

McConkey's legacy lives on through movie

By Julie Brown, Powder

On Saturday afternoon at Squaw Valley, a couple bartenders tapped a few kegs, pulled out the bar stools, and opened the renowned Chamois for business. Cars started to pull up one after the other and soon the parking lot was as full as if it were a sunny powder day. Groups of friends, many wearing trucker hats with the ubiquitous Shane McConkey Foundation logo, sat around picnic tables, talking about hopes for a deep winter.

But the conversation kept coming back to one name in particular—Shane McConkey. He was, after all, the reason why we were all there.

“There’s just going to be love oozing out of this place,” Scott Gaffney said at the Chamois before the festivities ramped up.

More than 4,500 people showed up to see the highly anticipated Squaw Valley premiere of “McConkey”. The afternoon of après felt like any other, except there wasn’t any snow and people like Mike Douglas, Bobby Brown, and Travis Rice along with two dozen other Red Bull athletes walked through the village among the locals.

People came from near and far, some taking long flights while others like Squaw locals Cody Townsend, Elyse Saugstad, and Michelle Parker just had to walk across the street. J.T. Holmes, Timy Dutton, and Miles Daisher jumped down to the crowd—literally—sky diving from above and landing at the base of Squaw’s KT-22 lift, which had been transformed into an outdoor amphitheater for the show.

Underneath a cold and starry night, we watched McConkey's life unfold on the screen. We laughed more than we cried. We learned things we never knew about McConkey. Like how he lived in a closet, won a pro mogul tour comp without even trying, including his legendary naked bump contest run at Vail.

Read the whole story

Research shows dogs have human-like emotions

By Huffington Post

New research is telling the world something that dog owners have known all along – that canines have emotions just like humans.

Gregory Berns, a professor of neuroeconomics at Emory University, has spent the past two years training dogs to go into an MRI scanner “completely awake and unrestrained.”

Berns says the scans reveal that the structure and function of the caudate nucleus is similar in dog and human brains. In humans, the caudate activity spikes when we anticipate things we will enjoy like food or love.

In an op-ed in Sunday's *New York Times*, Berns summed up the study's conclusion thus: Dogs are people, too.

In his study, Berns and his colleagues tracked dogs' caudate activities when they were shown a hand signal that meant they'd be getting a food reward.

Read the whole story

Twain to be guest of honor at library fundraiser

Mark Twain said, "Good friends, good books. This is the ideal life." The South Lake Tahoe Friends of the Library has taken this poignant quote to heart and is hosting a unique fundraising event called A Toast to Twain.

On Nov. 3 from 4-7pm a party in the library will be held in honor of this incredible American's 178th birthday. In addition, the library will be celebrating the publication of "Autobiography of Mark Twain, Volume 2".

Samuel Clemens, will be the guest of honor, as the event will showcase the talents of McAvoy Layne, noted Mark Twain impressionist. In addition to his books and performances, Layne's projects include a major role in Nevada's sesquicentennial and developing a distance learning platform for living history in the classroom. Twain will share stories of his life through his unique humor and personality.

Guests will dine on hearty appetizers, sip wine and may bid on a plethora of silent auction treasures. The proceeds from this fundraiser will go toward the purchase of new books and other resources to serve the South Lake Tahoe library.

Tickets for the event are \$40 per person and are available for purchase through Oct. 30. For tickets, call or visit the South Lake Tahoe Library at (530) 573.3185 or 1000 Rufus Allen Blvd.

‘Why I Farm’ author to give talk

The Friends of the Library and South Lake Tahoe Master Gardeners are partnering to present Gary Romano, author of “Why I Farm: Risking it All for Life on the Land”, in a talk and book signing as part of the Friends of the Library fall programming.

The Oct. 22 6pm event is free and open to the public.

The library is at 1000 Rufus Allen Blvd., South Lake Tahoe.

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Glen

Glen looks a little like a mop – but under all that hair is a very nice, somewhat shy, fluffy Shih Tzu (best guess) mix.

He came into the shelter very matted, and was glad for a quick haircut. He will benefit from some professional grooming, and

will be quite beautiful when his hair grows back in. Glen is a sweet little boy, about 18 months old, who will fit into just about any household.

Glen is neutered, microchipped, 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 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.

– Karen Kuentz

Martin, Brickell and dazzling fiddler delight fans



Steve Martin and the Steep Canyon Rangers featuring Edie Brickell played to a sold-out showroom Out. 5 in

By Kim Wyatt

STATELINE – A few minutes into the finale, “Auden’s Train,” I wondered if Nicky Sanders had sold his soul – the Steep Canyon Rangers’ fiddler stole the show at the MontBleu showroom Saturday night. Mashing up songs from “Norwegian Wood” to the “Nutcracker Suite March” and bluegrass is no small feat, and it’s the song I wanted to track down long after the curtain fell.

Despite the headliners being Steve and Edie (this joke almost seems intentional), the sold-out show should have been billed Steve and Nicky. Steve Martin and the Steep Canyon Rangers featuring Edie Brickell in An Evening of Comedy and Music played a tight, funny 90-minute show to an appreciative audience of fans old and new. But it was the fiddler on fire who carried the 14-song set featuring classics and freshly penned tunes alike.

Martin kicked off the night by welcoming in the crowd at MontBleu in his best Inspector Clouseau accent – MontBleu does sound better when said this way – taking note of the median age of the audience. Noting he’d first played in Tahoe 40 years ago, he said it was good to see them again. “There are lots of familiar faces in the crowd, and I’m not kidding,” he joked. There was no shortage, however, of bearded young men, facial piercings and fedoras. Some came for the comedian, others for the music, and all got their money’s worth at a smokin’ hot show, punctuated by a cool Brickell.

After a round of jokes, Martin and the five-man bluegrass band Steep Canyon Rangers blasted into “Katie Mae,” a number that allowed each band member to showcase his instrument, including a memorable mandolin jam by Mike Guggino. Rousing tunes followed in which each musician had a chance to shine: Woody Platt providing luxurious vocals and guitar, Graham Sharp on

the five-string banjo, Charles R. Humphrey III on the upright bass rounding out the band.

Martin and friends ran through songs from Martin's solo Grammy-winning album "The Crow" and "Rare Bird Alert," recorded with Steep Canyon Rangers, who met at a party in North Carolina four years ago, about the same time Martin began to play the banjo professionally. The pace was raucous, broken up only by Martin's comedic banter, and it was as welcome as the tunes.

His humor was topical: Divining messages from his "banjo tuner," Martin claimed to receive an email stating, "They just turned off Niagara Falls," referring to the government shutdown. Some of the heartiest laughs of the evening came during the tune, "Atheists Don't Have No Songs" – a Martin-penned nod to the influence of gospel in bluegrass – "They'll never sing a song of faith/In their songs, they always have a rule/Their 'he' is always lowercase."

Wearing suits like accountants at a hoedown, Martin led the Rangers in toe-tapping, hand-clapping fun. Against a line-up of banjos, guitars and seldom-used stools, these cats worked it. When Martin excused himself for a beer from the standing bass that doubled as a refrigerator, the Rangers held their own with divine vocals that got some of the biggest applause of the night.

Martin is no slouch as a musician, showing range on Scruggs-style and clawhammer tunes, and particularly worthy on a duo with Sanders, homage to banjo great Earl Scruggs called the "Fiddle and Banjo." This crowd loved this number, with many in the audience unable to take their eyes off master fiddler Sanders.

The entrance of Brickell, previously with the New Bohemians, was understated. The Texas-native's songwriting prowess is the foundation of her collaboration with Martin; the pair just

released an album, “Love Has Come For You.” Performed to enthusiastic audience, the title track featured a rootsy vocal that sounded straight from the holler, and the haunting “Remember Me This Way” showcased Brickell at her melancholy best.

But back to the fiddler on fire.

As the band crested “Auden’s Train,” – yes, homage to W.H. Auden, and to trains – band members crowded to the right of the stage opposite Sanders, seemingly in awe of his heat, building to a standing ovation, followed an encore with two numbers that brought another standing O.

Even though the jokes were polished to a fine grain, Martin delivered them as if for the first time, making it feel like an intimate jam session. The blend of stellar musicianship and comedy made this a show to remember, and not to be missed if this train passes through again.

Martin, upon bidding adieu to MontBleu as Inspector Clouseau, agreed, as the group claimed the International Bluegrass Association Entertainer of the Year Award in 2011.

“If you didn’t enjoy the show tonight, you’re wrong.”

He was right. I’ve never seen such a happy crowd file out of the MontBleu showroom. When asked of what could have made this show better, one concert attendee said, “A dance floor!”

House in Incline sells for

more than \$19 mil.



This Incline house sold for \$19.75 million. Photo/Eric Jarvis

A house in Incline Village just sold for \$19.75 million.

Known as the StoneGate estate, it had been listed by Chase International. The name is from the exterior granite stonework.

For that price tag, the buyer gets a private pier, 100 feet of sandy beach and more than 10,000 square feet of living space – including five bedrooms and 10 bathrooms, an exercise room and wine cellar.

The interior was designed by Michael S. Smith. Smith is known for his work with Hollywood celebrities, but most notable is his work on the White House for the Obama family.

The house was built in 2006.

Casino boss has tips for winning

By Stephen Magagnini, Sacramento Bee

Do you ever wonder about your chances of winning on the slot machines at Red Hawk, Thunder Valley, Cache Creek, Jackson or other area Indian casinos?

California's more than 50 Indian casinos earn around \$7 billion a year, according to industry economist Alan Meister. About 70 percent of that – \$4.9 billion – comes from slot machines, invented in Brooklyn, N.Y., in 1891.

California's Indian casinos are run by sovereign Indian nations that set their payout at whatever they think the market will bear. Paul Cornish, director of casino operations for Chukchansi Gold Resort & Casino. The site at Coarsegold, north of Fresno, boasts 1,750 slot machines. Cornish, a 25-year veteran of the gambling industry, started on the Las Vegas Strip and has worked at casinos in Detroit, Indiana and California.

[Read the whole story](#)

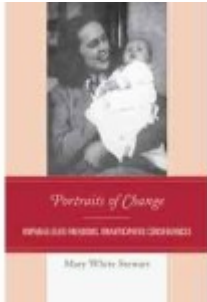
'Portraits of Change' – a disappointing read

By Kathryn Reed

I kept hoping "Portraits of Change: Unparalleled Freedoms, Unanticipated Consequences" would get better. This book had so

much potential.

Mary White Stewart, who is a professor of sociology at UNR, published the book this year.



It's a look at four generations of her family – including herself, her daughters, her mom and her grandmothers. It delves into how the women's movement changed the expectation of women and the options for women.

But so often I kept putting the book down because I just didn't care what happened to her family. Unlike a good novel or autobiography, I never connected with her or her family. I never liked them or disliked them. I just didn't care.

I expected more analysis, especially based on her profession. What readers get is more like a laundry list of what happened in their lives. But there was no context to the rest of the world in order to judge if these women represent the "average" family.

There needed to be more than just her family to make the book relevant.

The last chapter on age begins to go below the superficial and starts to ask questions about why women, particularly in the United States, react the way they do to getting older. But it was too little, too late.

I'm still wondering why I bothered to read all 143 pages.

Arctic vs. Antarctica – contrasting the poles



Mountains of Antarctica from a cruise ship. Photos/Robert S. Wood

By Robert S. Wood

I never thought I'd get to Antarctica. Way too expensive, though I'd lived and worked in the Arctic and traveled Patagonia as far south as the tip of South America. I badly wanted to compare the two polar regions, which I knew to be vastly, wildly different.

In the north one travels mainly on land and by bush plane; in the south it had to be by ship or air. But just flying over all that ice didn't interest me. Tours by ship commonly start at \$15,000 per person and as much as \$65,000 if you want to actually set foot on land. That's partly because of stiff

entry requirements to prevent pollution like double-hulled ships with a special expensive fuel. And it's a long way from California.

My wife, Deanne, and I had cruised with Holland America Line (HAL), so we kept an eye on its Antarctic offerings. We spotted a coming three-week cruise in January 2013 that started in Valparaiso, Chile, on the South Pacific, dove deep into Antarctic waters for four days cruising, then sailed north up the Atlantic to Buenos Aires. It sounded good, though way too expensive at \$14,500 each.

What especially attracted me was that it cruised the Sarmiento Canal in Argentina where my buddy Jack Miller, with whom I'd camped in Patagonia, had made a handful of first ascents on inaccessible wilderness peaks. I'd always wanted to see those mountains. That made the HAL itinerary sound especially great. So did the dozen of glaciers emptying into the sea along the way.

Fortunately, cruise industry economics make it mandatory to somehow fill every cabin even if they have to cut prices to the bone. We talked to our agent at HAL and he offered us a decent discount, but the price was still way too much. The sailing was still three months away and we expected the price to drop a little further as time grew shorter. But there was always the risk that the boat would suddenly fill up and our chance would be gone.

We had just about decided to save our pennies and wait hopefully for next year, when in late November our agent called us, breathless. HAL was unexpectedly offering a special on "our" cruise. An ocean view cabin, he told us, would cost us just \$2,400 each, barely \$100 bucks a day. We grabbed it – our Christmas present to each other – and started planning. Bulky parkas wouldn't fit in our suitcases, so the strategy was to wear multiple layers of thinner winter garments for the warmth we'd need out on deck in Antarctica.

Our American Airlines jet landed in Santiago, Chile, in January, where the suddenly summer temperature was 90 degrees. Coming from winter in the U.S., it felt like our blood was boiling. A bus took us west through farmland for two hours to the seaport of Valparaiso, where we boarded the 1,300-passenger HAL Veendam. The next morning we set sail down the mostly wild Chilean coast of Patagonia, behind which rose the shadowy spine of the Andes.

We had been promised a chance to go ashore at small fishing towns every other day to see the sights, but the notoriously stormy Patagonia weather threatened those excursions. Since the villages were all too small to have a dock that could accommodate the Veendam, the only way ashore was to climb into bobbing oversized lifeboats called tenders and plow through harbor waters to small fishing boat piers.

At Puerto Montt, two days sail south of Valparaiso, we planned to take an 11-hour bus-launch-bus excursion through the remote famed Chilean Lake District. But the captain decided the stormy bay's whitecaps made it too rough, and we were not allowed to attempt a landing. Sigh.

So we sailed on south. Every day it grew a little cooler, while at the same time the days grew longer as the latitude grew higher. So, paradoxically we got more sun as we approached Antarctica.

In the next four days, we managed to get our tenders ashore at several fishing villages, where we enjoyed barbecued lamb and Pisco sours and wine at one remote rancho/estancia behind the town of Chacabuco. On the way back to the ship our driver stopped at a local market where he helped us buy more wonderful Chilean wine – \$30 on the ship – for four bucks a bottle.

Jack had warned us to watch out for the dreaded Trancura Fly, a giant bee native to Patagonia that was extremely aggressive

and had a nasty sting.

On a driving excursion on a rocky road in the Simpson River Valley, we stopped to walk to a waterfall when suddenly we were attacked by a swarm of Trancuras. We ran for the van and got inside without being stung, but several bees came in with us and zoomed angrily around inside, everybody cringing and swatting, until the frantic driver could kill the last of them.

The next day, when the captain announced we would be entering Sarmiento Canal around 11am, I made my way with my camera to the highest deck in the bow. Jack's photos of his climbs in the National Geographic had showed nothing but snow. Now in mid-summer there wasn't a flake in sight. We did, however, see the impressive Brujo Glacier, with its spawn of ice floes and bergs floating at its foot, as well as the landmark rusty red shipwreck of the Santa Leonor.

Punta Arenas, which I had visited almost 40 years before, had grown from a village to a seaport city. From it, I sent Deanne on a strenuous inland 12-hour bus-flight-bus excursion to see beautiful Paine National Park, a highlight of my trip back in the '70s. It was a gamble on the Patagonian weather, which thankfully held fair, and she returned beaming but weary with wonderful pictures.

Punta Arenas was our last civilization on the mainland. After that we made our way through thousands of Argentine uninhabited islands, weaving our way toward Tierra del Fuego. The next day we enjoyed a series of blue-tinged icefalls in Glacier Alley cruising through the fearsome Beagle Channel – tame that day as a lake – to the final island, Tierra del Fuego, planning to go ashore at Ushuaia, the continent's southernmost city that I had previously visited on our '70s camping trip.

When it came in sight I was astonished. The little village I

remembered had also tripled in size into a large town, but again stormy seas prevented us from landing or even tendering ashore. Double sigh.

So we continued south through open empty seas in a twilight that refused to turn to darkness, through the feared Drake's Passage where the Pacific and Atlantic oceans angrily meet. Our first sight of Antarctica, only hours from Ushuaia, were the black humps of islands that extend out from the tongue of Antarctica known as the Palmer Peninsula, some of which is actually outside the Antarctic Circle.

Everyday now there were several lectures by a pair of Antarctic expert brothers named David and Chris Wilson, whose famed uncle had accompanied the legendary Shackleton in the race to be first to reach the South Pole more than a century ago.

By now it was cold all the time, though the sun never set, and when the wind blew it was decidedly chilly on deck. Fortunately, there were ample heated, glassed in public lounges where views were better than those from our portholes and exposed balconies. Then a thick fog rolled in, obscuring the sun, providing a strange pearly gray lighting affect.

At St. George's Island on Admiralty Bay we passed three of the lonely stations that are the only man-made sights in Antarctica, beside wrecked vessels. Here, sharing a slightly sheltered bay, were the Polish, Russian and Chilean bases – forlorn clusters of low huts and crude blocky buildings set in clearings in the snow. A few figures in bulky dark clothing could be seen moving like ants between the buildings. Many of them stopped and waved at us, the only signs of distant civilization they were likely to see.

Offshore stood several small supply ships and research vessels. The only other boats we saw on the whole voyage were a big yellow German cruise ship blaring beer hall music and a

small sailboat, not more than 30-feet long, dwarfed by the bergs it was sailing amongst. I shivered to think of living conditions on board, compared to our cozy cabins.

Now well inside the Antarctic Circle, the myriad islands were simply mounds and blocks of snow rising from pitch-black seas flecked with ice floes and small icebergs. The only place we saw the black rock that revealed land in that world of white was on slopes so steep that the mantle of snow had avalanched off into the sea. It was a desolate sight that shouted cold, cold, cold. The sun had disappeared the night before behind a layer of fog and cloud that made a backlighted ceiling of gray at about 1,000 feet above the water.

The following day we began to pass bigger islands and more glaciers. It was sometimes possible to see three at one time. The old glacier ice was distinct from the snow by its pure blue glow. Mostly the weather was mild and cold, with low clouds that obscured the sun but revealed the moderate snow-covered dark peaks.

We saw hundreds of penguins strutting comically ashore from a distance through binoculars and dozens more looking up at us on passing icebergs, close-up.

We passed immovable-looking icebergs far bigger than the ship, explaining what had easily sunk the unsinkable Titanic. Often they were larger than the islands and topped with snow, but their baby blue ice looked much different. They rose hundreds of feet above the seas, meaning nearly a thousand feet of ice lay underwater – only the proverbial “tip of the iceberg” being visible. Hitting one would be like driving the ship into a sheer granite wall. Being summer, it never got completely dark.

Obviously, our 1300 passengers could not be taken ashore at any of these tiny stations, but several scientists arrived one morning in inflatable Zodiacs from the out-of-sight Palmer

Station, one of three bases run for research by the United States. They delivered fascinating illustrated lectures and told us what life was like in the stations. If you weren't passionately dedicated, as they were, life would definitely be grim.

These talks supplemented the excellent daily lectures and slide shows by the Wilson brothers and frequent reports on the loudspeaker from the captain, announcing glaciers, whale sightings, penguin colonies, etc., keeping us well informed. While on board the scientists clearly enjoyed basking in our spas and eating gourmet food in our warm dining rooms.

A map of our course looked like a can of worms, as the ship zigzagged among islands. And after showing a landmark to the starboard side of the ship, the captain would rotate it 180 degrees to show the port side cabins the sights.

The Argentine Station sat right next door to an Adele Penguin rookery. That might sound like good company, a source of entertainment, a floorshow for the lonely residents. But there was a price. "Eau de Penguino," a stink said to clear one's sinuses, was never absent. We could smell it from the ship. Adele Penguin poop, we learned, is pink, the only color we were to see in this black and white movie of the Antarctic.

As we pushed farther south toward the pole, the pack ice got thicker and icebergs were crowding us as the captain put the Veendam through some narrow straits on the way to Iceberg Alley. Pack ice finally blocked our entry into the Weddell Sea lying east of Palmer Land. At dinner, through the dining room windows, we often were treated to some lovely endless sunsets when the sun sank below the layer of fog and seemed to move sideways.

After cruising Antarctic waters for most of four sunless days, we headed north into the Atlantic, and immediately the sky turned blue and the sun came out. It was fun to run in our

robes across the open aft deck and jump laughing into the deck hot tubs, despite the icy wind, to watch the last of the glittering snowy peaks recede in the distance.

We were supposed to go ashore at Stanley in the nearby Falkland Islands, but weather forecasts from there convinced the captain (and his cost-conscious bosses ashore) to cancel that port, too – saving the ship substantial fuel money. Boo! Instead, we sailed into and landed at Puerto Madryn on the flat, bleak Argentine coast, where we got a taxi to take us to an Eco Museum (closed) with its giant outdoor whale skeleton and then on to a lively sea lion colony where the rare giant Albatross flew.

Two sea days later we docked in Montevideo, Uruguay, for a city tour. It was a beautiful European metropolis with many parks and gardens and bronze statuary commemorating its endless heroes. The following day came another city tour, this time of bustling cosmopolitan Buenos Aires whose gigantic soccer stadium, dwarfed most of our football arenas. That evening we disembarked, bused to the airport and began the long flight home.

I had been curious about how the Antarctic would stack up against the Arctic, to which I'd taken two great summer Alaskan trips. Except for the cold temperature, they were different in every way. Back in college a pal and I had built a camp trailer and drove it up the just opened Alcan Highway (then just a muddy trail) to Fairbanks.

There we got jobs in Point Barrow, then the northernmost year-round community in the world at the top of Alaska on the Arctic Ocean, working in the oil exploration camp kitchen and hanging out at the Arctic Research Laboratory, where we got to go on great field trips. We lived in wolf fur-lined parkas, but it didn't seem especially cold. We worked there two months under the circling midnight sun, enjoying the abundant wildlife (millions of caribou migrating, polar bears, musk

oxen, endless birdlife) and the still intact thriving native Eskimo culture.

We loved the vast sweeping Arctic vistas, the lush green permafrost tundra bursting with color, light and wildlife. Contrast that with the Antarctic where the only plant life is rare hair grass and lichen. The ice pack at the mountainous South Pole is over a mile thick, and the only creatures to be seen in that black and white world are penguins and whales.

Then just 10 years ago, Deanne and I rode a series of bush planes from Fairbanks to Gates of the Arctic National Park, where we crash-landed on a sandbar in the Alatna River under the mighty Brooks Range. There we blew up rafts and rafted south through the snow-free Arctic, portaged the rafts over a hill to a large lake where we were picked up by bush floatplanes for the flight back to Fairbanks.

The greatest similarities we found were between the beautiful windswept wonderland of Patagonia, where the natives have been extinct for a century, and busy northern Alaska where Eskimos still exist and still hunt seals and whales.

Of course we only saw a small slice of Antarctica on our cruise, and were unlucky with the foggy ceiling that hid the sun, but when it comes to choosing between which end of the earth to travel, I'll take the Arctic every time.

Robert S. Wood and his wife spend half the year in Lake Tahoe and the other half in Sedona. He is the author of a dozen books, including the original trail guide to Desolation Wilderness.

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