

Locals to test dancing ability in public for charity

Dancing with the Tahoe Stars returns to MontBleu in Stateline on March 8.

The benefit for Tahoe Arts Project pairs locals with professional dancers. The contestants are Liz Niven, Amy Thompson, Roberta Benvenuto, Jodi Stewart, Frances Caro, Tom Davis, Eric Taxer, Klaus Utecht, Sean Sweeney and Chris Proctor.

The performance is at 6:30pm.

Tickets are \$10, \$15 and \$22, plus fees. Call 888.829.7630 for tickets. Tickets go on sale Feb. 5.

Judges are Marcia Sarosik, Pat Ronan and Paul Middlebrook.

For more info, call (530) 542.3632.

North Shore ad campaign targets unplugging, outdoors

By Tanya Irwin, Marketing Daily

The North Lake Tahoe tourism group is urging vacationers to leave their gadgets behind and let their feet succumb to gravity.

The campaign, which includes TV and out-of home, is intended to “condone” time off for an extended weekend getaway to North Lake Tahoe’s skiing and snowboarding resorts.

The North Lake Tahoe Marketing Cooperative enlisted San Francisco-based School of Thought to create the effort, which aims not to lift ticket sales, but hotel stays.

“The big hurdle for us is not getting San Franciscans here, but getting them out of their homes,” said Andy Chapman, chief marketing officer, North Lake Tahoe Marketing Cooperative.

Read the whole story

Improv comics deliver laughs for 50 years

By Kathryn Reed

Comedy is more than making people laugh. It’s also about getting people to think and perhaps letting them forget about their life for an hour or two at a time.

Budd Friedman didn’t seek out to be the master of comedy. But now with 23 Improv clubs across the nation, that is what he is. He’s celebrating 50 years of being in the business.



Howie Nave warms up audiences at the Improv at

Harveys five nights a week.

Photo/LTN

"I really started out opening a coffeehouse in Times Square for Broadway singers after their show. Within a year comedians started coming in. I realized I had a better ear for comedy than singers," Friedman told *Lake Tahoe News*.

That was 1963. In 1975, the first California club opened in Los Angeles. In 1985, the push was on to open clubs throughout the country. The Stateline Improv just turned 13, having opened originally at Harrah's Lake Tahoe on Jan. 15, 2001. Now the show is at Harveys.

Howie Nave has been the emcee at the local club since its inception.

Nave first worked for Friedman when the former Reno Hilton, which is now the Grand Sierra, had an Improv. Nave said the Hilton's general manager at the time told him he wanted Friedman out and Nave to stay. Nave chose to stick with Friedman. That's what led to an Improv at the lake.

"Budd has been like a second dad," Nave said of the comedy maestro. Because of that, Nave's loyalty has been with Friedman all these years even when other venues have tried to woo him away. Their closeness is evident in the fact Friedman was at Nave's wedding a few years ago.

It's Friedman's voice people hear introducing Nave at the start of the show. The comedy leader comes to Tahoe every now and then. And when he is in town, he'll often take the stage to say a few words.

Friedman and Nave agree getting comics to Tahoe is easy. Comics are booked through July. They like what Tahoe has to offer and the crowds are always receptive. Plus, it is a diverse audience based on its being a mix of locals and tourists.

But it's not easy to get into an Improv for comics.

"You have to have a lot of credit," Nave said. He has freedom with deciding who will be the two other comics joining him each night. The Stateline showroom is dark on Mondays and Tuesdays, while there are two shows on Saturdays.

Nave said even renowned political satirist Will Durst couldn't get in to the Improv. Durst had helped Nave when both lived in the Bay Area. Nave returned the favor when he got the job in Tahoe and got Durst a gig at the local Improv. Durst was last here in December.



Howie Nave, left, and Budd Friedman opening night of the Improv in 1998 at the Reno Hilton. Photo/Provided

There was a time when the emcee got paid more than the headliner. A lot had to do with that person being at the club the entire time.

"The host is the most important job; every comic will tell you because you have to set the table, you set the tone. If it's a s— host, you are not going to want to watch the rest of the show," Nave told *Lake Tahoe News*. "I am the appetizer for the main course. If the appetizer is bad, you are vomiting before the main course."

The comedy business has changed quite a bit in the 50 years since Friedman started. In the early days clubs didn't have liquor licenses. It wasn't uncommon for teenagers to be in the audience. Now you must be 21 to get in.

"I would love to get in a few more casinos. They are easier to run because they take care of all the liquor and booze that are necessary," Friedman said.

But now in his 80s, Friedman is most interested in sustaining his business instead of growing it. However, this month he will be opening a 500-seat club in Irvine and closing the existing 300-seater. He said the trend is larger clubs. (The Harveys Cabaret seats almost 300.)

Comedy isn't completely recession proof, Friedman says, but he has survived. People want and need to laugh.

"With the advent of cable, the audiences are much more sophisticated than they used to be. They know what to expect when they walk into the club," Friedman said.

But knowing what to expect can be dicey for the comics. Nave half-jokingly says comedy clubs might need to install metal detectors because of the divisiveness of the country. Political humor isn't always funny depending if you wear blue or red.

For those who've never stepped inside a comedy club, this is what Friedman says you'll get, "I would say you are going to get current events in a palpable, amusing way. It's educational, yet funny. You will learn a different slant on life. I think that is what comedy does – particularly today. Just look at Bill Maher and Jon Stewart. My wife and I watch them all the time to get the news."

'Conversations' will get you thinking and talking

By Kathryn Reed

I don't know if it has ever been easy for mixed generations to talk to one another. One thinks the other is too old to understand and the other is too young without any life experience to contribute.

But if the dialogue were more about having a conversation, a discussion, sharing, then perhaps there could be an exchange of ideas instead of a litany of criticisms that are often followed by rolled eyes.



"Conversations" by Bob Keller of Glenbrook is aptly titled. He wrote it for his grandchildren. Sometimes it's easier to read than it is to listen. It gives us more time to process what is being "said".

The first page of the book explains his intent: "I seek to raise questions and hope the reader will attempt to answer those questions for himself or herself. I do not seek to teach the subjects covered. I do not seek to convince the readers of a particular viewpoint. I do not seek agreement with me.

"I will have been successful if this book stimulates thought and discussion even if the result is complete disagreement with everything here. I will have failed if the reader is in complete agreement with me without having done any critical thinking and analysis."

The 222-page book is a fast and easy read. There are typos and grammatical errors that would need fixing if the book goes into another printing. But those can be overlooked because the subject matter is more than compelling. (“Conversations” is available on Amazon.)

Not enough books today make us think without being preached to.

And while it is a quick read, it requires a certain amount of time in between chapters to contemplate what is being written. To get more out of this book I think it would have been better to read it in a book club setting or at the same time as someone else in order to have my own conversation.

What I was left with was wanting another chapter – really, another book. Keller said a second book isn’t likely, but he’s always open to conversations.

“From time to time, friends have asked me for a copy of the book. I sent them a copy and, if they had children above the preteen age, enough copies for them to share with those children,” Keller told *Lake Tahoe News*. “I’m afraid they were concerned that my pitiful effort would destroy the frail and vulnerable faith of their children and, hence, wouldn’t let them read it. It amused my atheist beliefs that they thought the efforts of their church and their own beliefs were not strong enough to be a complete answer to my comments on the subject. But so be it – not my responsibility to raise their children.”

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Josephina

Some cats are a bit aloof, others are on the independent side. Some, especially those who become homeless as adults, are fearful or withdrawn.

Josephina, who has been at the animal shelter since late December, has none of these characteristics. She is happiest in someone's lap, being petted, and she loves to be brushed. Even better, she likes other well mannered cats and dogs, so she should fit into just about any household.

Josephina is spayed and vaccinated. She is at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes.

Go online or 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

Free alternative health sessions in S. Tahoe

Rejuvenate Sauna is offering a series of free classes this month.

- Zyto Compass Bio Surveys (10 minute readings) use state-of-the-art bio-communication technology to discover how to bring your body into balance. Drop-ins welcome every Tuesday and Saturday from noon-5pm with Chris Alper.
- Aroma Touch Technique (30 minute sessions) will help people reduce stress with essential oils. By appointment on Mondays and Wednesday from 6-8pm and Sundays from 1-4pm with Sue Dehnen.
- Integrative Yoga Therapy demonstrations are designed to manage asthma, pain, high blood pressure, as well as many other medical conditions. Drop-ins welcome every Thursday from 3- pm with Charles Whitten
- Learn Emotional Freedom Technique to address the body's imbalances and create wellness. Drop-ins welcome Feb. 11 and Feb. 25 from 6:30-7:30 pm with Rosemary Manning.
- Crystal Singing Bowl Meditation is a way to harness the power of sound. Drop-ins welcome every Sunday from 6-7pm with Chris Alper.

For more information, call (530) 545.3426. Rejuvenate Spa is next to Nepheles at 1169 Ski Run Blvd, No. 2, South Lake Tahoe.

Lake Tahoe fisherman reels in lost images

By Brett Prettyman, Salt Lake Tribune

For a few minutes after the splash, Jana LeVitre hoped she could get her camera back from the bottom of the amazingly clear waters of Lake Tahoe.

The Pentax camera was, after all, waterproof.



Jana LeVitre thought this and more than 1,000 other images were gone forever.

Photo/Jana LeVitre

But when somebody on the sailboat told her the water below was 150 to 200 feet deep, she reluctantly bid adieu to a collection of more than 1,000 photos and videos taken over five years. This was in September 2011.

But last week, she saw an image she had lost – on her Facebook page.

“Is this you? Or a very close look-alike?” asked the Facebook friend who posted the photo.

Stephen Garnett was just hoping to catch a lake trout when he ventured out with a friend for some fishing Jan. 19 on Lake Tahoe. He ended up hooking a fishing story that stretched all the way to South Jordan, Utah.

Read the whole story

Nevada cancer patients already Super Bowl winners

By AP

RENO — From the point of view of two Nevada cancer patients, there will be no losers at Sunday's Super Bowl.

One will be at the game with his family, and the other one made it all possible with a little help from the NFL and a Lake Tahoe research center founded by the family of the late Oakland Raiders great Gene Upshaw.

Gary Kasden of Incline Village had just completed an exhaustive series of chemotherapy treatments at the Gene Upshaw Memorial Tahoe Forest Cancer Center in December when he learned he'd won a Super Bowl trip as part of a fundraising raffle for the center.

But Kasden got the flu, then came down with double pneumonia, scuttling his trip. He reached out to the Northern Nevada Children's Cancer Foundation, which found a deserving replacement in 16-year-old Kody Beach of Spring Creek in Elko County.

Beach, who was diagnosed with cancer last summer, found out at a surprise luncheon with his family at a Reno restaurant on

Thursday. He took off for New York City on a flight Friday with his older brother, Cory, and parents, Kirt and Carmen.

"I never thought something like this would happen to me," Kody told the *Reno Gazette-Journal*.

Over the past five months, the teen has had five surgeries and undergone months of treatment as the disease metastasized into his lungs and reached stage IV cancer, the most advanced stage. But he continues to receive regular chemotherapy treatments and his parents remain optimistic about his prospects for recovery.

"This is great. I think it will rejuvenate him," Kirt Beach said. "He's been strong through the whole process, stronger than us, but at some point depression starts to set in because you can't go to school and you go through all these treatments and every week you have to go to the doctor. This is unbelievable."

Kody's unexpected football fairytale began when Kasden and his wife, Megan, won a pair of tickets with the all-expense paid trip in the Gene Upshaw Memorial Fund Super Bowl Raffle

Upshaw, who went on to lead the NFL players' union, was a regular at the annual American Century Championship celebrity golf tournament at Stateline before his death from cancer in 2008.

After Kasden's doctor ruled out the trip, his wife said they started a search for someone who believed, "Going to the Super Bowl is my dream."

The Tahoe Forest Health System Foundation helped enlist the Northern Nevada Children's Cancer Foundation to track down Kody. A football fan since his youth, his father said he would "watch ESPN 24/7 if you allowed him."

The news only got better when the NFL mistakenly mailed four

tickets instead of two, then told the family to keep them.

Megan Kasden said it was meant to be.

"I honestly don't believe in coincidences," she said. "I believe in angels."

Upshaw's widow, Terri, said she was thrilled.

"Gene did it. Gene is looking down," she said. "That's just the kind of guy he was. He would have loved this story."

Acting saves 'The Wolf of Wall Street'



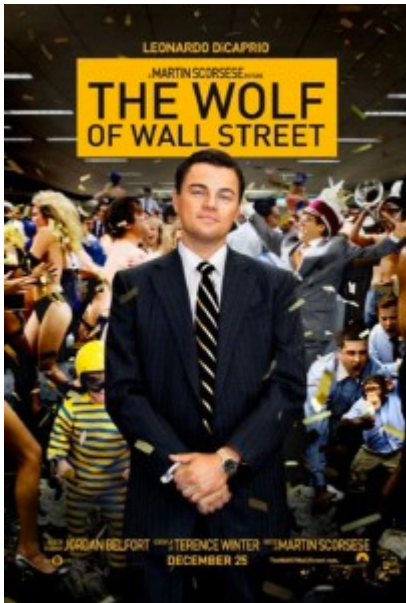
By Jeremy Miller

"The Wolf of Wall Street" is the latest from master filmmaker Martin Scorsese. It stars Leonardo DiCaprio, Jonah Hill, Matthew McConaughey, Margot Robbie and Kyle Chandler.

The three-hour epic centers on the rise and fall of Jordan Belfort (DiCaprio), a young and very ambitious stockbroker on Wall Street. He moves to Wall Street wanting to get in on the action, and quickly decides to stray away from the corporate ladder and do things his way. Joined by a few quirky characters, including his No. 2 Donnie Azoff (Hill) he turns a

broker firm of 20 employees into 250 with a perfectly rounded sales script he wrote himself.

Essentially, the firm made their money pushing worthless penny stocks onto rich people and took 50 percent commission off each and every sale. Along the way, the “crew” delves into the world of drugs, prostitution, and any other activity that warrants an R rating.



Eventually they catch the attention of the FBI, especially agent Patrick Denham (Chandler) who confidently pursues Jordan and his buddies, just waiting for them to screw up overtly. Jordan has to evade the FBI while also upholding his playboy image, along with the managing of his now very successful firm. But how long can he keep it up? Bam! There's the plot.

The film is packed full of fancy cars, elaborate houses, the craziest parties, and most things the average person only fantasizes about while scratching the \$2 ticket purchased at 7-Eleven that day.

Aesthetically the film is decent, pretty standard cinematography and the cast, not the visuals, delivers most of the power. Leonardo definitely out-did himself (won the Golden Globe) and I sense he's favored for the Oscar. Jonah Hill is who really stuck out to me, however. He created a wonderfully entertaining character and was hands down the comedic drive behind the film.

I enjoyed the story and felt it moved well and I was satisfied when it was over. There's just one problem that warranted the 3/5 rating. I felt like I was watching a modern day reimagining of "Goodfellas". As soon as I had this epiphany, I

realized that it is almost the exact same film. Plot points, story line, even the timing was the same. If you've seen one, you've seen the other. That bummed me out. The stories are similar, so I don't put it all on Mr. Scorsese, and it's still a wonderful film, but that just took away from my experience. Also, unlike "Goodfellas", the three-hour run time of "Wolf" was noticed. I must have checked my watch three or four times toward the end just waiting for credits to roll which is never a good indicator. Overall, the film was good, acting was awesome, it was fun and explosive, but I didn't feel it held to the Scorsese standard of a game changer.

South Lake Tahoe resident Jeremy Miller has more movie reviews online.

Zac Brown Band to play Lake Tahoe in July

Multi-award winning country stars the Zac Brown Band will be at Harveys on July 20.

They will be in town during the 25th annual celebrity golf tournament.

The opening act has yet to be named.

Tickets go on sale Feb. 14. They range in price from \$59.50 to \$135.50, plus fees.

