

Holiday concerts on the South Shore

Lake Tahoe Community College Chorus and Tahoe Choir are putting on A Holiday with a Spice concert on Dec. 2 and Dec. 4.

Also performing will be the children's choir. Marcia Sarosik dancers will be performing "A Charlie Brown Christmas."

The Dec. 2, 7:30pm performance is at Lake Tahoe Community College's theater. The Dec. 4, 3pm show is at St. Theresa Catholic Church in South Lake Tahoe.

Both cost \$12 for adults, \$10 students/seniors.

Zach McAllister – 1990-2016



Zach McAllister and Spooner

Zach McAllister, who grew up on the slopes of Sierra-at-Tahoe,

died unexpectedly Nov. 12, 2016. He was 26.

Zach was born and raised in South Lake Tahoe. He graduated from South Tahoe High School in 2008.

He embraced all things outdoors – skiing, camping, and mountain bike riding in particular.

From the time he was a young boy, Zach knew he wanted to be a paramedic. He went to paramedic school in Michigan and then returned to attend the Lake Tahoe Basin Fire Academy at Lake Tahoe Community College.

In response to the 2010 Haiti earthquake, Zach traveled to Port-au-Prince where he served as a member of the EMPACT Northwest Paramedic Volunteer Team.

He had been a firefighter-paramedic at Northstar Fire Department since 2012. He also worked as a ski patroller at Sierra-at-Tahoe for the past eight years where he was affectionately known as “Zach Mac.” Zach is credited with saving at least two lives on the mountain. His golden retriever, Spooner, is a member of the Sierra Avalanche Dog Program.

A **GoFundMe account** has been set up to help defray costs associated with his death.

Zach is survived by his parents Mark and Susan McAllister; his long-time love, Nina Thompson; a loving extended family; and countless close friends.

A celebration of his life will be at Sierra-at-Tahoe on Dec. 9 at 5pm.

Mortgage debt a growing problem as people age

By Paula Span, New York Times

It was a modest house, a two-bedroom ranch in Arlington, Mass. Jerri and Richard Newman had to stretch to buy it for \$169,000 in 1996, but with his job at Boston's Museum of Fine Arts and her freelance editing, they figured they could swing it.

They took out a 30-year, fixed-rate mortgage. But their son developed mental health disabilities, including a bipolar disorder. To pay for his care, and help compensate for her interrupted career, the Newmans refinanced four times and took out a home-equity loan.

In an earlier era, the Newmans — he's 65; she's 62 — might now be contemplating retirement in a paid-for home. Instead, they've amassed so much mortgage debt, about \$375,000, that they're reluctantly considering selling. "We tried for years to catch up," Jerri Newman said.

Amid the continuing fallout from the housing boom and bust, however, a growing proportion of older homeowners now carries mortgage debt. And the average amount keeps rising, according to two recent studies, which may portend lower standards of living for many retirees.

Read the whole story

Basic tip for driving in snow country

By Tracy Franklin

Winter is upon us as we begin to see our first accumulative snowfall and cold, icy conditions. Every year families travel to South Lake Tahoe for Thanksgiving and Christmas, leading to congested roadways and an increase in pedestrian traffic.

Many of these travelers are foreign to winter weather and do not have much experience driving in icy conditions. The South Lake Tahoe Police Department reminds motorists to be alert and courteous so that everyone can arrive at their destination and enjoy the holiday season with their friends and loved ones.

To help everyone stay safe this holiday season, South Lake Tahoe Police Department recommends the following tips:

- Make sure your tires are properly inflated and the tread is in good condition.
- Check your brakes, lights and windshield wipers to make sure they are functioning properly.
- Warm up your vehicle and make sure your windshield is clear of ice and snow before driving.
- Be alert. Constantly scan the road for hazards and give yourself enough room to react safely.
- Remember, stopping distances can double in rain and triple in snow.
- Minimize distractions, such as turning off or silencing your cell phone.
- Do not use cruise control during wet or snowy road conditions. Cruise control can cause skidding and loss of tire traction in winter conditions.
- Buckle your seat belt! Wearing a seat belt is the best defense to prevent injury and death in a crash. This

includes buckling children into properly installed child safety or booster seats.

- Carry an emergency kit in your trunk for safety, comfort and possible repairs. Ensure properly fitted tire chains in case of severe winter weather.

Tracy Franklin is the spokeswoman for the city of South Lake Tahoe.

Easy care gardening trends for the holidays

By Melinda Myers

Dress up the holidays or give gifts that continue giving throughout the year with these low maintenance gardening trends. Just add a little fun, classic beauty or style to make it even more memorable now and throughout the year.

Terrariums. These mini greenhouses continue to grow in popularity and are perfect for new or timid gardeners. Just plant a few small tropical plants, moisten the soil, close the lid and you have a self-contained growing chamber. Show off your green thumb with a modern, classic or vintage style vessel.

Use the gazebo tabletop terrarium, classic bell jar or other mini garden as a centerpiece for the dining table or buffet. Or create a miniature garden in glass to give as a hostess gift. When the party is over, it's a great memento of a fun holiday gathering.

Succulents. Growing succulents is another low maintenance garden trend that is perfect for busy gardeners during the

hectic holiday season. Just place them in a sunny window and water whenever the soil is dry. It's truly as easy as that.

The small scale cacti and succulents provide a multitude of opportunities for incorporating them into your holiday celebrations. You won't need much space to enjoy the subtle colors and dramatic form of these drought tolerant plants. Just select containers that complement, but don't overpower their charm.

Consider buying a few extras for guests to take home and enjoy for years to come.

But first, use them to dress up the table by making them into place cards for your guests. Simply add a name to the decorative pot. Or display them all together in a copper plant tray, terra cotta saucer or other shallow container to use as a centerpiece throughout the evening. When the party is over, each guest can pick their own plant to take home.

Air plants. Unique and amazing air plants are all the rage and could certainly be described as the definitive easy care plant. Many are native to rain forests where they grow in the canopy of trees, gathering water and nutrients that pass by. No soil is needed for these versatile plants. Just hang them in a bright location and soak in tepid non-softened water once every week or two.

Display them in an open terrarium, shell, or another decorative container. They make great centerpieces or stunning displays.

Pothos, philodendron and ivy. These plants have long been low maintenance favorites of the indoor garden. This year, consider dressing them up for the holidays with sparkling garland, artificial flowers, berries and greens.

Or display them in unique containers, baskets or hangers. Go retro and macramé a colorful hanger for your favorite hanging

basket. Or place the pot in an earthy woven basket, sleek plastic pot or classic round copper wire globe hanging basket. Add some fairy lights for a bit more sparkle on long winter nights.

Make this holiday season warm and memorable with the help of these low maintenance garden trends and plants. You, your family and friends will enjoy their beauty, charm and easy care nature throughout the new year ahead.

Melinda Myers has more than 30 years of horticulture experience and has written more than 20 gardening books, including "Small Space Gardening". Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for Birds & Blooms magazine and was commissioned by Gardener's Supply Company for her expertise to write this article.

Meyers nonprofit cultivates community synergy

By Kathryn Reed

While everybody might not know your name, you still feel comfortable among strangers.

This is Meyers.

It's a community unto itself. It has that sense of place; where you belong to something bigger, but not something so big that you get lost.

Going to South Lake Tahoe is going to town. When people talk about doing so it's almost like a burden. People who live in Meyers are prideful. They feel a little more connected to the

outdoors. They are mountain people.

“We are unincorporated, so we have limited local governance. We are not doing any government stuff, but we are filling a civic pride void,” David Reichel told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Reichel is the vice president of the Meyers Community Foundation. Community is what this nonprofit is all about it.

While the concept of the foundation came about in 2011, it was in 2014 that the group of locals secured its nonprofit, 501(c)3 status. A seven-member all-volunteer board runs the foundation. Other members are Rene Brejc, Kim Wyatt, Brian Levy, Tara Offenbacher, Christian Waskiewicz and Tim Cain.

For the group’s sake, the boundaries of Meyer’s are loosely defined since other parts of unincorporated El Dorado County – like Christmas Valley and Tahoe Paradise – flow into this enclave.

Brejc, Wyatt and Josh Welch started what was the Meyers Business Group in 2011. It morphed into the community foundation. They along with others that year started what has become an annual tradition – the tree lighting at Divided Sky, with Santa arriving via CalStar helicopter and the Lake Valley fire engine all decorated in holiday lights.

The foundation now puts on this event, which this year will be Dec. 2 at 5pm. There is no cost – not even for the popcorn and hot cocoa.

Donations, though, are accepted.

The foundation’s fall event is the gear swap.

“This made sense and fit Meyers. A lot of people have outdoor toys,” Reichel said of the swap.

This is a money-maker for the foundation.

Another fund-raising event was launched this year – the OMG Fun Run in May. It was part serious running up Old Meyers Grade and part fun with people in costumes.

And while the events are all in Meyers and the money is staying there, people from everywhere are encouraged to participate.

The foundation wants to have a pot of money so it can help spur improvements throughout Meyers. People are encouraged to submit grant proposals year round. This year money was provided to help stock fish at Baron Lake at Tahoe Paradise Park and support a rock climbing project.

For more information about the Meyers Community Foundation or to donate to the cause, go **online**.

How to master online shopping

By David Hochman, AARP

You can shop for virtually anything on the Internet, but whether you're browsing for glow-in-the-dark garden gnomes or a 65-inch ultra-HD television, check out the newest price-cutting tricks and tools.

Michelle Madhok, CEO of the fashion news and deals site SheFinds, recommends services such as PricePinx.com to get notified the instant an item you're craving is marked down. She also suggests following your favorite retailers on Facebook and Twitter for early access to sales and markdowns. Another trick: buying discounted gift cards at Gift Card Granny and CardCash. In September, Granny was selling a \$300 Talbot's credit for \$198. "It's silly not to check," Madhok

says.

Don't just Google it. Use comparison engines that are tailored to your shopping whims—for instance, ShopStyle for fashion and home products, and Shopping.com and Bizrate for commodity items such as TVs.

Read the whole story

Less frenzied Black Friday as millennials stay in

By Rachel Abrams, New York Times

If you're in the retail business in the United States, you probably really care about these two things: millennials and Black Friday.

But more and more, these two big drivers of the industry don't mix inside stores — a dynamic that is reshaping one of the country's biggest shopping days.

Young people of all kinds, a coveted group for retailers because of their free-spending ways, are increasingly turning to their computers and phones to do their holiday shopping, spreading out more widely the days they open their wallets. Crowds on Friday, the unofficial kickoff of the holiday shopping season, will tilt older than a few years ago, and also, it appears, more cautious with their money.

Read the whole story

Surviving Thanksgiving: Fight, flight or drink

By Maura Judkis, Washington Post

Every year at Thanksgiving, we're subjected to stories about how to cope with your drunk uncle, your bratty cousin, your grandma with an ax to grind. And every year, at least for those who come from your typical, slightly dysfunctional but lovably kooky family, the idea that we'd need an entire coping strategy to get through one meal seems a bit histrionic.

This year is different.

Hoooboy, do some of us need advice on how to get along with our families after a year like this one. Could we postpone Thanksgiving for another month or so, until we've all cooled down? No? OK then, let's take a deep breath, set out the decorative gourds, and dive in.

Read the whole story

Experts: Best holiday deals closer to Christmas

By Adam Candee, Las Vegas Sun

Setting up a tent and camping for days outside your favorite

big-box retailer for those screaming Black Friday deals sounds like either an adventure or a nightmare.

For those tent-dwellers, experts have some bad news to share: the best holiday shopping values might pop up closer to Christmas this year.

“I think the discounts get larger as you get closer,” said Melina Cordero, head of retail research for the Americas at CBRE, during a conference call on holiday retail trends last week.

Read the whole story