Celebration of Writers lineup released

Tahoe Writers Works will host the third annual Celebration of Writers Around the Lake on Sept. 16 at 7pm at the Valhalla Grand Hall.

It's an evening of literature at the lake with eight writers who call Tahoe home or find their inspiration here. The $10 admission includes a wine reception featuring the Après Wine Company followed by readings from award-winning writers. Books will be available for signing and purchase.

The event will showcase several South Shore writers including Suzanne Roberts reading from her third collection, "Three Hours to Burn a Body," and Andrew Homan ("Life in the Slipstream: The Legend of Bobby Walthour Sr."), Janet Smith ("All of a Sudden, Nothing Happened"), and Terry Easley ("The Kismet Blade"). Also appearing are Janet Kaidantzis ("Fallen Leaf Lake: A Lake and its People, 1850-1950") and Joseph Flannery of Tahoe City, who will read from "Grizzly Country."

Two renowned Reno poets round out the bill. Nevada Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts recipient and UNR Professor Gailmarie Pahmeier ("Shake It and it Snows"), and BEtheCAUSE founder, writer and activist Benjamin Arnold ("Synaptic Traffic: Intersections of Prose & Poetry") will bring their powerful stage presence to Tahoe.

Local publishers will also be represented. Jared Manninen, publisher of Makoto Press, will discuss his latest project, an illustrated story about hiking the Appalachian Trail, and Bona Fide Books publisher Kim Wyatt will feature forthcoming titles.

Tahoe Writers Works, formerly the Lake Tahoe Writing Club, is a nonprofit organization based in South Lake Tahoe. Each year, the group organizes events to create a stronger literary and arts community in Lake Tahoe, including Bare Bones Open Mic and Murder Mystery Theater at Valhalla. The group also publishes the literary journal “EDGE”. For more information, go online.

Delay in warm weather means a late wine grape harvest

By Chris Macias, Sacramento Bee

September traditionally ushers in a key time for California’s multibillion-dollar wine industry. It’s the month when the state’s grape harvest hits high gear, and for the past seven years, September has simultaneously been proclaimed California Wine Month by the governor.

But where are all the ripe grapes? 2011’s growing season has been hampered by unseasonably cool temperatures and a wet spring, delaying the grape harvest by a few weeks compared with a typical year.

Lodi’s looking at an overall light crop, with a little pinot grigio and chardonnay just starting to be picked.

“We’re starting about three weeks late, but the weather’s been ideal, and I think steadily we’ll catch up,” said Mark Chandler, executive director of the Lodi Woodbridge Winegrape Commission. “The quality looks excellent with the warm afternoons and cool evenings.”

The same just about goes for the Sierra Foothills. Paul Bush, the co-owner of Madroña in El Dorado County, says he doesn't expect the bulk of his grape crops to be harvested until late September.

Read the whole story

K-9 Trials in South Lake Tahoe

On Sept. 24 at 9am the South Lake Tahoe Police Canine Association will host the 2011 K9 Trials at Babe Ruth Little League Field, 1100 Lyons Ave., South Lake Tahoe.

This event is sanctioned through the Western States Police Canine Association. It will feature K9 Teams from throughout California and Nevada.

Competition will include: agility, obedience, and suspect locating and apprehension.

The event is free.

Charges in Broc's Puppies case being reduced based on

changes to law

Charges against Dennis Franks, one-time owner of the now closed Broc’s Puppies in South Lake Tahoe, will be reduced.

It was decided in El Dorado County Superior Court this week the new grand theft law affects all pending cases so some of the 65 felony accounts originally leveled against Franks will become petty theft charges.

El Dorado County Assistant District Attorney Hans Uthe told *Lake Tahoe News* he will be refiling charges next week, but on Friday did not know how many charges will be changed.

The limit for grand theft increased from $400 to $900.

“The number of forgery counts will not change since that is not dependant on the amount of loss,” Uthe said.

Franks faces 27 counts of forgery.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Never too early to discuss end-of-life issues with parents

By Anita Creamer, Sacramento Bee

When Roberta Battle and her 10 siblings gathered in Washington, D.C., twice each year for their parents’ birthdays, her mother, Helen Harper White, always initiated a family business meeting. The agenda included her and her

husband’s wills, their health care wishes, their financial situation – the entire spectrum of issues that experts call end-of-life planning.

When White died in 2009 at age 92, the family was prepared.

“With that background, I should be better prepared than I am myself,” said Battle, 67, a retired consultant who is president of Sacramento’s Older Women’s League. “I haven’t even done my own health care directive. I’ve just told my daughter things.”

For many families, it’s the most uncomfortable conversation they’ll ever have: How do their elders see their final years? What kind of life can they afford? How far do they want doctors to intervene in their last hours?

For millions of baby boomers and their parents, this conversation is the elephant in the room. And in today’s volatile political and financial landscape, experts say, frank discussions between the generations about money, health care and other end-of-life issues are all the more crucial.

Even when older people have carefully planned for their retirement years, today’s plummeting home values and rocky financial market can lead to concerns that they’ll outlive their resources – especially with the future of Social Security and Medicare in question.

Experts also note a more basic truth: You can’t honor your parents’ wishes if you don’t know them.

Read the whole story

9/11: Stage becomes a vehicle to share experiences, feelings

Publisher's note: ***This is one in a 12-part series running from Sept. 1-12 about how Lake Tahoe is tied to 9/11.***

By Susan Boulanger

On Sept. 11 at 2pm, the LTCC Theatre Arts Department will have a special theatrical presentation to commemorate the 10th anniversary of 9/11. I am excited and grateful that members of various branches of South Lake Tahoe law enforcement and fire departments, as well as several other LTCC staff members, have joined with me to present several events that will follow the play, including a panel discussion, and a special commemoration of the Victims and Heroes of 9/11 at the Ledbetter Terrace. This event will culminate in honoring our present-day heroes in Lake Tahoe – law enforcement, fire, military, and all public safety personnel.

So, the question posed to me was – "Why are you doing this?"

I don't have enough space to fully express my feelings or thoughts, or to describe my need and my joy to use my art to reach out to my community. But I will try to put some of them into words.



From Sept.

1-12, Lake Tahoe News is looking at 9/11.

To me, the events of 9/11 were staggeringly horrific. It’s 10 years later and I still can’t get my mind around it; I still feel for the victims, the heroes, the rescue workers, and all of the families; and a nation that was deeply wounded.

Like so many other people, I wanted so much to go to Ground Zero to help, but that wasn’t possible. And what could I have done there to help?

So, I donated what money I could afford. I prayed. I attempted to comfort one of my students who had lost a brother in the World Trade Center. I wept for the victims and was in awe of the heroic efforts of so many people. I tried to comprehend it all. And I felt helpless.

On the 10th anniversary of 9/11 I can do something. I can use my abilities as a theater artist to help this community pay tribute, remember, and hopefully, heal a little.

Some playwrights in the world of theater wrote plays connected to the impact of 9/11. Some of the plays dealt with personal experiences; some were fictional, and some were taken from the real-life experiences of people near Ground Zero. “With Their Eyes – A View From a High School at Ground Zero,” edited by Annie Thoms, is a collection of real-life accounts of students and staff members at Stuyvesant High School in the shadows of the towers.

A year after 9/11, a play called “The Guys” by Anne Nelson was performed in New York. Based on a true story, this play deals with a NYC fire captain who lost eight of his men in the towers and now must try to find the words to honor each man’s memory. While the world was calling these men “heroes,”

(which, of course, they were), this play reminds us that each of those heroes – everyone who ran into the horror to help – was human, an ordinary person who selflessly gave of themselves to help others.

I had the idea to do this commemoration a number of years ago. I knew that I wanted to do something to mark the 10th anniversary and, as a theater artist, I knew it would have something to do with the stage. When I was hired as the director of theater at Lake Tahoe Community College two years ago, one of my first thoughts was "I will have a place to do this commemoration!"

I started with the idea to do the two-character play, "The Guys," but once I was at LTCC, I wanted to include more people. That is when I decided to incorporate monologues from several different plays. I now have 18 actors involved.

Some of the play will focus on the immediate experiences of people – what happened at the moment of the attack and directly following. Some of the play will focus on the aftermath.

Most important for me, though, are the parts of the presentation that focus on the people who were the heroes – this presentation speaks directly about the firefighters who were lost, but I look at it as a representation of all of the public safety personnel who were lost that day.

Theater is such a unique medium. The immediacy of it, the live actor/audience give and take, provides an experience that is unlike any other art form. Theater provides a connection for the audience that allows a deeper experience. I am hoping that this piece of theater, and the events that follow, will provide a meaningful experience to the members of our community.

Given the scope of what happened that day – and what has happened since – this project is a small thing.

But, it’s something I can do.

Susan Boulanger is director of theater arts at Lake Tahoe Community College in South Lake Tahoe.

Cyclists to get some space on Nevada roads

By Lenita Powers, Reno Gazette-Journal

Heads up, motorists.

If you’re passing someone riding a bicycle, you’d better keep at least 3 feet away or – as of this Saturday – you’ll be breaking the law.

Senate Bill 248 is one of two revisions to state laws the 2011 Legislature approved to make the roadways safer for bicyclists. Under Assembly Bill 328, the second revision known as the Vulnerable Highway Users Bill, motorists found at fault in a collision with a bicyclist or a pedestrian can be charged with reckless driving and face harsher penalties.

Both laws go into effect Saturday.

Sgt. Jim Stegmaier of the Reno Police Department said the law that previously required motorists to pass bicyclists at a safe distance was too vague, but the new 3-feet requirement specifically defines it.

“Everyone pretty much knows that a yardstick is 3 feet, and that’s roughly what we will use to judge,” Stegmaier said. “It’s going to be an eyeballing type of measurement. We won’t get down to inches, but if motorists brush too close, we will

cite them.”

He said the fuzzy wording of the original statute would have been harder to enforce, but the 3-feet rule provides a concrete distance.

Read the whole story

El Dorado County controller releases retiree benefit information

El Dorado County Auditor-Controller Joe Harn on Friday announced that the list of county retirees receiving retirement benefits greater than $100,000 per year is available on the county’s website.

The county’s unfunded obligation to its retirees has become a major problem, Harn said.

In 1999 and 2000, the Board of Supervisors changed its contract with CalPERS. The changes provided significant increase in retirement benefits to employees and dramatically increased the county’s unfunded obligation to CalPERS. The county’s unfunded obligation to CalPERS is $264 million, according to the latest actuarial report available.

Tahoe Regional Young Professionals collect cash, food for Christmas Cheer

As local young professionals sang karaoke and danced at Murphy's Irish Pub, attendees filled buckets with cash and food donations for South Lake Tahoe's Christmas Cheer All Year.

"We were able to deliver $542.60 and two large boxes of canned food and toys to Christmas Cheer," Rebecca Wass, co-founder and president of Tahoe Regional Young Professionals, said in a press release.

Christmas Cheer is assisting about 700 households or 1,700 people a month.

TRYP is a newly formed organization in South Lake Tahoe aiming to connect Tahoe's next generation to help the Lake Tahoe region and encourages members to partake in fundraisers, socials, networking opportunities and build a better community.

The next event is a full moon stroll on Sept. 12, then participating in the Great River Sierra Cleanup on Sept. 17.

For more information and upcoming TRYP events, go online or email tahoetryp@gmail.com.

Autumn Fest

Gardening and sustainability presentations, live music, crafts for kids and adults, games, a local artisan market, dancing, storytellers, pony rides, local food vendors and a pumpkin patch are all part of the 5th annual Autumn Fest.

Tahoe RCD is putting on the free event at the Lake Tahoe Community College Demonstration Garden in South Lake Tahoe on Sept. 25 from 11am-3pm.

Autumn Fest is the primary fundraiser for the garden.

For more information, contact Kirsten at (530) 543.1501, ext. 127, or klindquist@tahoercd.org, or go online.