pod, the intermediate trails on the Nevada side add 20 acres of skiable terrain.

This will be a bonus on windy days with more access to lower elevation terrain via Stagecoach and Galaxy chairlifts.

Five trails on the California side have been widened – Ridge (at the top by the wind fence), Ellie's (making it more uniform), Liz's, High Five and High Roller Park.

The Umbrella Bar will now be found at Snow Beach.

"I think people will be psyched. It will have a beer garden atmosphere and good food," Russ Pecoraro, spokesman for Heavenly, said of the revamped Snow Beach.

Even more Adirondack chairs will be scattered about for those soaking up the rays.

Heavenly keeps upgrading its snowmaking to be more efficient, while also putting in guns to cover more of the mountain. Seventy-three percent of Heavenly's trails can be covered with the fake stuff. In an hour, 1 acre can be covered with a depth of 3½ feet.

New to Heavenly and Northstar (also owned by Vail Resorts) is Epic Photo – a component of EpicMix. Action and still shots will be available for free via a rider's EpicMix account (which is free). They can be shared immediately on Facebook or Twitter, or high-resolution shoots may be purchased for $19.99.

While individual lift ticket prices are not set until the opening, Heavenly has long been big on touting its season pass. With the change of ownerships at various Tahoe-area resorts, pass deals are abundant – but Vail Resorts says it has the best value, either through Epic or Tahoe Super passes.

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