

Burning Man army returns desert to pristine state

By Jenny Kane, Reno Gazette-Journal

A little more than a speck of evidence remains of Black Rock City.

Where about 70,000 people rode lobster-shaped cars, danced witch-like in the moonlight and set up camp for a week straight, now there is only dust. Most of the people that participated in the week of artful libations known as Burning Man packed out their couches, skate parks, igloos, six packs of Bud Light, jungle gyms and crepe makers. They inevitably, though, left behind tidbits of waste.

The reason that leftovers are so trace from this annual hoopla is because of a group of 125 volunteers and workers known as the "Resto" crew among Burners. The Resto, or restoration, team cleaned the earth for two weeks as though tidying a living room before a visit from the in-laws.

Read the whole story

Improv group to perform at LTCC

Off-the-wall comedy will be provided by the improvisation group Random Acts of Improv on Oct. 28 at 7:30pm in Lake Tahoe Community College's Duke Theatre.

This improv group is the resident improvisation company of the

Theatre Arts Department at Lake Tahoe Community College.

This show is for all ages. Entrance is \$5 at the door. Participants who come wearing a costume will receive Halloween candy.

For more information, call 530.541.4660, ext. 240.

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Mercy

Mercy is a beautiful 9-month-old puppy who is very shy, but who loves other dogs.

She will need a patient owner who will help her come out of her shell. Mercy is probably a Black Mouth Cur, which is not a very nice name for a very nice breed. These dogs are very smart dogs who bond closely with their owners. They are also sensitive dogs, and they need a good amount of exercise and attention.

Mercy will need a home with no children under 14 due to her shyness.

Mercy is spayed, microchipped, tested for heart worm, and vaccinated. She is at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many other dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes. Go to the Tahoe animal shelter's Facebook page to see photos and descriptions of all pets at the shelter.

Call 530.573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet.

For spay-neuter assistance for South Tahoe residents, go **online**.

– Karen Kuentz

Women's fund embracing the power of one



**TAHOE WOMEN'S
COMMUNITY FUND**

Giving Together for our Community

Annual membership in the Tahoe Women's Community Fund starts at \$100. For for info, call 530.622.5621 or

go online.

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – One person cannot do as much good as a group of like-minded individuals, but one person can make a difference.

The power of one. That was the theme of the Tahoe Women's Community Fund gala last week at Harveys.

"We talk about the word collective. Our collective power is why we are here," Wendy David told the 170 people in the room. While it was mostly women at the dinner, a few men were in attendance.

David along with Kathy Haven are the co-chairs of the South Shore-based group that was founded in 2015. Their concept is "giving together for our community." It's not a traditional service club. The group raises money, gives it out and has an annual dinner. Email is how they get things done.

Three membership levels are possible, with part of the money going to an endowment.

The areas of need the 200 members identified include:

- Children and youth
- Poverty and housing
- Education and literacy
- Mental health and wellness
- Women's issues
- Environment and community
- No focus.

The plan is to give out grants each year; \$22,000 was given in

2016.



As principal of South Tahoe High School, Ivone Larson oversaw a transformation of the school into a state-of-the-art institution. Photo/LTN file

Educator Ivone Larson, who has lived in South Lake Tahoe since 1980, was the keynote speaker Oct. 12. She came to the United States just before her 7th birthday, not knowing a word of English. It became her fourth language. The family had to leave Brazil for political reasons.

In her classroom in Hollywood she was put in the back of the room facing the wall because she didn't speak the language. She would go home and cry. She began to hate everyone and everything.

She figured it out and by 16 was a full-time student at UCLA. Then she transferred to UC Irvine, where the class sizes were smaller and more to her liking. Her areas of study were criminal justice and mental health.

Larson, like so many others, came to Tahoe thinking it was a

visit and ended up making it her home.

She worked for the El Dorado County Probation Department, went back to school, and then started teaching. She rose through Lake Tahoe Unified School District to where she eventually retired as the assistant superintendent a couple years ago.

How did she achieve all of her successes? “One person believed in me,” she said. “At each and every turn there was someone to motivate me. The power of one person helped guide my life’s trajectory.”

It hasn’t always been easy. Acceptance to change helped, as well as a willingness to learn and to try again. It meant figuring out how to blend work and home. And to this day Larson continues to grow and adapt. She said it’s about making small changes – progress, not perfection.

“How will you use your power of one to make a difference today and every day?” Larson asked as she concluded her talk to a standing ovation.

Truckee’s Paladino, Incline’s Solomon honored by SNC

Sierra Nevada College 2012 grad Jason Paladino has been named alumni of the year for 2016, while trustee Ben Solomon received the Lane Murray Distinguished Alumni Award.

Paladino is a Truckee native and reporter at UC Berkley’s Investigative Reporting Program at the Graduate School of Journalism. This year he earned the Society of Professional Journalists – NorCal 2016 James Madison Freedom of Information

Student Award for his investigation into the Navy's Sea Dragon program. Paladino was also a Livingston Award Finalist and Sigma Delta Chi Awards winner for his work on the project.

Paladino's investigative work, which he began as a Berkeley graduate student, resulted in an NBC Nightly News story entitled "Sea Dragon Down, The Human Cost of the Navy's Most Crash-prone Chopper." Beginning with Navy data, Paladino found that the Navy used the Cold War-era Sea Dragon helicopter for years without proper maintenance and access to replacement parts. Records showed the Sea Dragon was frequently involved in crashes and fires, costing sailors their lives.

While at SNC he was the news editor and then managing editor for the Eagle's Eye, the campus newspaper.

Solomon's history with SNC goes back to its foundation in 1969, when he started as a volunteer professor. He served as the CEO of the college for 25 years, including administrative director (1970-80), president (1980-93 and 2003-05), and chancellor (1993-94). During his tenure, SNC grew from 23 full-time students and three converted buildings to several hundred students and an energy-efficient campus with five buildings.

Money Matters: Pros and cons of a gap year

By Rick Gross

A growing number of U.S. students are taking time after high school to expand their horizons before pursuing further studies. Most students who take a year off, also known as a

“gap year,” use the time to gain real-world work experience, become more involved in volunteer work or learn more about other cultures through traveling.



Rick Gross

While a gap year can be rewarding, the prospect of taking a year off from academics may create some anxiety for you or your child. Asking your child some important questions can help you both get on the same page about whether a gap year makes sense.

What do you want to accomplish by taking a gap year?

First, help determine your child's motivations for wanting to take a gap year. Why is it important?

Then challenge your child to create a specific plan with a goal so his or her time isn't spent watching Netflix or sleeping in. Has your daughter wanted to start her own business? Encourage her to draft a business plan to execute. Does devoting time to charity peak your son's interest? Suggest that he design a project that will make a big difference for an organization.

The more specific your student can be with his or her intentions, the better you both will feel about the open months ahead. Look for websites and organizations dedicated to helping students embark on a meaningful and productive gap year. Or encourage your child to interview several people who have completed gap years to learn about their experiences. Have your student review their plans with a trusted teacher or

guidance counselor to get an outside perspective.

Can you afford to take a gap year?

If your child was accepted to the college of his or her dreams, check to see whether the school has a gap year policy. Some colleges will accommodate requests for deferral and save any scholarships your student has earned for their return. Others may reduce the scholarship or require your child to reapply. Sit down together and discuss how to best finance his or her gap year.

Calculate the price tag of a gap year together to determine if it's within financial reach. To raise additional funds, suggest that your child save as much as possible, fundraise or secure a second job over the summer. In some cases, asking for financial support from a family member or applying for grants and scholarships may make sense.

Can you afford not to take a gap year?

The gap year can be invaluable if your student is uncertain about what school to attend or which major to pursue. Time away from academics can also allow him or her to refresh and recharge, so your student enters college ready to focus on the future. It can be expensive to attend college and pay for coursework that ultimately doesn't lead to a satisfying career path.

Students who take a year off to work or travel give themselves a chance to mature and also learn the value of a dollar. Adult responsibilities loom in the future, making a gap year after high school quite possibly a "now or never" proposition.

Taking a gap year isn't the right option for every student. If your child is excited for college or if it makes sense financially to continue with his or her studies right away, keep in mind that college will provide ample opportunities for new experiences.

Rick Gross is a financial advisor and private wealth advisor with Ameriprise Financial Services in South Lake Tahoe.

Vail's CEO distributes \$2M to charities

Sizable donations from the chief executive officer of Vail Resorts will benefit children on the South and North Shores of Lake Tahoe.



Rob Katz

CEO Rob Katz and his wife, Elana Amsterdam, founder of Elana's Pantry, made personal contributions totaling \$2 million to 12 nonprofit organizations in the communities where the company operates. Each of the contributions will be directed toward programs that support the welfare and education of children in these local communities.

"The success of our local communities brings a number of unique challenges that require our focus and attention – none more important than helping kids and families who are most vulnerable. Elana and I feel fortunate to be able to provide this support to these outstanding non-profits to allow them to continue their great work," Katz said in a statement.

The Boys & Girls Club in South Lake Tahoe will receive \$125,000. The money will cover the full cost of 50 children attending the club for an entire year, and provides the organization with \$50,000 in seed funding to launch a campaign for a new home.

The Boys & Girls Club in North Lake Tahoe also will receive \$125,000. This donation will support the expansion of the organization's program in Truckee to address youth and academic achievement, as well as to provide a safe place for teens to go. The program currently serves 320 kids per day at Kings Beach and 105 kids each day at Truckee. With this gift, 75 more children will be able to have access to the program for three years.

60 kids needed for 'Rumpelstiltskin' performance

Missoula Children's Theater will be back to Tahoe the week of Oct. 17.

Auditions for "Rumpelstiltskin" are Monday at Tahoe Valley Elementary School's multipurpose room from 4-6pm. Plan to stay for the full two hours. Some of the cast members will be asked to stay for a rehearsal immediately following the audition.

There are roles for up to 60 children. Assistant directors will also be cast to aid in rehearsals throughout the week, and to take on backstage responsibilities. Students in kindergarten (must be 5) through 12th grade may audition. No advance preparation is necessary.

Rehearsals will take place all week from 4-8:30pm depending on

the role. All children who are cast must be able to attend all rehearsals for their role.

“Rumpelstiltskin” will be presented Oct. 22 at Tahoe Valley Elementary School at 3pm and 5:30pm. Admission is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children and seniors.

Auditions are free. If cast, there will be a fee of \$50 per child to participate. A limited number of scholarships are available; call Tahoe Arts Project leader Peggy Blowney at 530.542.3632.

Environmental writer to give talk at LTCC

Environmental writer and humorist Michael Branch will give a free talk at Lake Tahoe Community College on Oct. 20 at 8pm in the Roberta Mason Library.

Books will be available for purchase and signing.

For more than a decade, Branch has been writing about life in Nevada’s Great Basin Desert. In his latest book, “Raising Wild”, he offers an intimate exploration of the western high desert, a wild and extreme land of caliche and juniper, where pronghorn antelope run and mountain lions stalk, and where wildfires and snowstorms threaten in equal measure.

Branch is the author of more than 200 essays, articles, and reviews, and he has hosted more than 250 public readings and lectures. Branch is also professor of literature and environment in the English Department at UNR where he co-founded the nation’s first graduate program in literature and

State of mental health and facilities in Tahoe

Publisher's note: *This is one of several stories about mental health issues in the Lake Tahoe Basin that will be running through October. The other stories may be accessed from the Home page under Special Projects, then click on Mental Health.*

By Linda Fine Conaboy

Living at beautiful Lake Tahoe and the lake's surrounding areas, where some of the most dazzling scenery in the world is always accessible, should contribute to a stress-free existence not to mention a well-balanced, mentally fit and happy population, right?

Partially right. It appears that living in stunning surroundings does not necessarily guarantee a cure for what ails us. And to compound that, there is a great divide when it comes to serving people with mental illness as opposed to those who have a physical ailment such as a sore throat, although physical and mental health cannot truly be separated.

Medical care for folks with mental health needs within the Tahoe basin, it seems, has long been on the decline, at least in the area of study that included South Lake Tahoe, El Dorado, Douglas, Washoe and Placer counties. However, new and concerned people have recently relocated to the basin, recognized the situation and are doing their best to rectify

it.

Caring people like Jeanne Nelson and her husband, Alan, who are Family to Family instructors for the El Dorado County branch of the National Alliance on Mental Illness or NAMI, the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness, are two of the bright spots, doing their best to bring the situation to light.



The following is a list of some of the mental health resources available in and for residents of the Lake Tahoe Basin and Truckee:

- Nevada County Crisis Line – 530.885.2300
- Nevada County Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 530.885.2300
- Nevada County Adult and Children Line – 530.582.7803
- Placer County Adult Mental Health Services – 530.581.4054
- Placer County Children's Mental Health Services – 866.293.1940
- Barton Community Health Center – 530.543.5623
- Barton Psychiatry – 775.589.8946

- Tahoe Safe Alliance domestic and sexual violence/child abuse
Kings Beach – 530.546.7804
Truckee – 530.582.9117
Incline Village – 775.298.0010
- North Tahoe Family Resource Center
Kings Beach – 530.546.0952
- Telehealth Adult Psychiatry – 530.543.5867
- A Balanced Life – 530.544.1748
- Carson Counseling and Supportive Services – 775.687.4195
- El Dorado County Mental Health – 530.573.7970
- El Dorado County Alcohol and Drug Program – 530.573.7959
- Family Resource Center – 530.542.0740
- Hope Lutheran Church – 530.541.1975
- Live Violence Free – 530.544.2118
- NAMI El Dorado County South Lake Tahoe – 650.740.5776
- Sierra Child & Family Services – 530.541.2111
- South Lake Tahoe Drug Free Coalition – 530.541.2445
- St. Theresa Church – 530.544.3533
- Tahoe Turning Point – 530.541.4594
- Tahoe Youth & Family Services – 530.541.2445
- Each Mind Matters at www.eachmindmatters.org
- Psychiatric Health Facility – 530.621.6210
- Spanish Wellness Support Group – 530.542.4912
- Narcotics Anonymous – 530.541.4100

- Alcoholics Anonymous – 530.541.1243
- Carson-Tahoe Behavioral Services
46-bed facility – 775.445.7350
24-hour crisis line – 775.445.7350
Senior Pathways (age 50-plus) –
775.445.8181
- Willow Springs – Children's and
teen's residential treatment center
in Reno – 775.858.3303
- West Hills in Reno 95-bed
residential treatment center –
800.242.0478
- Northern Nevada Adult Mental Health
Treatment Center 70-plus beds –
775.688.2001
- Tele-Care El Dorado County
Psychiatric Health Facility in
Placerville 16 beds – 530.621.6213
- Sutter Hospital in Sacramento 69
beds – 916.386.3620
- Sierra Vista Hospital in Sacramento
120 beds – 916.288.0300
- Heritage Oaks Hospital in Auburn
125 beds – 916.489.3336
- Dignity, in-patient mental health
services in Woodland – 530.662.3961

24-hour crisis lines:

- El Dorado County Mental Health –
530.544.2219
- Live Violence Free – 530.544.4444
- Tahoe Youth & Family Services –
800.870.8937
- National Alliance on Mental Illness
(NAMI) – 800.950.6264
- National Suicide Prevention Hotline
– 800.273.8255

“Primary care physicians must incorporate mental health screening into their standard of care,” said Jeanne Nelson, adding that “families need to openly discuss mental health in the same manner as going to the dentist.

“Preventative care and sharing family histories of addiction and mental health issues are a must to help encourage early intervention. Stigma prevents people from seeking help; it also makes individuals feel they can get better on their own.”

Although providers exist, knowing how to navigate through the system can be daunting. Many people, Nelson said, drive long distances to Sacramento, Roseville or Reno for treatment, because in-patient services simply do not exist within the basin.

She added, this is what comes with living in a beautiful, rural area, a sentiment put forth by nearly everyone who talked to *Lake Tahoe News* about the state of mental health at Tahoe and environs.

Sgt. Michael Seligsohn, coordinating supervisor with the El Dorado County Sheriff’s Office Crisis Intervention Team lamented that we are definitely facing a mental health care crisis in California and nationwide. He also echoed Nelson’s statement that living in a rural area can have drawbacks.

The CIT is a group of deputies assigned to the patrol division who are specially trained to recognize and understand mental illness and brain disorders. They are familiar with the resources available to support individuals in need and they are also trained to understand the impact on families.

“Acute psych beds are few and far between,” Seligsohn told *Lake Tahoe News*. “Mental health clinics that are available have very restrictive policies about whom they may treat based on diagnosis and insurance. Those with multiple problems, such as a psychiatric diagnosis, drug or alcohol issues and/or traumatic brain injury, may fall through the cracks in the

system as the issues that they have are not all treated by the same clinician or even in the same clinical setting.

“To a real degree, the geographic isolation of the Tahoe basin from major metropolitan areas exacerbates the problem. As an example,” he said, “the nearest in-patient psych facilities are in Placerville and Reno. One receiving treatment in either of these communities is a long way from home and support. Once separated from these facilities, follow-up with the treating psychiatrist may be difficult for some, and impossible for one of limited means.”

Seligsohn was upbeat as he described some of the services available at El Dorado County Mental Health including the Outpatient Clinic, and the Wellness Center and Intensive Case Management.

The same services exist on the West Slope of El Dorado County. In addition, in Placerville there's the Telecare El Dorado Psychiatric Health Facility, a 24/7 community-based, locked intensive inpatient psychiatric treatment program for individuals 18 and older who experience an acute mental health crisis.

“A key factor,” Seligsohn said, “is to understand that while there are beds, they are few. As an example, if detained in South Lake Tahoe on a 5150 (involuntary psychiatric hold), you can be confined to a location in California. It is not unheard of for patients to sit for days or weeks in a non-psychiatric setting, not receiving acute psych care, while waiting for a bed. On many occasions, beds have been found in the San Francisco Bay Area or even further.”

Seligsohn said that surprisingly, he is not aware of a facility that can provide psychiatric as well as medical care (wound treatment for example), concurrently. He added that the El Dorado County Sheriff's Office is committed to the idea that people ought not to be incarcerated for symptoms of

mental illness.

Unfortunately, mental illness does not confine itself to only adults—it plays no favorites when it comes to age.

Cheyenne Lane is the supportive services Coordinator for Tahoe Youth & Family Services, which includes a drop-in center and a street outreach program providing services to runaway, homeless, street, couch surfing and high-risk youth up to age 24. This facility is in South Lake Tahoe at 1021 Fremont Ave.

In addition, clientele can be aged-out foster kids, those from dysfunctional homes (where the streets are actually safer), youth with mental health issues and/or substance abuse problems, LGBT youth, parenting youth and simply those who have fallen through the cracks, a term used as a catchall within the mental health community.

“We provide a full continuum of services that include emergency shelter, 24-hour crisis line, case management, individual and family counseling, food, clothing, showers, laundry and other survival items,” she told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Additionally, Lane said her organization aims to improve youngsters’ safety, well-being, self-sufficiency and permanent connections to caring adults while maximizing their potential to become productive citizens of the community.

“We conduct weekly outreach to our schools, street outreach to local youth hangouts, post flyers and we are on social media,” Lane said.

In Truckee, Tahoe Forest Hospital serves a wide population and annually updates a list of local behavioral and mental health providers. This directory can be found by accessing the hospital’s **website**, scrolling down to Quick Links then clicking on Mental Health Crisis Information.

In Placer and Nevada counties, Phebe Bell, the program manager

for county Health and Human Services said part of her department's activities revolve around providing mental health services to people on Medi-Cal.

"I think we are effectively serving the people who meet these criteria. We provide therapy, psychiatry and case management as needed to people who need our services. The challenge comes for people who don't meet those criteria," Bell said.

Bell agreed with Sgt. Seligsohn, saying in general, people in rural communities struggle with mental health issues in some specific ways. "There is more stigma in rural areas about mental illness and about asking for help," she said. "Because our population base is small, we don't have as wide an array of services as are available in urban areas."

She added that like many resort communities, "We tend to have high levels of substance abuse, which can be closely connected to mental illness. I am not sure I would say we have a mental health crisis, but I do believe that we can do more as a community to support the mental health of all of our residents."

Bell said that when Placer and Nevada counties survey the community about health issues that concern them, mental health always ranks at the top of the list. "I think we continue to have room to improve. From reducing stigma around mental illness to improving comprehensive services for everyone, we have plenty of work to do."

Nelson said nationally there is a 50 percent deficit in psychiatrists, but at South Lake Tahoe, this problem is no longer a problem.

"The government recommends that a population of 32,000 have one psychiatrist," she said. "The Lake Tahoe Basin has three, although there are none in Douglas County, but you can use Telepsychiatry if you're chronic or severely disabled." Telepsychiatry can be accessed at Barton Community Health

Center. Barton's main phone number is 530.541.3420.

Nelson commented that there is a striking difference in mental health services between Douglas County and the Lake Tahoe Basin. "Nevada has a long way to go in education, access and stigma," she said.

As an example, Nelson pointed to the new and innovative kiosks to be found around South Lake Tahoe, crammed full of information about mental health. Each kiosk highlights local mental health services and educational materials printed in both English and Spanish.

They are at:

- Barton Community Health Center Lobby – 2201 South Ave.
- Barton Family Medicine lobby – 1090 Third St.
- Barton Memorial Hospital's Emergency Department – 2170 South Ave.
- El Dorado County Probation and Sheriff's offices – 360 Johnson Blvd.
- Lake Tahoe Community College in the Commons Area – 1 College Way
- South Lake Tahoe Library – 1000 Rufus Allen Road.

The burgeoning mental health situation at Lake Tahoe is in actuality one which many communities face. The area has dedicated people who are aware of the problem, who are trained in the field and who are determined to reign it in.

As Christopher Croft, the executive director of Tahoe Youth & Family Services puts it, "We're seeing more and more of the area service providers and community members collaborate to address the issues ... now, we're all attempting to work together to figure out care programs for community members."