Poets being sought for contest

Submissions are open now through Aug. 31 for the 2011 Melissa Lanitis Gregory Poetry Prize.



Bona Fide Books of Meyers annually awards The Melissa Lanitis Gregory Prize for an unpublished collection of poems.

Lanitis was a South Lake Tahoe artist who died in 2009. This award created by Bona Fide Books Publisher Kim Wyatt is in honor of her friend and to recognize the inspiration Lanitis gave to so many others in pursuit of literary and artistic dreams.

The winner will receive publication, 10 copies, a $500 cash award, and a reading at Lake Tahoe.

For guidelines, go online.

School work just part of graduates' life achievements

By Kathryn Reed

"Every accomplishment starts with the decision to try."

Those words from Mt. Tallac High School counselor Amy Jackson

resonated with the students sitting before her in their blue graduation gowns.



Fidel Valdez Moya with his daughter graduates June 10 from Mt. Tallac High School. Photos/Kathryn Reed

The 45 students who received their diploma Friday morning have overcome obstacles many adults twice their age have yet to – and may never – experience.

While plenty of family and friends turned out for the momentous occasion, many of these young adults have been living on their own for years. Some couch surf – having no real place to call home. A few are already parents. Many work full time. For some, they are the first in their family to earn a high school diploma.

And about 70 percent of these graduates are going onto college. Most never thought a high school diploma would be possible, let alone pursuing higher education.

Austin Beentjes was one of three student speakers. His first stint in the juvenile detention center was at age 14. He admits it took a while to confront a drug addiction.

“A while ago I was scared of the world. Now I’m taking it by the reigns,” Beentjes said. “A while ago I was in an 8 by 10 cell. Now I stand here free.”

All of the speakers praised the school’s staff for providing them an opportunity and the inspiration to be successful.

Emily Yelle spoke of how Mt. Tallac has given all students a second chance.

Her spiral downhill started in fall 2009 while she was a junior at South Tahoe High. Her whole family came down with the flu. It hit Yelle’s mom the hardest. She was hospitalized, airlifted to a Reno hospital, and eventually suffered a stroke that left her brain dead. Yelle’s mom died Nov. 12 that year.

Yelle didn’t go to school. She became depressed. She and her dad started fighting. Family finances were thin.

Finally, she was given the chance to go to Mt. Tallac. It turned her life around.

Yelle told her classmates what makes them different is they’ve been tested so much sooner in life than the average teenager.

“Our stories will not break us,” Yelle said.

Fidel Valdez Moya panicked when his girlfriend told him he was going to be a father. How was he going to support a family without an education? With his daughter now 6-months-old, he doesn’t have to answer that question. He has a high school diploma and has a desire to join the military or go the fire academy.

On Friday, he walked across the stage carrying his daughter – with a huge smile on his face.

Plenty of tears were shed (some adults admitted to wearing sunglasses to hide that fact), lots of hugs were shared, and smiles filled the audience as they celebrated this next step

in these young people’s lives.

“This is a pretty incredible class,” Susan Baker, who runs the school, said after the ceremony. “They are very smart and very focused.”

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Anderson signs 3-year contract with Billabong

By Mike Lewis, Transworld Business

Snowboarder Jamie Anderson of South Lake Tahoe will be rocking Billabong for at least another three years. The brand announced this week that it had signed a three-year contract extension with Anderson, one of the sport’s top women riders.

“We are thrilled to be continuing our support of Jamie,” said Candy Harris, Billabong Brand Director, “she has become a true icon for the sport and we know the future holds no limit to her accomplishments.”

“It feels amazing to sign with Billabong for another three years, and I’m so proud to work with such a great company,” said Anderson. “I’m excited about expanding the Jamie Anderson Collection and couldn’t be happier about the relationship.”

Read the whole story

Legislation would extend ban on gold mining technique

By Matt Drange, California Watch

When it comes to protecting California watershed habitats, environmentalists rarely embrace budget cuts. But that is exactly what they are doing in response to a recent proposal to slash funding for gold mining permits.

Last month, legislators amended the proposed state budget to prohibit the California Department of Fish and Game from issuing new permits for the gold mining process known as suction dredging. They estimate it will save the state $1.8 million by eliminating costs associated with selling and databasing individual permits, sending biologists to collect information at various sites, and paying for wardens who must devote a portion of their time to enforcing the regulations.

Suction dredging involves using vacuum-like devices to suck up sediment from the river bottom and deposit the material into sluice boxes floating on the water. But environmentalists say it is damaging to fisheries that are already on the decline. Craig Tucker, a spokesman for the Karuk Indian Tribe in Northern California, said it has been “downhill” for the tribe since the first Gold Rush more than 150 years ago.

Some fish species, such as the lamprey, live in riverbed sediment for up to seven years during their larval stage, Tucker said, and are especially vulnerable to suction dredging.

“It’s deadly to those species,” Tucker said.

Read the whole story

Lake Tahoe Relay race a labor of love for family

By Chris Murray, Reno Gazette-Journal

Every year in early June, April Carter and her family gather for a reunion at Lake Tahoe.

But unlike most family reunions, this one isn’t just about catching up and reminiscing about old times. It’s largely about work. And a race.

That race is the DeCelle Memorial Lake Tahoe Relay, which celebrates its 47th anniversary this year and is the oldest distance relay race in the United States.

“We’re just trying to carry on the tradition,” Carter said.

Carter’s father, Robert DeCelle, created the seven-person, 72-mile relay that circles Lake Tahoe in 1965. It’s steadily grown and an expected 117 teams and 820 runners will line up when the race begins at 7 a.m. Saturday.

DeCelle served as the administrative assistant for U.S. Olympic teams in 1968 and 1972 and often trained athletes at Tahoe’s high altitudes. It was then that he decided to create this race and make it his labor of love.

Read the whole story

TRPA employees stop driving for a day

Weather got in the way of the first date set for the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency staff to not drive to work. But when it stopped snowing, nearly 60 people (which includes people in adjoining offices) left their vehicles at home on June 3.



An empty parking lot June 3 at TRPA. Photo/Provided

All of this was part of the annual bike to work program which is all about using two wheels. But on this particular day employees could take public transit or walk – just not use a passenger vehicle.

Reducing vehicle miles traveled is a big part of the bi-state regulatory agency's mantra.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Bull riding at county fair to test cowboys’ prowess

A good bull ride is symbiotic and competitive at the same time. Part pitted warfare between man and beast, part beautiful partnership – where for a mere eight seconds the two become one.

Cowboys endure cracked ribs and plenty more for the chance to achieve the high … to feel it even once.



They hope and pray to pick the bull named “Little Hummer” or “Slim Slam,” so they get their shot at a perfect ride, because even if they stay on for the full eight seconds, none of it matters unless they also have an outstanding animal.

A really good bull, the one that gets good scoring and the one a rider hopes he’ll pick, doesn’t just buck a lot. He spins and kicks and puts his whole heart into knocking the rider off.

Humpz & Hornz is a Professional Bull Riders Contractor , with upward of 70 bulls in the herd, including such high scorers as Spartacus, Funky Music, Slim Slam and Little Hummer.

In bull riding, both the rider and the bull are judged on a one to 25 scale by two judges, with a possible total score of 50 points for each. A 22-point bull is considered a good bull,

On June 17 at the El Dorado County Fairgrounds, dozens of cowboys will attempt to ride Wes Ibrahimi’s bulls. They’ll vie for the small chance at a little bit of prize money, a silver buckle and a perfect eight seconds. Many of us might consider it a foolhardy act, but they’ll do it for the love of it, pure and simple.

The bull riding starts at 8pm in the Grandstands at the El Dorado County Fairgrounds. It’s free with admission to the fair.

The 2011 El Dorado County Fair is June 16-19 in Placerville. For more information, call (530) 621.5860.

Work day on Corral mountain bike trail

On Saturday, Hilride returns to South Lake Tahoe to begin work on lower Corral Trail for mountain bike riders.

Bring bikes and riding gear.

The agenda:

Meet at U.S. Forest Service office (College Drive, South Lake Tahoe) June 11 at 9am.

9-10am Workshop Part 1- Trail analysis overview

Review project overview and goals

Review field workshop goals

Review workshop process

Carpool to Corral Trail

Meet at Corral Trailhead 11am

11-noon Workshop Part 1 – Trail analysis preview

Meet at Corral Trailhead

Shuttle to top of Upper Corral Trail

Descend Upper and Lower Corral Trails

Objective – Establish basic trail characteristics, features, speed, flow, basic inventory of features, and ground truth map.

1-3pm Workshop Part 2 – In-depth trail analysis

Regroup at Lower Corral Trailhead

Shuttle to top of Upper Corral Trail

Descend Upper and Lower Corral Trails

Objective – In-depth analysis of Lower Corral Trail to establish specific user speeds and flows that will inform the design and planning of new and modified trail features.

3-4pm Workshop Part 3 – Trail analysis review

Regroup at Lower Corral Trailhead

Shuttle to top of Upper Corral Trail

Descend Upper and Lower Corral Trails

Objective – Review trails metrics, analysis and proposed trail features, placement, speeds and user flows to build group consensus.

Workshop participants

Participants should come prepared to ride with bikes, clothes and equipment, plus additional layers of clothing to stay warm while talking.

Participants are encouraged to bring vehicles capable of carrying multiple bicycles, in addition to cameras, and lunch for the day.

Abbacadabra – The Ultimate Abba Concert

Abbacadabra – The Ultimate Abba Concert will be in Harrah's South Shore Room July 1-3. Shows start at 7:30pm.

Tickets are $25.

To purchase tickets, call 800.786.8208.

Officials warn river users of raging, frigid waters

By Cathy Locke, Sacramento Bee

With sunshine and temperatures in the 80s forecast for this weekend, the Sacramento region's rivers and waterways beckon.

But public safety officials recommend steering clear of the water, particularly the rivers, for at least one more week.

The flow in the Sacramento River at Freeport on Wednesday was 46,000 cubic feet per second, about 2 1/2 times the historical average of 18,000 cfs for the date, said Maury Roos, chief hydrologist with the California Department of Water Resources.

"We've posted signs at launch points warning of cold water and high flows," said Randy Lewis, park ranger supervisor for Sacramento County Regional Parks.

Parks officials issued an advisory Tuesday urging people to avoid recreational activities on the lower American River after the Bureau of Reclamation increased releases from Folsom Dam to 9,000 cubic feet per second. The bureau said flows are likely to increase to 15,000 cfs in coming days.

Roos said 64 percent of the expected runoff into the American River from this year’s snowpack has already occurred and much of the remaining 36 percent is likely to come down the river next week, generating some of the highest flows before tapering off for the summer.

Read the whole story