

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Adoptable kitties

The shelter has four young kittens who will be up for adoption starting Dec. 11. Applications will be accepted beginning at 1pm.

They have been in foster care since they were born, and are your typical cute, playful, inquisitive kittens. Kittens usually aren't available at this time of year; there probably won't be others until late spring.

The kittens are spayed/neutered, microchipped, 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 online 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.

The last two photo sessions for people and their pets with

Santa at Alpine Animal Hospital are coming up – this Wednesday and Thursday from 4-6pm. Donations (suggested \$5) will benefit the Animal Coalition of Tahoe. Dates: Alpine Animal Hospital is at 921 Emerald Bay Road. Call (530) 541.4040 for more information. All pets are welcome.

– Karen Kuentz

Museum to feature state parks artifacts

By Matt Weiser, Sacramento Bee

Most Californians know their state parks as a place to camp, walk on the beach or stare with jaws gaping into a canopy of giant redwoods. Fewer know the state parks system also guards one of the largest troves of historical artifacts in the nation.

Soon, Californians will be able to walk through that remarkable assembly of artifacts for the first time. They can survey one of the largest collections anywhere of American Indian basketry, behold racks of ornate furniture once owned by big names straight from the history books, and eye curiosities – such as Kit Carson's name carved into a tree stump.

All these and a lot more are held by the California Department of Parks and Recreation at its Museum Collections Center, a vast storage and research facility unveiled Wednesday after more than four years of preparation.

The center is housed at a cavernous concrete warehouse at

Sacramento's McClellan Park, a former U.S. Air Force installation. The state parks system spent four years and \$15 million refurbishing the building. In total, more than a million artifacts are stored here – and millions more documents and photographs – most of which have never been displayed in a state park or museum. Parks officials said they have as much responsibility to protect these remnants of California's past as they do the parks themselves.

Starting Jan. 7, the Museum Collections Center will be open to the public.

Read the whole story

LTCC looking for wide age range of actors

The theater department at Lake Tahoe Community College is seeking children and adults to perform "Still Life With Iris" by Steven Dietz.

Auditions are Jan. 7 at 7pm in the Duke Theatre. Performances will be March 14-23.

"Still Life with Iris" is a fantastical adventure that centers on a young girl's search for the simplest of things: home. Iris lives with her mom in the land of Nocturno, a magical place where workers make, by night, all of the things we see in the world by day. The rulers of Nocturno, the Great Goods, are determined to have the "best" of everything on their island, and therefore take Iris away from her home and bring her to Great Island to be their daughter.

For the roles of Iris, Hazel, Elmer, and Mozart, the department is seeking actors to play 10 and 11 year olds. The character of Annabel Lee may be played by a teenager or young woman. Men and women of various ages and types are needed for the adult roles.

Auditions will consist of readings from the play. Scripts are available on reserve in the LTCC library, and audition sides and character breakdowns are available in the theater lobby.

For more information, call (530) 541.4660, ext. 240.

Christmas trees can be a fire hazard

By Teri Mizuhara

Did you know that a dried out Christmas tree can become fully engulfed in flames in a matter of 3 to 5 seconds and in another 30 to 40 seconds everything in your room can be ablaze?

A well hydrated tree, on the other hand, is very difficult to ignite. To see short videos on what a Christmas tree on fire can do, go online. It is a very sobering video.

Christmas trees cause approximately 240 house fires each year in this country, resulting in \$16.7 million in direct property loss. Although these types of fires are not common, when they occur they are costly and often deadly. Electrical problems caused one-third of these fires, so carefully check the wiring and lights, making sure the lights are UL listed before placing them on the tree.

Another 20 percent of these fires are caused by a heat source too close to the tree so be sure your tree is not too close to your fireplace, woodstove, space heater or any other heat source.

Here are some life-saving tips:

- If you purchase your tree from a lot or a local tree farm, make sure it is treated with a fire retardant before bringing it home. Make a fresh cut (1-2 inches) at the base of the tree trunk and place it in a bucket with plenty of cool, fresh water. A tree can drink a gallon or more in the first 24 hours.
- When choosing a location for your Christmas tree, make sure it is away from all heat sources including your home heating system.
- Make sure your stand is the correct size for your tree and that it is clean before you place the tree inside it. A stand that is too small is prone to falling over.
- Once the tree is in the stand, water it daily. This will prevent the tree from drying out and becoming a fire hazard.
- Make sure every string of lights is UL listed and in good working order. Throw out any strings of lights that are damaged. If they feel warm after you plug them in, they are no good, throw them away.
- Do not overload your outlets. If you do not have enough outlets, use a good quality surge protector.
- Always turn off the trees lights when you leave home or go to sleep.

Teri Mizuhara works for the Amador-El Dorado unit of CalFire.

Pearl Harbor survivor shares his stories

By Ryan Parker, Denver Post

COLORADO SPRINGS – No one asked Navy Lt. James Downing to hurriedly memorize the names on the dog tags of the dead and injured during the attack on Pearl Harbor.

But Downing, then 28, did it because he could not bear the thought of families not knowing the fate of their loved ones. He wrote to as many families as he could.



A memorial in Honolulu commemorates those who died Dec. 7, 1941. Photo/LTN file

The Colorado Springs resident, who celebrated his 100th birthday in August, is the oldest known survivor of the Dec. 7, 1941, Japanese sneak attack that killed more than 2,400 Americans .

Downing fought to save lives that day, all the while wondering whether it was the day his own life would end.

Downing was a gunner's mate 1st class and postmaster, assigned to the USS West Virginia. The battleship had just returned to base after more than a week on patrol.

His wife of five months, Morena, was cooking Sunday morning breakfast for a few servicemen in the couple's home near the harbor when they heard explosions in the distance, Downing said.

"Then an anti-aircraft shell landed right outside and blew a crater about 25 feet across," Downing said, illustrating with outstretched arms.

Read the whole story

Cold weather a signal to pay attention to pipes

By Pam Emmerich

With the Tahoe region engulfed in a bitter cold snap, the North Tahoe Public Utility District would like to remind residents to take precautions to make sure their homes, especially their water lines, are prepared for the cold.

- If you know that pipes in your home freeze, make sure to leave them running.
- Never completely shut the heat off when you are not at home and leave cabinet doors open to allow air to circulate.
- All homeowners should have a water shut off valve installed in the home that will allow you to completely shut off the water to your home when you will not be home for any length of time. The shut off should also allow the water system in your home to completely drain leaving no water in the pipes.
- Most important, make sure your water district has your most

current contact phone number so we can reach you in the event of a water emergency. There is nothing worse than seeing water pouring out of a house or garage and having to send a letter to notify the homeowner, instead of calling them.

- Finally, if you see water running out of a neighbor's garage, down a driveway or anywhere else you don't typically see running water, call your local water district.

During the winter of 2009-10, a significant cold spell in the region resulted in more than 60 homes having significant water damage. Home service breaks showed usage in the 20,000 to 40,000 gallon range with several homes in the 100,000 to 200,000 gallon range. As you can imagine, that amount of water running through a home will cause significant damage.

For reference, during the winter with no landscape irrigation, domestic (home) water usage usually runs well under 10,000 gallons per month. The district's National Avenue Water Treatment Plant was producing 200,000 to 300,000 gallons more per day than would be expected this time of year.

Pam Emmerich works for the North Tahoe Public Utility District.

Douglas County – one of Nevada's jewels

By Ed Vogel, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Douglas County must be the best-kept secret in Nevada.

Lying just south of Carson City, here one finds the lush, green, 20-mile long Carson Valley dotted with ranches covered

by grazing cattle. And 1,400 feet above the valley floor lies the southern half of Lake Tahoe, with some of the most beautiful scenery in the world.



View of the Sierra from Genoa. Photo/LTN file

This is where Nevada's first Anglo residents settled in 1851 – although that was about 9,000 years after the Washoe Indians arrived to live a nomadic life of gathering pine nuts and hunting rabbits in Carson Valley, except for fishing and summering at Lake Tahoe. They knew a good place when they saw it.

But outsiders slowly are discovering this place of clean air and beauty. Until the Great Recession five years ago, wealthy California retirees – like the late Bing Crosby's wife Kathy – were buying ranches near pricey Genoa. Ever hear of Friesian horses, the horse used in European wars? There are ranches here full of the beautiful and costly black horses.

Others were purchasing multimillion-dollar homes at Lake Tahoe and in the pine forests on the west side of Carson Valley. The boom brought skyrocketing land and home prices that priced many people, particularly those with children, out of Douglas County.

Read the whole story

‘McConkey’ film, presentation at Squaw

Squaw Valley Institute is partnering with the Shane McConkey Foundation to raise awareness and funds for this local charity.

The Shane McConkey Foundation has given back to Tahoe area schools and the community by raising environmental awareness and promoting a sustainable future.

The evening of Dec. 28 will start with a safety presentation by the SVI Kids program. The focus will be geared toward navigating risk management in the world of extreme sports.

The film “McConkey” will be followed by a Q&A with the film’s executive producer Sherry McConkey and chief editor-director Scott.

The event will be at the Olympic Village Lodge at 6:30pm. Go online to buy tickets.

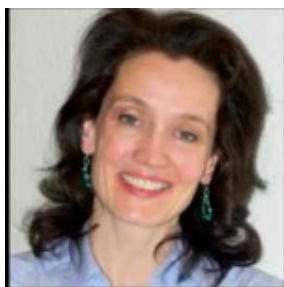
Be smart about goals for New Year

By Mandy Kendall

The end of the year is not that far away. Before we descend into the chaos that can occur around Christmas, this can be a

good time to reflect on what has happened in the last 12 months. Once we've reflected on what's happened, we often turn to what might be in the future.

Resolutions are often made last minute and are sometimes not that well thought through, which may explain why so many of them are never achieved.



Mandy Kendall

So whether you decide to call them resolutions, goals or plans, a little forward thinking can often make for a more successful New Year.

SMART is a well used acronym used in setting business goals which can be also be used for planning changes in your personal life too.

So here are a few *Qwik-e* tips to help start your New Year off on the right foot.

Specific – Rather than just say “I want to be healthier”, try to be specific about what you are going to do to be healthier. Asking yourself the what, why, who and where questions will usually get you all the answers you need.

Measurable – Having something quantifiable about your goal will make tracking your progress much easier. If you make a promise to yourself that you will do a certain amount of something (or stop doing a certain amount of something), you are definitely going to be able to tell if you've reached your target or not.

Achievable – I know there is a saying “Never say never”, but you should be honest with yourself as to whether you can truly achieve your goal. If your goal stretches you too far, you may find it too disheartening to contemplate, let alone achieve.

Realistic/relevant/resonant – Do you have the resources (time, support, and most important, the desire) you need to achieve this? Is this the right time to try to do this? Is it something that you are passionate about? If you can’t say yes to all of these, you might need to re-evaluate where you are trying to get to, and why.

Time – Setting a time frame for a goal is important. It not only helps in planning the steps needed but also gives the task a sense of urgency. Have you given yourself the right amount of time to do this? Can you set aside the time that is needed to reach your goal?

Some also like to add a couple of other steps to the goal planning process to make it SMARTER

Evaluate – With the strategies above in place, it is important to evaluate along the way to make sure you are on track. This gives you the ability to make adjustments before you get too far off track. I also like to think of this one as “enjoy” too. It’s important that this is fun to keep that motivation going.

Reward – My favorite part. You’ve set your goal, planned all the steps, evaluated your progress and achieved your goal. Now you get the reward. You deserve it! Then you get to start all over again on a whole new goal if you like.

Until next time.

Mandy Kendall operates Health Connective in South Lake Tahoe, which aligns wellness seekers with their ideal wellness provider. If you have questions, would like some advice, or would like to request some Qwik-e tips on any health and well-

being topic, drop her an email at connect@healthconnective.com or keep an eye out on Lake Tahoe News for regular Qwik-e tips on how to make healthy changes one Quick and Easy step at a time.

Grieving can be a lifelong journey



Sandy Amish and Susan Wood

By Susan Wood

STATELINE – By the looks of the Christmas tree filling up with ornaments, there appears to be no shortage of loss and grief on the South Shore of Lake Tahoe this season.

About 60 people showed up at MontBleu on Wednesday night to mark an evening of remembrance called “Light Up a Life,” an event hosted by Barton Hospice.

I entered the convention center room with an open heart as well as tear ducts as the emotion set in. I was honoring my beloved sister, who, at 55, died unexpectedly July 4. As I walked up to the microphone to announce her name, I let the room know that she wasn’t the average sister. She was “the

best” to me. And with that, my clear ball ornament with her name in gold metallic ink found the perfect branch on the memorial tree. When the tree was lighted, I was sure her name glowed.

As hospice registered nurse Natasha Stone put it after the ceremony: “There’s something about a sister.”

That’s all she needed to say. Sandy and I grew up together – as children and adults. I’m still growing up as I deal with such a significant loss. Stone reminded me that loss is all part of the human experience and helps your heart evolve beyond our day-to-day joy.

Whether it’s for a sister, brother, mother, father, child or spouse, grief hits all members of the family, albeit differently. Many filled this room as groups, with lots of hugs to go around.

South Shore local Judi Brown got a long one from a family member after setting the ornament on the highest branch.

“I love you Dad. I always will,” she said, choking back the tears.

She later told *Lake Tahoe News* that her father, Mack Brown “was everything to me.” He succumbed to cancer last August. Brown admitted the experience was “quite overwhelming.”

She seemed to find peace that evening.

“I’m glad we did this,” she said.

The ceremony started 14 years ago as a way for loved ones to honor those who have died. The event evolves a little bit each year, with 2013 being the first one at the casino. The memorial tree stood out in a sea of trees the hospital erects for its annual Festival of Trees and Lights.

Even hospice’s director of patient care services, Barbara

Kaufman, was affected and couldn't make it as the Dec. 4 event fell on the same day as the anniversary of losing her mother.

"It's just a little tender," hospice services coordinator Tina Bruess told the crowd, before leading them into the "Blessing of the Hands."

Everyone raised their hands, as the sacred words rang true.

"Bless these hands that have held and felt pain. ...

Bless these hands that have comforted grieving families and friends. ...

Bless these hands that have reached out in caring and have been received with gratefulness."

An instant kinship came over the room. This was indeed a safe place to be at the holidays – grieving with other family members who are dealing with loss.

After Bruess offered the group sprigs of rosemary because the herb is considered one of remembrance, I let out a sigh. I had stared my grief in the face and embraced it. I knew the holidays would be difficult.

"With the holidays, there are so many long-term traditions and memories, and they're all brought up again. Holidays resonate family, and the grief is accentuated by the one place that's missing at the table," Bruess told me after the ceremony. She was dead-on correct.

Bruess runs grief workshops using the book "Understanding Your Grief." I was comforted by this since that's the book I turned to months ago when I felt I was living a sad parallel life to the one the rest of the world participated in.

The most striking thing about the book?

All grief is unique and needs to be honored that way. Bruess

and I agreed with the message. And there's no rush to "get over it" because I've surrendered to the idea that I never will.

My grief still lingers and can overwhelm me at significant as well as insignificant times. I use writing as therapy.

For one excruciatingly difficult time, my sister's birthday on Nov. 15, I wrote an ode to her life even though I could barely see the keyboard through the tears. It goes like this:

Today is my sister's birthday, and even though she has left the Earth, I feel closer to her than I ever have.

Death works that way. It makes us appreciate what we have – in the moment. I must say, I've never felt so alive or more keenly aware of how precious life is since July 4, when she was ripped from the living. My heart was ripped to pieces. How could I even live without my only sister?

We protected each other for so many years. What kills me is that I couldn't protect her this time. I didn't know it was her time. I wish I did. I would have told her how much she meant to me. Then again, my words would have seemed shallow. It didn't seem to matter that I showed her and told her that I loved her at each visit. For every goodbye, there was a long hug – as if one of us was leaving the country or thought that later we'd become disinterested in each other's lives.

Yesterday, I inadvertently ran across some pictures of a time she lived in Colorado and I lived in California. We didn't stay in touch. We were so different 35 years ago. At least we learned to embrace our differences in the last 25 years. It was like we were kids again when we got together. We danced and joked and shared small pleasures. Her smile was radiating. Her essence was the epitome of joy. She trusted people in a way that I never could. She looked for the good in everyone. She lived to love.

How I miss her. I can't even begin to tell you what this deep pain is like. Thank God it's not consistent.

Even now, I can barely restrain my tears. I probably have cried a thousand of them in the last few months, sometimes bellowing in a too-sad-to-describe moan that only the grieving know of.

My memories will have to sustain me.

Mostly, I remember how we could talk about anything and often confided in each other. She had a hard life and was often under so much stress that I took some comfort in seeing her at peace when I decided to view her body with her children. It took everything I had to not break down. They lost their mother. My mother lost her child. The sorrow is overwhelming.

I think what gets to me is how beautiful she was inside. I see her now through the heart of her children. I will never take their love for granted. I guess that's the message here.

Hug those who matter most to you because our time together is finite.

So in spirit: Happy birthday, Sandy. I'll love you every day forever.