

Poet Camille Dungy at LTCC

Poet Camille Dungy is the guest for a LTCC Writers' Series event at the library at Lake Tahoe Community College, One College Drive, South Lake Tahoe. (530) 541-4660, ext. 708.

Kokanee literary journal reading

Suzanne Roberts, author and LTCC instructor, hosts the Kokanee literary journal reading, Aspen Room, Lake Tahoe Community College, One College Drive, South Lake Tahoe. (530) 541-4660, ext. 708.

El Dorado County networking meeting

In an effort to make community-based organizations aware of other organizations that provide services, as well as networking with the education community, there will be a breakfast in the Activity Building (Building I) at the El Dorado County Office of Education, 6767 Green Valley Road, Placerville. This event will be co-hosted by the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA).

Please feel free to bring handouts and any other informational materials to share. We are also requesting that each

organization representative be prepared to conduct a 60-second Ainfomercial@ about that organization and the services provided.

We believe this breakfast will encourage communication and networking throughout the county, enabling all to provide more comprehensive services to the people of El Dorado County.

Please R.S.V.P. by Sept. 24 to Jackie Mintz, at (530) 295.2337 or jmintz@edcoe.org.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

Helen Smith, who lived at Vikingsholm as a child and is now a docent for California State Parks, was recognized this summer for her 40 years of service to the preservation of the historic home at the base of Emerald Bay.

Trivia: Kings Beach was named after card shark Joe King, who won the town site from George Whittell nearly a century before poker had a cult cable-TV following.

Sierra magazine reports that in the first quarter of 2009 more bicycles were sold in the U.S. than cars.

Harveys handed over \$1,141,923 to an Oxnard man after he hit the Wheel of Fortune MegaJackpot on Aug. 10.

Lake Tahoe's Shane McConkey is featured in the September issue of *Skiing* magazine.

World of words runs deep in Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed



It was a night of literary wonder as author after author read his or her work to a full house at the Valhalla Grand Hall.

Tahoe Writers Works assembled this cast of eight who all have ties to the Lake Tahoe Basin. It proves Tahoe is rich with writers who care about the English word – written and spoken, and that there is an audience who still relishes the concept of holding something tangible in their hands to read.

The inaugural Celebration of Writers Around the Lake on Sept. 18 is bound to be a regular event.

Suzanne Roberts let the audience decide the topic of poetry she would read. “Sex” was the only audible response. She didn’t disappoint.

The Lake Tahoe Community College instructor has published several collections of poetry. Her delivery and charisma rival her words.

Michael Makley read from his book about Cave Rock that has yet to be released. The essence of the passage captured the conflict of this famous Nevada landmark being such an incredible spiritual place for the Washoe, while at the same time emitting a similar emotion for climbers. It will be a book to look for in the future.

To not bore the audience, those were his words, Todd Borg opted to not read from his current release in his Owen McKenna Tahoe Mystery Series. He captured listeners with his who-done-

it intrigue that always has Tahoe at the center of his prose.

Karen Terrey shared a poem that is still in the works about being at a hot springs along Highway 395 with her dog. It sounded like it was ready for a final printing.

Ellen Hopkins read poetry even though she is the author of 20 nonfiction books. "Tricks," her latest book, debuted at No. 1 on the New York Times Bestsellers' list its first week. One day she should publish her poetry so those who don't attend readings can experience her work.

Other writers at Friday's gathering were:

Gailmarie Pahmeier who is a published poet with another book of poetry ("West of Snowball, Arkansas, and Home") that will be released next year;

June Sylvester Saraceno is English program chair at Sierra Nevada College and accomplished author; and

Jennifer Woodlief who this year released "A Wall of White" about the 1982 deadly avalanche at Alpine Meadows.

For more information about Tahoe Writers Works, go to www.TahoeWritersWorks.com.

**Budget, personnel issues
dominate Happy Homestead
Cemetery agenda**



Linda
Mendizabal,
John
McChesney, Del
Laine

By Kathryn Reed

The Happy Homestead Cemetery board approved a budget last week without having final numbers tabulated. As of Saturday not all board members knew what the exact figures are for revenues and expenses for the fiscal year that starts Oct. 1.

The board agreed to slash the estimated interest to be accrued from \$50,000 to \$20,000. Then the three members (John McChesney, Del Laine and Linda Mendizabal) started cutting expenses.

The end result is a difference of about \$7,000 that the board expects to put into reserves.

When board clerk and bookkeeper Coco Kelly left the Sept. 16 meeting to borrow a calculator she came back with a reserve of \$90,000, but said the calculator was too small to get accurate numbers and that she did the calculations three times, with three different results.

The total budget for the South Lake Tahoe cemetery is close to a half million dollars.

Confusion reigned between the board members toward the end of meeting about how to pay Kelly for expenses she incurred while the county withheld payment for services rendered.

Kelly owns Substitute Personnel & Business Services and works at the discretion of the board to do clerk and bookkeeping duties. The job of clerk-bookkeeper has been in her family for about 30 years. Things started to get sticky in the last year when the county auditor-controller said Kelly could not work for the board while her husband, David, was a board member.

David Kelly chose to resign even though he had been on the board since 2003 without any alarms going off in Placerville.

Joe Harn, El Dorado County auditor, said in a letter dated Sept. 2 he was not going to pay a \$2,411.50 bill submitted by Coco Kelly until county counsel reviewed it.

Cemetery legal counsel Dennis Crabb said after the meeting that Kelly has since withdrawn her request to be paid for the work. Still, he said she would be getting paid for the expenses incurred because she had to borrow money to keep her finances in order.

At last week's meeting there were questions whether Kelly had been paid the \$3,000 for expenses related to the matter. McChesney said he didn't know how to get a check out of the endowment fund for this. Laine was adamant that Kelly gets reimbursed.

Because of a 3-0 vote by the board to combine what Kelly does with that of the cemetery's receptionist, it is possible Kelly will be out of a job unless she wants to give up her business and become staff at the cemetery.

The board also agreed to expand to become a five-member board. That could be in place by the end of the year.

The Board of Supervisors, which oversees special districts like this, will make the ultimate decision at a public hearing. Appointments would be made that day after the hearing. So far John Poell has applied to be on the board. He was at last week's meeting.

USFS warns of continued fire danger

By Tahoe National Forest staff

Across the Tahoe National Forest, spotty rain occurred last weekend/early Monday with a slight short-term decrease in fire danger. This weekend, however, hotter temperatures, lower humidity and gusty northeast winds are predicted. This will bring us back into very high fire danger. North/northeast winds are frequently associated with severe fire conditions and serious wildfires and often extend through the month of October. We are not out of fire season and need everyone to be especially careful with fire.

Deer hunting season begins Sept. 26. All hunters and others who are camping/recreating in the forest need to remember that fire restrictions are still in effect which means that campfires can only be in designated campgrounds. Small, portable propane/liquid fuel stoves can be used in the back-country with a campfire permit. For those camped in campgrounds – please be sure to completely put out your campfire – even before you go to bed at night. Embers from a campfire can escape and start a wildfire while you sleep. Please be fire safe.

Chemical smell keeps West Slope schools closed

El Dorado County health and school officials have extended the closure of Oak Ridge High, Rolling Hills Middle, and Silva Valley Elementary school campuses as a precautionary measure until additional air sampling can be conducted on Oak Ridge High's track, at all three schools and in some classrooms. The schools were closed Sept. 18, and students evacuated following a strong chemical odor.

"We recommended the continued closure of the schools as a precaution until additional air monitoring data can be collected and analyzed to confirm that there are no potential health hazards," said county health director Olivia Kasirye, in a statement. "All testing done to date indicates that there is no actionable cause for concern for the materials that we have been able to monitor; however, we are erring on the side of caution."

Health officials believe the incident is localized to the Oak Ridge High School track and additional air sampling was expected to take place by the federal Environmental Protection Agency on Saturday. At this time, all school and non-school activities have been suspended and health officials are advising members of the public to avoid the immediate area pending sampling results.

Aside from experiencing initial symptoms, there have been no reports of medical attention sought by teachers or students due to this incident. Health officials continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as they become available. Parents will be notified when the schools have been cleared to reopen.

V&T Railroad steams through history

The historic Virginia & Truckee Railroad train runs every Saturday through Oct. 31, along a 12.8-mile reconstructed portion of the 16.7-mile original route between Nevada's sister cities.

Trains leave Carson City at 10am, arriving in Virginia City at 11:30am. The train departs Virginia City at 3pm, returning to Carson City at 4:30pm.

Roundtrip tickets are \$48 per adult, \$36 for children 12 and under and \$40 for seniors over 65. One-way tickets are \$29 adults, \$23 for children and \$25 for seniors. To reserve tickets, call 800-NEVADA-1 or visit www.VisitCarsonCity.com and click "buy tickets."

The 60-90-minute train rides include scenic vistas of the "old west" countryside, views of the Carson River, two tunnels and occasional sightings of wild stallions.

The V&T Railway, the richest short-line in American history, originally operated during the raucous silver strike era of the infamous Comstock Lode from 1869 to 1938. The 1860's V&T was privately funded and featured the finest appointments with the most luxurious interiors money could buy, including gold-leaf and brass-adorned locomotives to wooden coaches.

The line brought entrepreneurs, gamblers and aristocrats to the Comstock. Along with these characters, the train carried the Mother Lode's gold and silver to Carson City and lumber from Lake Tahoe to build the mines in Virginia City.

The \$55 million project, which links the area's storied past with the present and provides a promising future has been 17 years in the making.



V&T Railroad,
Photo by Jim
Grant

Minuscule clams threaten Lake Tahoe



Sen. Dianne
Feinstein
shows off a
pair of
earrings made
from invasive
clam shells

found in Lake
Tahoe.
Photo/Kathryn
Reed

By Amy Littlefield, Los Angeles Times

Lake Tahoe is under siege by clams the size of your thumbnail.

The population of the coffee-colored Asian clams has soared in the southeast portion of the lake, threatening to hog food sources and excrete nutrients that foster algae growth, according to an annual Lake Tahoe report by UC Davis researchers.

Scientists worry that calcium in the clams' shells could make the lake more hospitable to invasion by quagga or zebra mussels, which cluster onto boats and anything else that rests in the water. Although the mussels have not been sighted at Tahoe, authorities at other lakes have spent millions of dollars trying to control them.

[Read the whole story](#)