2 comedies by James McLure to be staged at LTCC

Lake Tahoe Community College's Theatre Arts Department is putting on "Lone Star" and "Laundry and Bourbon," two companion one-act comedies by renowned playwright James McLure.

McLure is known for his plays addressing the challenges soldiers faced returning from the Vietnam War.

Performances are Nov. 9, 10, 15, 16, 17 at 8pm, and Nov. 11 and 18 at 2pm.

Tickets are $10, $7 for seniors, $5 for students with valid ID, and children under 13; free for veterans and active military.

Children younger 6 will not be admitted.

LTCC, LTUSD officials relieved Prop. 30 passes

By Kathryn Reed

California lawmakers have a handful of years to figure out a more sustainable way to fund K-14 education. That is because the tax measure approved Nov. 6 by voters will expire.

"I've been dealing with finances in community colleges for the last 12, 13 year and it's been unstable the whole time," Kindred Murillo, Lake Tahoe Community College president, told

Lake Tahoe News.

Jim Tarwater, superintendent of Lake Tahoe Unified School District, said it is long overdue for Sacramento to get its act together.

“What they have got to have is stability. There is not an organization or company around that doesn’t know how much money it has to function,” Tarwater said. He doesn’t understand how lawmakers ever rationalized taking money away from K-12 midyear when those dollars had been allocated.



Gov. Jerry Brown’s efforts paid off on election night. Photo/Los Angeles Times

LTCC and LTUSD, respectively, would have faced $632,000 and $1.6 million in cuts this fiscal year had Proposition 30 failed. With contracts in place, cutting people midyear is not a possibility.

For now though, both institutions can breath a sigh of relief. And both can put a few dollars back into reserves that were designated to cover the potential state take-away.

The anticipated revenue to be gained via Proposition 30 is estimate at $6 billion annually for education, with 89 percent for K-12 and 11 percent for community colleges. This will come from starting this tax year by increasing taxes on those who

make more than $250,000, as well as upping the sales tax one-quarter cent to 7½ percent beginning Jan. 1. The income tax is for seven years and the sales tax for four.

While the money will go for several things, the bulk is allocated toward education.

People in all capacities of education are hailing the approval of Proposition 30 as a victory for schoolchildren. The measure passed with 53.9 percent of the voters saying yes.

“This is a great win for our schools and public safety. Our local schools will not face more cuts this school year and in the near future. The voters of California have stood up to support our schools and we are all grateful,” Mike Patterson, a past president of the local teachers’ union and member of the state union, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

For LTUSD, it means programs will not have to be cut. Nor will the school year be shortened by 12 days.

When it comes to people, in the last four years about two dozen teachers have been let go, mostly through attrition; that many classified employees have received pink slips; and the administration has cut nine jobs.

“For California community colleges it will finally allow us to begin adding back some of the thousands of classes we have been forced to cut since we began this nightmare of educational rationing in 2008,” Brice Harris, California Community Colleges chancellor, said in a statement. “With this vote of support from California’s citizens, community colleges will receive $210 million in additional funding this year. This should allow us to serve an additional 20,000 students statewide and to begin erasing the financial deferrals that have plagued our budgets in recent years.”

Since 2008, the 112-college system has endured $809 million in cuts. It has meant cutting nearly a quarter of the classes

that were once offered and losing about 500,000 students.

But according to Murillo, the next few years will be tough for community colleges because of how the state reimburses institutions. Core classes and sticking to the mission of providing transfer-remedial-career/tech courses will alter what is in the class schedule.

LTCC is reviewing all of its classes with the goal of by early next year to have a firm grasp of what people will be able to repeat, what the state will pay for, what must stay in a certificated program and everything in between.

Plus, in two years the college will have to deal with the priority registration mandate coming down from Sacramento.

Here is how all the California propositions on the Nov. 6 ballot did:

Proposition Title			Yes Votes	%	No Votes	%
Yes	30	Temporary Taxes to Fund Education	4,959,206	53.9%	4,241,246	46.1%
No	31	State Budget, State and Local Government	3,369,175	39.2%	5,220,193	60.8%
No	32	Political Contributions by Payroll Deduction	3,973,720	43.9%	5,086,590	56.1%
No	33	Auto Insurance Prices Based on Driver History	4,046,275	45.4%	4,872,423	54.6%
No	34	Death Penalty	4,269,535	47.2%	4,776,815	52.8%
Yes	35	Human Trafficking	7,309,737	81.1%	1,698,939	18.9%
Yes	36	Three Strikes Law	6,181,771	68.6%	2,826,624	31.4%
No	37	Genetically Engineered Foods Labeling	4,277,985	46.9%	4,835,045	53.1%

Proposition Title			Yes Votes	%	No Votes	%
No	38	Tax for Education. Early Childhood Programs	2,489,028	27.7%	6,495,745	72.3%
Yes	39	Business Tax for Energy Funding	5,295,968	60.1%	3,522,579	39.9%
Yes	40	Redistricting State Senate	6,068,518	71.4%	2,427,514	28.6%

Source: *California Secretary of State*

Speeding ticket turns into arrest on drug charges

A speeding stop turned into a marijuana bust for a Nevada Highway Patrol officer.

The trooper pulled over a Black Mercedes on Nov. 4 that was traveling east on Interstate 80 in Elko. The trooper said the driver, William Dashawn Nixon, 35, of Ohio acted nervous. Then the officer smelled marijuana.

A search of the vehicle turned up abut 7.5 pounds of marijuana.

Nixon and Lewis R. Price, 27, of Ohio were arrested on possession of controlled substance/marijuana, possession of controlled substance with intent to sell, and transport of controlled substance.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

MontBleu and parent company report revenue gains

By Steve Green, Las Vegas Sun

Lower interest expenses drove a higher third-quarter profit for casino operator Tropicana Entertainment Inc. of Las Vegas, the company reported today.



Tropicana, which has casinos in smaller Nevada markets as well as in Atlantic City and around the country, said it earned $20.9 million in the quarter ended Sept. 30, up from $14.9 million in the year-ago quarter.

Interest expenses fell from $8.2 million to $3.7 million, thanks to a new $175 million credit facility cutting Tropicana Entertainment's main interest rate from 15 percent to 7.5 percent.

The previous high-interest debt was left over from the bankruptcy of the old Tropicana Entertainment Holdings LLC, which in 2010 saw its casinos nationwide spun off to different investment groups, including Tropicana Entertainment.

The profit improved even as net revenue fell from $175.4 million to $171.5 million amid difficult operating conditions in Atlantic City and at the company's Nevada casinos in Laughlin and Lake Tahoe.

Tropicana Entertainment said the Tropicana Atlantic City generated net revenue of $83.2 million, down from $86 million as the property was hit by the double whammy of a 1.8 percent

decline in casino revenue citywide and the addition of a new competitor there, the Revel resort that opened in May.

Hurricane Sandy, which hit the East Coast this quarter, didn't affect third-quarter results. Tropicana said in Wednesday's report that its Atlantic City property likely didn't incur significant damage, but it so far is unable to estimate losses resulting from the five-day closure of all casinos in the city and the aftermath.

For Tropicana's three Nevada casinos, quarterly net revenue dipped from $33.2 million to $32.7 million. The Tropicana Laughlin and the River Palms in Laughlin saw net revenue decline $900,000 amid weak visitation trends to the city, while the MontBleu in Lake Tahoe played lucky at its table games and posted a net revenue gain of $300,000.

The company's Casino Aztar in Evansville, Ind., generated net revenue of $31.3 million, off slightly from last year. Tropicana's casinos elsewhere, including in Mississippi and Louisiana, produced $24.3 million in net revenue, again down just slightly from the 2011 quarter.

Overall, the company said, "uncertain economic conditions continue to adversely impact us and the gaming industry as a whole."

Tropicana Entertainment does not own the Tropicana Las Vegas, which is controlled by a separate group of investors. Investor Carl Icahn controls Tropicana Entertainment as well as the mothballed Fontainebleau resort project in Las Vegas.

Coverage of Sandy gives Weather Channel a lift

By Katie Leslie, Palm Beach Post

ATLANTA – Hours after Hurricane Sandy trampled the Northeast, a group of exhausted meteorologists and journalists gathered in the Weather Channel's Atlanta newsroom to assess the damage.

And their own work.

Tom Moore, a meteorologist with the Atlanta-based network, was succinct: "(We) knocked it out of the park."

Sandy's timing may have been rotten for the presidential campaigns, but it was very good for the Weather Channel. The outfit, whose parent company recently dropped the word "channel" from its name, becoming simply The Weather Co. LLC, has navigated its own choppy waters this year.

Viewership is down 18.5 percent from last year, and in recent weeks the newsroom lost employees to a company-wide layoff that saw 80 workers depart. It's a business that thrives on bad weather, which until this month, was at a minimum in 2012.

And then along came Sandy, a seemingly impossible blend of weather oddities. Getting it right was paramount, especially after an alert issued by Weather Channel senior meteorologist Stu Ostro prompted an outpouring of skepticism online.

Sandy "will occupy a place in the annals of weather history as one of the most extraordinary to have affected the U.S.," Ostro, a 23-year-veteran of the network, wrote in Sunday's warning.

"WHOA: The Weather Channel Meteorologist Just Completely Freaked Out About Hurricane Sandy," read a headline from

Business Insider.

Many comments to the story followed that sarcastic lead. “Our Nielsen ratings are down this year, so it’s absolutely essential that you continue to watch the EXTREME weather on the Weather Channel so that my boss’s boss can get his bonus,” read one.

Twitter soon picked up the drum beat. “Freaked out meteorologist does his part to spread panic about Sandy,” read a tweet from chriscostner.

Helen Swenson, the network’s vice president of live programming, rebuffed critics.

“We never called it Frankenstorm,” said Swenson, who, like her employees, has spent every day in the newsroom since Sandy’s first sighting last week. “We don’t need to be dramatic. Our mission is to get it out there to the masses and get it out early.”

Ostro, who stayed overnight in the newsroom during storm coverage, betrayed just a touch of smugness his week when asked about the skeptics: “Wonder what they think now,” he said via email.

Without a doubt, media analysts say, Sandy was a boon to The Weather Co., which was acquired in 2008 by NBC Universal and private equity firms The Blackstone Group and Bain Capital. The flagship website, Weather.com, exploded with nearly 300 million page views Monday — almost eight times its daily average.

The previous record was 141 million single page views during a massive snowstorm in February 2011, said digital president Cameron Clayton. Monday, all digital platforms combined had about 450 million views, followed with another 356 million Tuesday.

The TV viewership numbers aren't available yet, but the online stats point to a substantial bonanza.

"They seem to have reported this very well . they've done incredible numbers," said Sam Thielman, staff writer for Adweek who covers the network, noting that the staff cuts didn't seem to harm the coverage.

Thielman, like Swenson, said critics who suggest that the company trumps up stories are off the mark. In fact, he said, doing so could help company's business model.

"I don't think they're telling people the storm will split the earth open to get more people to watch the network," he said. "You may see that more on cable news, and honestly, that might be one of their problems."

In recent years, the TV channel has experimented with documentary-style programming, getting away from its original mission. No more.

CEO David Kenny – who joined the company earlier this year – said that, based on expectations that climate change will create bigger weather disasters, the network is refocusing its efforts on weather and science. One goal, he said, it to explain climate change in a way that people will understand.

"The whole realization that weather is going to become more volatile made us say there is more to do on weather. We should not shy away from it," he said. "I believe our refocus on weather is going to help us with ratings."

But when storms like Sandy are in full swing, ratings take a backseat, Swenson said.

"People will tell you I'm highly competitive. But when we are absolutely serious in warning people to get out of harm's way, I'm not here to be competitive anymore. I'm there to save as many lives as I can," she said. "At that point, the only thing

we’re competing against is Mother Nature.”

North Shore ski resorts want ‘food fight’ participants

Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows are embarking on year two of their friendly competition to raise money for Project MANA, a Truckee-North Lake Tahoe hunger relief organization.

Each resort has donated $500, for a total of $1,000, to get the Food Fight started, and guests are encouraged to join the fight and pitch in on behalf of their favorite resort to help alleviate hunger in the community during the holiday season.

Now through New Year’s Day, guests of Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows can donate to Project MANA through the resorts’ online stores or as part of any lift ticket or season pass purchase. One hundred percent of donations will go directly to Project MANA.

Project MANA’s role is to make sure individuals and families have enough to eat during the tough times. Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows appreciate the many members of the community and guests who joined them and made a donation to Project MANA.

Artown looking for designs for 2013 poster

Each year Artown commissions a regional artist to create a unique piece of fine art to be used for the Artown poster and marketing materials for the July festival. A panel of judges consisting of arts leaders, the previous year's artist and the members of the Artown board will review the submissions and select the artist.

The piece of art will be transformed into a poster, incorporated into the Artown website and utilized in many of the Artown marketing materials. The selected artist will be required to sign 300 posters for Artown.

This artist will be contracted at a non-negotiable rate of $3,000 and will receive 100 posters from Artown for non-commercial use for the sole purpose of promoting the artist's work.

Submit no more than two concepts designed specifically to promote the July 2013 Artown festival. This is not a call for a designed poster. Artown contracts with a graphic designer to create all the marketing materials including the poster from the selected art piece.

The deadline is 5pm Nov. 30.

For more info, contact (775) 322.1538 or office@renoisartown.com.

Where is your favorite place to play in the snow and why?

Job burnout a growing issue with workers

By Ellen Jean Hirst, Chicago Tribune

While the economy is flashing signs of a rebound, it’s a markedly different story for a growing number of workers, according to a recent survey.

More workers than ever report feeling burned out by their jobs, according to a ComPsych Corp. survey of nearly 2,000 employees conducted during September that sought to measure stress levels and their effects in the workplace.

“We’re seeing a growing trend of employee burnout,” said Richard Chaifetz, chief executive of Chicago-based ComPsych, a global provider of employee assistance programs. “It’s a product of the sputtering economy – companies continue to be slow to hire, and prolonged employee stress inevitably turns into decreased performance, unfortunately.”

During the recession, companies shed millions of jobs as they strove to cut costs and shore up the bottom line. But that work didn’t go away with the elimination of the position, it just got shifted, pushing workers to do more with less,

workplace experts said.

According to the report:

•Nearly 1 out of 4 employees say their top work priority is just being present at work

•About 2 in 3 workers report high levels of stress with extreme fatigue and a feeling of being out of control.

•More than half of those surveyed said they miss one to two days of work per year because of stress.

Sherrie Bourg Carter, a clinical psychologist who focuses on employee burnout, said she hears complaints from burned-out clients firsthand. Those who say showing up for a job is their highest priority are at high risk, she said.

“Each employee has increasingly demanding workloads,” said Bourg Carter, of Fort Lauderdale, Fla. “The work still has to be done, but employers want to do it with fewer employees. One person is often doing the work of two people and probably without any support staff.”

Herbert Freudenberger was the first to alert the world to the dangers of “burnout” in 1974 when he coined the term in his book, “Burnout: The High Cost of High Achievement.” He described burnout as a complete lack of motivation or reaction to incentives.

Since then, the term has become a catchphrase for maniacally stressful days. But burnout is a chronic problem, said Bourg Carter, author of “High Octane Women: How Superachievers Can Avoid Burnout.” It starts with mild stresses that most people experience, but if nothing is done to manage the stress, it can become unbearable.

“The actual state of burnout is not just a bad day or a bad week,” Bourg Carter said. “It’s when a person is so consumed with symptoms that they can’t function.”

Burnout usually sneaks up on people, she said.

“All of a sudden you’re exhausted, you’re feeling cynical and unattached,” Bourg Carter said, “and you think ‘What happened to me?'”

In addition to extra work, a lack of job satisfaction can exacerbate feelings of burnout, said Jennifer Schramm of the Society for Human Resource Management. Because middle-age workers have delayed retirement, Schramm said, younger employees feel like they can’t advance. Less than 50 percent of workers said they were satisfied with their career development in the society’s most recent job satisfaction survey.

“It could have a domino effect down the ladder where everyone feels a little bit stuck,” said Schramm, the society’s manager of workplace trends and forecasting. “A lot of the millennials really are having a hard time.”

Those most likely to burn out are those who work excessively without breaks or outlets for stress, said Thomas Donohoe, who researches work-life balance at East Tennessee State University.

But there’s hope, even for voluntary — and involuntary — workaholics.

Donohoe said talking about stressors with trusted friends or family is a good place to start. Other options include taking five minutes to eat or do simple exercises at the office, going for a brief walk or taking a catnap on the subway with a phone alarm set.

“Most people expect their brain to constantly be on,” Bourg Carter noted, “but if your brain is constantly on, it will eventually shut itself off.”

Cole returns, Conner joins South Tahoe City Council

By Susan Wood

In line with the early absentee counts, South Lake Tahoe voters tapped community jack-of-all-trades JoAnn Conner and incumbent Hal Cole to lead the town over the next four years. With all precincts reporting by 12:40am, Cole received 26 percent of the vote with 1980 ballots cast. Conner seized the second seat with 1928 votes at 25.3 percent.

The other three candidates: marketer Austin Sass, incumbent Bruce Grego and businessman Clinton Schue followed behind with 20.2 percent, 18.7 percent and 8.9 percent of the vote, respectively.

A high vote-by-mail turnout characterized the evening for El Dorado County. Results are unofficial and as always are expected to be finalized in the next few weeks.

For South Lake Tahoe, 52.9 percent of the city's 9,248 registered voters cast their ballots for their favorites of the five candidates.



Hal Cole



JoAnn Conner

The race showed a little bit of everything – from the standard debate circuit to a last-minute, anti-candidate campaign with signs reading “No Sass,” a measure of no confidence to Sass’s support of the Loop Road project, one of several proposals the candidates will need to wrestle with in the near future. With new ideas coming from a creative, resourceful city manager in a post redevelopment agency era, the entire council will have its hands full in terms of responsibility. Projects and plans remain pending from Stateline to the Y in a city with much of its focus on tourism.

Cole, who runs a construction company, would be going on his fifth term with a city struggling to still define itself in the last decade. Even as a newcomer, Conner has a long history with the city working in fields ranging from social work to education.

Cole and Conner share several things in common, with one being a desire to put recreation as a focus of the city.

“I think this recreation master plan doesn’t sound like much to some people, but it’s a big deal. We’ve been skirting around this issue for a long time,” Cole said.

He wants the city to re-embrace the phrase being the all-year playground.

Conner knows developing recreation assets and then promoting them is critical to developing a better economy.

Another big issue with her is to immediately work on talking

to businesses that would be good to relocate here that would bring jobs for people who already live in the area.

Cole served three four-year terms, took two years off and is now starting the second term of this stint. He tells *Lake Tahoe News* this will be his last run. After all, he turns 64 next month. But there is more work to do, he says.

“I’ve had a great career. I’m really excited with [City Manager] Nancy [Kerry]. She has more energy than I’ve seen in anybody,” Cole said.

He said he has great hopes with Kerry and Conner.

Conner is ready to get to work, but is realistic in her approach.

“I think the first thing I need to do is learn more, study the budget, meet with people who already offered to share their insights so I can learn more,” Conner told *Lake Tahoe News* early Wednesday morning.

The councilmembers-elect will join Angela Swanson, Tom Davis and Claire Fortier. The latter may soon be vacating her seat due to family obligations, leaving another possible seat up for grabs. It would likely be filled by appointment.