

‘Last Days of Judas Iscariot’ at LTCC

The world’s most infamous betrayer gets his day in court at Lake Tahoe Community College in March. “The Last Days of Judas Iscariot” is an adult, thought-provoking play by Stephen Adly Guirgis.

Set in a time-bending, darkly comic world between heaven and hell, “The Last Days of Judas Iscariot” re-examines the plight and fate of the New Testament’s most infamous and unexplained sinner. The play is set in Hope, a contemporary urban city on the lower east side of Purgatory. An agnostic defense attorney hopes to get a reprieve for Judas, who is so overwhelmed by guilt that he cannot speak in his own defense. Judas’ life and final acts are dissected in the courtroom, with a parade of witnesses that includes hip-hop and street-talking saints, Pontius Pilate, St. Peter, Mother Teresa, Mary Magdalene, Sigmund Freud, and even a jaded Satan.

Performances are March 13, 14, 19, 20, and 21 at 7:30pm, with Sunday matinees on March 15 and 22 at 2pm. Tickets are \$10 general admission, and \$5 for seniors, groups of eight or more, and students with a valid student ID. Tickets may be purchased in advance at LTCC’s bookstore Monday through Thursday, 10am-7:30pm and Friday 9am-2:30pm starting March 2. The Duke Theatre Box Office will be open for ticket sales one hour before each performance.

For more information about this production, call 530.541.4660, ext. 207.

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Freddie

Freddie is a 7-year-old gray tabby Abyssinian mix who came here with his friend Zombie, who is a pretty 10-year-old silver tiger mix, when their owner went into the hospital. They are a really nice bonded pair who would prefer to be the only pets in their new home. They qualify for our senior for seniors discount.

Freddie and Zombie are spayed/neutered, microchipped, tested for FIV, and vaccinated. They are 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

Monopoly keeps growing after 80 years

By Allison Prang, Bloomberg

How do you keep a Depression-era board game like Monopoly growing after 80 years? Keep giving people a reason to buy a new one.

That's been the strategy of Hasbro Inc., which has created hundreds of versions of the game in a bid for repeat shoppers. Special editions of Monopoly cover everything from the New England Patriots to "The Walking Dead" TV show. The best-selling variation currently on Amazon.com is based on Walt Disney Co.'s "Frozen."

Monopoly's ceaseless reinvention has helped bolster demand in a era when kids are engrossed in smartphones and tablets. Sales of the product have climbed more than 15 percent in the past three years, and lately it's been outperforming the rest of Hasbro's board-game business. A key driver: a 2013 token contest that let people vote out one of Monopoly's game pieces and choose a new one to take its place. After intense lobbying online, the cat replaced the iron.

Monopoly, which celebrates its 80th birthday next month, is a bright spot in Hasbro's sluggish games category.

Read the whole story

2 authors to give talk at LTCC

Novelist Gayle Brandeis and short story writer Dimitri Keriotis will read selections from their works, answer audience questions, and sign copies of their books, which will be available for sale on March 5 at 7pm at Lake Tahoe Community College.

Brandeis is the author of “Fruitflesh: Seeds of Inspiration for Women Who Write”, “The Book of Dead Birds”, which won Barbara Kingsolver’s Bellwether Prize for Fiction of Social Engagement, the sequel “The Book of Live Wires, Self Storage”, and “Delta Girls”. She teaches in the MFA program in creative writing at Antioch University, and is currently distinguished visiting professor/writer in residence at Sierra Nevada College in Incline Village.

Keriotis’ debut collection of short stories, “The Quiet Time”, was released in 2014. Keriotis was an instructor in LTCC’s English Department, and now teaches English at Modesto Junior College and co-coordinates the High Sierra Institute. He and his family live in the Sierra Nevada foothills.

LTCC’s Writers’ Series is committed to providing a cultural outlet for students and the community by hosting free readings, discussions, craft talks and workshops with nationally known, award-winning authors, as well as poetry slams, open mic nights and student readings.

‘The Vagina Monologues’ returns to Tahoe

“The Vagina Monologues” returns for its 13th year in South Lake Tahoe on March 6.

The cast is made up of a diverse group of community members including students, mothers, daughters, sisters, new-to-the-stage and seasoned performers.

V-Day is a global activist movement to end violence against women and girls, by raising funds and awareness. Productions like this and other V-Day benefit events organized by volunteer activists take place around the world, educating millions of people about the reality of violence against women and girls. The award-winning play “The Vagina Monologues” is based on V-Day founder/playwright Eve Ensler’s interviews with more than 200 women. With humor and grace the production celebrates women’s sexuality and strength.

Doors open at 7pm at Lake Tahoe Golf Course in Meyers. The show starts at 8pm. Tickets are \$20. There will be a wine tasting and tapas pairing from 6:30-7:30pm for \$25. Must have show ticket to attend.

Proceeds benefit Live Violence Free, Tahoe Youth & Family Services and Zawadisha. Black Jack Taxi will be offering 25 percent off all rides to and from the event. Tickets are available online.

Playing the Oscar odds with a bettor's mind-set

By David Leonhardt, New York Times

The Academy Awards ceremony will emphasize the suspense of the unknown on Sunday night. But Hollywood insiders are well aware that many nominees have little chance of winning – and know who those nominees are.

Not only will the award for best picture most likely go to “Birdman” or “Boyhood,” but the best director award also seems destined for one of those two films. Eddie Redmayne (“The Theory of Everything”) will probably win best actor, though Michael Keaton (“Birdman”) has a shot. The other acting categories – best actress, best supporting actress and best supporting actor – appear to offer even less suspense, with Julianne Moore (“Still Alice”), Patricia Arquette (“Boyhood”) and J. K. Simmons (“Whiplash”) each a runaway favorite.

There is nothing new, of course, about Hollywood going into Oscar night with a very good idea of what will happen. That’s been the case for years. The new development is that any of the rest of us who want to know the likely outcomes can do so, with nothing fancier than an Internet connection.

Several betting markets, including European bookmakers, the Wynn Las Vegas casino and a prediction market known as the Hollywood Stock Exchange, publicly list Oscar odds. And their record over the past decade is remarkably good.

Read the whole story

Sleep deprivation common for all ages

By Debra Goldschmidt, CNN

I won't take it personally if you yawn while reading this story.

Chances are you're sleep deprived.

Sleep deprivation is such a rampant problem that last year the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention called insufficient sleep a public health epidemic.

Teenagers may be suffering the most. Researchers at Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health called the problem "The Great Sleep Recession" in a new study published in the journal Pediatrics.

They surveyed more than 270,000 teens in eighth, 10th and 12th grades between 1991 and 2012 and found teens are getting less and less sleep.

The average amount is seven hours a day, which is two hours less than the nine hours they should be snoozing. African-American and Hispanic boys are the least likely to sleep enough. But why?

Read the whole story

Researchers delve into

munchies from pot

By Angus Chen, NPR

Shortly after toking up, a lot of marijuana users find that there's one burning question on their minds: "Why am I so hungry?" Researchers have been probing different parts of the brain looking for the root cause of the marijuana munchies for years. Now, a team of neuroscientists report that they have stumbled onto a major clue buried in a cluster of neurons they thought was responsible for making you feel full.

This cluster, called the POMC neurons, is in the hypothalamus, a region of the brain that scientists typically associate with base instincts like sexual arousal, alertness and feeding. Tamas Horvath, a neuroscientist at the Yale School of Medicine and the team's leader, says that the POMC neurons normally work by sending out a chemical signal telling the brain, you're sated, stop eating.

In the past, when neuroscientists shut down POMC neurons in mice, all the mice became morbidly obese. Horvath figured that in order for the drug in marijuana – compounds called cannabinoids – to spawn that undeniable impulse to feed, it would have to bind the activity of these neurons and make them fire less. Paradoxically, Horvath says, "We found the exact opposite."

Read the whole story

Safe savings critical as one nears retirement

By Michael Abbott and Christopher Bennett

As people creep into the retirement “red zone” – those years just before or right after they retire – it becomes more important than ever that they find ways to keep their savings safe.

Because at that point their retirement picture will change significantly only if they lose a lot of money.

They are not going to change who they are. But if they lose a bucket of money, they are not going to go out to eat, they won't travel, they won't be able to leave money to their children and grandchildren. They will end up having to make sacrifices.

In other words, they won't be living the retirement they envisioned all those years they were saving a nest egg.

Having a “safe money” strategy is key to a secure retirement. It's important to be able to create an income stream that the retiree won't outlive.

There are several areas you and your financial professional can focus on as part of an overall “safe money” strategy.

Here are two examples:

- Rate of return vs. sequence of return. The average rate of return on an investment can be misleading, they say. That's because in reality how well you hang onto your money depends more on “sequence of return.” That is, exactly when do those profits and losses come about?

To see how that might work, imagine a 50 percent loss followed

by a 50 percent gain. That would appear to average out to a zero rate of return. But that's not how it would look in your portfolio, Bennett says. If you have \$100,000, a 50 percent loss drops it to \$50,000. The market rebounds with a 50 percent gain. But a 50 percent gain on \$50,000 just increases that investment to \$75,000, so you've still taken a loss.

Now consider that kind of activity over the course of your retirement as you are also withdrawing money from your savings to live on. Depending on when market fluctuations happened, you could take major hits. That's especially true if the dips come early in retirement when your savings are at their peak, and the rallies arrive late when there is less left in the account.

One big downturn and that money could run dry.

There are tools that a good financial professional uses that can help people reduce the risk created by sequence of return.

- Maneuvering toward tax-free income. Whatever the tax rates may be in the future, taxes can be a drag on your savings and may adversely impact your retirement security. So it's important to consider the tax implications of how you hold your assets.

Even those Social Security benefits that retirees draw can be taxed, but they don't necessarily have to be. Once again, a financial professional can review strategies that could help reduce or even eliminate the tax on that monthly Social Security benefit.

It's possible to have tax-free income in retirement. Talk about being in control. Then you can just enjoy your retirement with your children and your grandchildren.

Michael Abbott has two decades of experience assisting retirees with their 401(k)s and pension plans. Christopher Bennett is a 16-year financial professional who has served as

CEO of the Abbott Bennett Group since 2003.

Inspiring LTUSD educator saying goodbye

By Kathryn Reed

Planting seeds. It's what Beth Delacour does every day. But what sprouts is no ordinary specimen. Her finished product is a responsible, self-confident educated young person.

This is Delacour's seventh and final year as principal of South Tahoe Middle School. She is retiring when the school year is over.

She has spent her entire 35-year career in education at Lake Tahoe Unified School District. This is rare. Usually to move up in the education world one has to switch districts.

Delacour started with kids and is ending with kids – which she thinks is perfect. She started as a regular classroom teacher, then taught special education, became the program specialist for 10 years, agreed to take on the human resources job for three months – it turned into eight years, and now she is at STMS.

The most difficult time in the district for her was in 2007 when she was HR director and the Angora Fire wiped out 257 houses. Houses that belonged to teachers, staff and students. The support was immediate, with school facilities opening up that summer to help, with assistance continuing for months to allow people to gain some semblance of their lives prior to that June.



Beth Delacour is retiring after 35 years in Lake Tahoe Unified School District. Photo/Kathryn Reed

"My favorite part of the job was anything with kids," Delacour tells *Lake Tahoe News* as she sat in her office.

She has a view to the front walkway – seeing who is coming and going from her school. Her door is usually open. People pop in needing answers. Student artwork is in her office. One wall is the entire school schedule. Books are a prominent feature.

Delacour isn't an ordinary educator. Her dedication, compassion and passion are extraordinary. Her job doesn't end when the last bell rings. It's not over when Friday comes. Some might say she cares too much, if such a trait is possible.

But it's always been this way for the 58-year-old. When she started at Tahoe Valley Elementary School it was usual for her to be at the school until 6:30 at night. She was making \$11,000 a year and thought it was great.

Her passion for kids has never wavered.

“Personally, it’s always a thrill to work with a professional who has a heart for all students. Her emotion always comes through with seeing them succeed. That is fun to watch,” Superintendent Jim Tarwater told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Tarwater has worked with Delacour in her current position as well as when she was director of human resources.

Karin Holmes has also worked with Delacour in two capacities – as a teacher at STMS and since last year as assistant principal.

“Beth is the most supportive person you could ever work with. I don’t think I would be here if it weren’t for her,” Holmes told *Lake Tahoe News*. “She has so much heart. It is just amazing. She is honest, she speaks the truth.”

Holmes tells stories of being various places around town and hearing people talk about the impact Delacour has had on their lives.

“Beth is a role model for kids and they respond,” Holmes said.

While Judy Klingler has liked all six of the principals she has worked for as their assistant, she said there is something special about Delacour.

“She has heart and compassion. Kids always are first and foremost. They are her passion,” Klingler told *Lake Tahoe News*. “She always puts the kids first, whatever they need, whatever the goals are they had. (She was there) whether for financial help or just being there as an inspiring adult.”

Delacour has no intention of leaving all of this behind. But what exactly the future holds, well, she isn’t sure. More time with her dad, kids and grandkids is the first priority. After about a six-month break from life as she knows it, Delacour said she would start the next chapter of her life. It’s likely to involve children and/or older people.

She knows she will miss her students, but she also knows it is time to move on.

“I have great hope for the kids and their future. Some of them are phenomenal,” Delacour said. “If they are going to run the world, it’s in good shape.”