

Conference targets small farmers in Nev.

The 10th annual Nevada Small Farm Conference is for farmers and ranchers, beginning or experienced, rural or urban, and business and community members.

It takes place at the Nugget Casino Resort in Sparks on Feb. 5-6. Early bird registration is \$85 until Jan. 25, and regular registration is \$95.

Topics range from soils, to beekeeping to raising chickens.

Four morning workshops are offered on Feb. 5: permaculture, beekeeping, Farm2Flask and farm hacks. The conference sessions follow the workshops, covering a variety of topics, including fiber and sheep production, pollinators and beneficials, organic farming, harvest to packaging and more.

Workshops and conference sessions will include candid discussions about the challenges facing producers. Lack of infrastructure, competitive pricing and Nevada's high-desert climate are among the major challenges.

For more info, go **online**.

Time management topic of free seminar

North Tahoe Business Association is hosting a free seminar for businesses titled Time Management for Busy People.

It is Feb. 9 from 8-9:30am at the North Tahoe Event Center in Kings Beach.

The seminar is designed to optimize work-life harmony by:

- Identifying time-wasters and reasons for procrastination
- Discovering if you are “addicted to urgency”
- Getting a perspective on what matters most in your life
- Prioritizing what is important and what is urgent
- Uncovering your prime real estate
- Implementing high impact tips to beat the clock
- Exercising integrity in the moment of choice.

The seminar will be taught by business coach and nationally known speaker Laura Moriarty, president of Tahoe Training Partners.

Complimentary continental breakfast is provided to seminar attendees who register before Feb. 5. For more information, call 530.546.9000.

What your new gym doesn't want you to know

By Ana Swanson, Washington Post

If you're thinking more these days about your fitness regimen – or lack thereof – then you're not alone. It's the time of year when many Americans realize they are a little pudgier than they ought to be and resolve to slim down. In other words, it's a money-making time for the gym industry.

Every year, Google searches for gyms spike in January, and membership purchases and foot traffic soar. According to

Gold's Gym, its traffic jumps 40 percent between December and January. But just wait a few weeks – it won't be long before all those good intentions die.

In fact, the gym industry depends on it. Perhaps the most vivid reminder came in a 2014 episode of the podcast Planet Money. Planet Money visited Planet Fitness, one of the biggest gym chains in America. The gym had capacity to hold only about 300 people but had signed up 6,000 total members. Half of the Planet Fitness members don't ever go to their gyms, Planet Money says.

It might seem like kind of a weird business model – a business that succeeds when its customers don't set foot in the door.

Read the whole story

All things snakes on exhibit at Reno museum

Sssnakes Alive is the current exhibit at the Wilbur D. May Museum in Reno. It runs through April 10.

This exhibition is designed to promote understanding and clarify misunderstandings about snakes. Sssnakes Alive focuses primarily on the four types of venomous snakes native to North America: copperhead, cottonmouth, coral, and rattlesnake. It features more than 20 live venomous snakes along with dozens of interactive displays.

Visitors will be able to:

- Walk on a suspension bridge over a pit filled with live rattlesnakes.

- Step into the dark recesses of a rattlesnake winter den.
- Get digested while crawling through a 25-foot model snake.
- Test reflexes in a simulated bite station.
- See the world through infrared snake vision.
- Hold a live snake under the supervision of a snake handler.

Visitors will also discover snakes in world mythology, ancient beliefs and cultural relationships with snakes, snake evolution and biology, the benefits of snakes, and snakebite first aid. The museum will also host a variety of special events throughout the exhibition, including lectures, animal encounters, photo opportunities, kids activities, and more.

The museum is in the Rancho San Rafael Regional Park, 1595 N. Sierra St., Reno. Cost is \$9 adults, \$8 children, and \$8 seniors. For more info, call 775.785.5961.

Sheila Charlene Middlebrook – 1950-2015



Charlene Middlebrook

On Wednesday morning, Dec. 23, 2015, my wife and best friend, Charlene Middlebrook, lost her long and courageous battle with cancer.

As with everything she did, Charlene handled the cancer and a subsequent stroke, with grace, courage, total resolve and of course her humor and her smile, once again being the hero in our family.

Charlene and I met here in Tahoe 35 years ago and soon discovered that we had both grown up in Southern California about two miles apart. We worked hard, played hard, made many friends, raised our two sons and enjoyed every single minute of living in this beautiful place.

During the summers, Charlene took "The Boys" to every trail, lake and stream in the basin, taught them how to ski, coached them in soccer and was an unwavering advocate for their education. There are many, many teachers and counselors in our school district who are more than well aware of Charlene's thoughts on education. The result of that is two very successful and accomplished young men.

Charlene was a hair stylist for almost 40 years and made many great friends with her business. We joked that when I was

doing news at the radio station that about half of my news came from her shop, which she shared with her friends, Joanne, Roxanne, Pam and Leo.

Charlene was preceded in death by her parents, Ada Lee and Charlie Henderson of Paramount, Calif. She is survived by her beloved sons, Devin (Ashley) and Grant (Kelsey), and my son, Matt (Lisa) and my daughter, Monica (Alex), and our grandchildren; Julia, Brady, Grace, Claire, and Della. She also leaves behind her sister, Lynette of Irvine, Calif., and her brother Rick (Margaret) of Hollydale, cousin and best friend Judy Lampshire of Carson City and her husband, Mike, and their children and grandchildren.

We want to thank the staff of Renown Cancer Institute, but most important, the staff, physicians and nurses of Barton Memorial Hospital and Barton Skilled Nursing. Their care, dedication and kindness added time and quality to Charlene's life. We know that she touched your hearts as you touched hers. Special thanks to Angie, Jill, Christine, Gil, June, Kelly, Heather, Ibeth, Patrick and Amy, and Jason Collin for always being there for us. You will always be like family. I also want to thank Barton Hospice for getting us through Charlene's final day. And a very special thanks to the man who could always get Charlene to smile through this, our friend Dr. Henning Mehrens.

Charlene always saw the good in everything and everyone. I will miss her kindness, her strength, her love, her humor, her smile ... and those incredibly beautiful green eyes.

Please remember Charlene by donating whatever you can to the American Cancer Society.

We will not have services at this time, but may have a memorial this summer.

– Paul Middlebrook

Unlimited vacation time a growing trend

By Steve Twedt, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Unlimited vacation time sounds like a pretty good job perk.

This year, social media site LinkedIn joined the still-small-but-growing roster of companies offering employees as much time off as they'd like, with the understanding that the coupon is good only if they get their work done.

Estimates about how many companies offer open-ended vacations run in the 2 to 4 percent range, mostly small startups but including none other than General Electric, which earlier this year began offering unlimited vacation time to many of its executives.

Besides being a strong recruitment and retention tool, such policies can free companies from any unused vacation pay liability if they currently allow vacation days to accrue. Proponents say the policies also bestow a sense of "ownership" among employees that cultivates a more committed workforce.

[Read the whole story](#)

Country sensation Urban

coming to Stateline

The first booking for the annual Harveys Outdoor Concert Series at Stateline has been announced. Country superstar Keith Urban will be taking the stage July 29 at 7pm.

Opening for Urban will be Brett Eldredge and Maren Morris.

Tickets range from \$69.50 to \$125.50, plus service fees.

Urban's RipCORD World Tour 2016 will debut on the heels of his soon to be released eighth studio album release of the same name, which has already produced two singles – his Grammy nominated, 19th No. 1 song, "John Cougar, John Deere, John 3:16" and its second single "Break On Me."

Tourism official: Nev. is more than casinos

By Las Vegas Sun

The Strip is like a one-night stand for many young travelers. It's good for a quick visit, but it's not the only memory they want of a Western adventure.

Millennials with cash to travel want interesting and unique stories as vacation memorabilia, said Bethany Drysdale, public relations director for TravelNevada, formerly known as the state Division of Tourism.

TravelNevada is in charge of promoting the Strip but also

Nevada's innumerable ghost towns, mountain ranges and natural attractions. The agency is working to adapt to changing media markets and different tourist demographics.

Drysdale said the needs of travelers have changed; the audience has changed. "We were targeting baby boomers – people with more money and free time – with traditional ads. That has changed with the rise of the millennial mindset. If it's Instagram worthy, it is a trip millennials will take. We are doing more social media and more direct-to-consumer outreach. We do Instagram takeovers, selecting someone with a really good audience, letting them post on our account when they are on a trip. In 2014, we had 700 Instagram followers. We hit 10,000 this past November."

[Read the whole story](#)

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Big

Big is a beautiful, tall 1-year-old German shepherd. He is a sweet boy who would love to go to training classes. He loves to play with other dogs.

Like many German Shepherds, he is very smart and a bit aloof until he gets to know you, but then he is very affectionate.

Big is neutered, microchipped, tested for heart worm, and vaccinated. He 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.

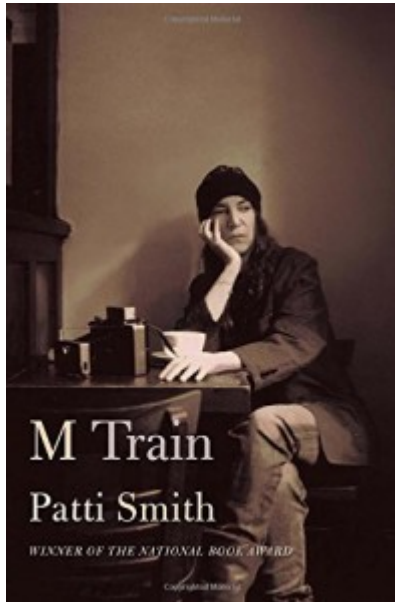
Call 530.573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet.

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

– Karen Kuentz

Book review: 2 inspired takes on survival

By Kim Wyatt



"M Train"

By Patti Smith

Knopf, 272 pages, \$25 hardcover

One-line review: Transcendent.

It seemed fitting to begin "M Train" by Patti Smith at a diner, the kind with Formica counters and only 10 items on the menu. Smith is a diner and—more significantly—coffee aficionado, so I felt a kinship with her before I even cracked the spine.

Eating alone at a diner with a book is a pleasure for those for whom it is a choice. "M Train" is an impressionistic meditation on many things, but most skillfully on navigating grief. Rock n' Roll Hall of Famer Smith won the National Book Award in 2010 for her memoir "Just Kids," chronicling the writer's early years in New York and her relationship with photographer Robert Mapplethorpe. This book is an incandescent departure, both elegy and ode to the powers of reflection.

What makes a memoir compelling is not just an author's skill with language, or the series of events that make up a life; it's their lens, the particular way in which they see the

world. Who else goes to a prison in French Guiana for their honeymoon, and later joins the Continental Drift Club? Smith is a person worth traveling with. You won't be staying at the Best Western and hanging at the pool. Her obsessions turn into journeys, and we are along for the ride.

The book begins with a dream and an unusual guide, a sardonic cowpoke. Don't let this put you off; by the end of the book we are looking forward to his visitations. Although "M Train" is steeped in loss—her husband, mother, brother and beloved café—each luminous chapter is a stop in which Smith departs to capture writers and artists who have guided her throughout her life. This aspect of the book was like catnip to me.

Smith finds magic and mysticism in books. Her mother began gifting her with books at a young age, and they have exerted lifelong power and influence. Roberto Bolano, Virginia Woolf, William Burroughs, Sylvia Plath, Jean Genet, Paul Bowles and, to my delight, a roster of Japanese authors including Mishima and Murakami are among those who appear in Smith's travels. At each rendezvous, she visits a home, grave, or an object; the effect is not morbid, but rather, insight into the cumulative passions that make up a life. Polaroid photos add to the spell cast by each chapter, and I soon found myself contemplating my own relationships with books and people.

Although grounded by ritualistic visits to her café for coffee and writing, Smith is powered by her fascinations, and there are many. But she's also unfailingly human: She loves detective shows; when Lennie Briscoe on "Law & Order" falls off the wagon, she worries about him. She's a cat lady. We see her hemming pants and sewing curtains and listening to Detroit Tiger ball games on the radio with her husband. But she also has friends named Ace and Dice, and when she chokes on a fish bone in Mexico, she sticks it in her pocket to consider later.

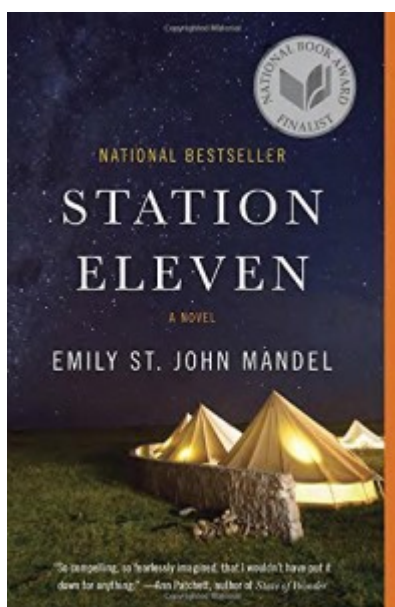
I loved Smith's minimalist gustatory tour of New York: coffee, a slice of pizza, more coffee, a tin of sardines, coffee. And

her uniform: Dungarees, T-shirt, long coat and watch cap, an affectionate object from her childhood. She doesn't have time for fussy clothes, nor, apparently, vegetables. Not complicating her life with busy food or dictates about fashion, she frees her mind for other pursuits.

But her reflections aren't navel gazing: they open up the world to us as well. When she literally buys into a young man's dream of owning a café at the shore, you recognize the impulse to connect and feel alive, a remarkable impulse after a life of loss. But isn't that the story for all of us?

"The transformation of the heart is a wondrous thing, no matter how you land there," she writes. And she does it again and again.

When grief does surface in the book, it's random and devastating, just like in real life. It might happen at a stop sign or while crossing the street; it comes mid-flight, and the tears are already there. Yet "M Train" inspires. Smith, at almost seventy years old, shares with us insights that come only through a lifetime of contemplation. You could do much worse than spend an afternoon in a café reading "M Train."



"Station Eleven"

By Emily St. John Mandel

Vintage; 352 pages, \$15.95 paperback

One-line review: A wildly inventive spin on what makes life worth living.

We're plunged into the action on the first page of "Station Eleven." It's mid-production in Toronto during "King Lear," and something terrible happens. And then something even more terrible happens. Emily St. John Mandel has crafted a weird and spellbinding tale, a fresh take on dystopia that elevates the human spirit while skewering celebrities and making us grateful for the here and now.

Twenty years after a virus has unpeopled the world, the Traveling Symphony, a roaming band of actors and musicians, brings Shakespeare to makeshift towns. "Survival is insufficient" is the troupe's motto, a nod to nostalgic memories of "Star Trek: Voyager," but more so to the power of art. The worst has already happened, and we enter a world with nature intact: people routinely hunt for deer and rabbit in the woods, build fires for heat. Those left have figured out how to survive.

When a prophet—why is there always a prophet? Even *after* the end of the world?—threatens the ensemble's small hold on survival, they move toward an airport in Michigan where they find the Museum of Civilization, which contains the objects we loved, like iPhones and stilettos, that no longer serve any purpose.

As the world collapsed, many planes were diverted to this landing strip in Michigan; passengers disembarked, and there they remained. A plane at the end of the runway, which landed but remained sealed, is a bone-chilling reminder of what has transpired and all that has been lost.

Author Mandel so skillfully weaves the plots and subplots that I didn't see the big reveal coming, as anticlimactic as it was. And in skewering our love of celebrity, she reveals to us

our desire for human connection. A neat trick.

Sentences, one by one, filled me with dread. Mandel must have been positively gleeful when writing them, and she certainly has a knack for the cliffhangers at the end of the chapters. Characters are complex, mostly original and fully realized. The subplots between them shift back and forth in time, and I found myself equally enjoying both worlds, pre-and post-apocalypse.

Although entertaining, weird and original, there is an occasional heavy-handedness that seems more authorial than character-based; it's almost as if the author didn't trust us to know what we'd miss in a world gone bad. Even so, if you need some good escapist fiction, "Station Eleven" is more fantastic than disturbing, in the end, making us look at what we already have with new eyes.

Kim Wyatt is the owner of the independent press Bona Fide Books.