

Physical activity is good for the brain, too

By Cynthia H. Craft, Sacramento Bee

If you leapt out of bed Jan. 1 bubbling with resolve to greet the new year with a rigorous fitness routine, get ready for a bonus.

Research has long established what exercise can do for heart and muscle development. Now, according to an expanding body of research, it could also be growing your brain.

The results of several new studies indicate that physical activity may make you better at learning and memory tasks. And in a hopeful sign for America's aging population, it is thought to be a factor in warding off dementia.

"What we now know pretty well is that animals who exercise have greater levels of chemicals in the brain that promote brain growth," said Owen Carmichael, associate professor in the neurology department at UC Davis Medical Center. "These neuro-growth factors are what tell the brain to grow new cells."

In particular, Carmichael points to research on rats showing that of two groups – one kept from exercising and the other exercised vigorously – the "active rats were gunning to go," mentally. The inactive rats showed an "inhibited ability to form new neurons; they didn't remember as well" as the active rats.

Fast-forward from rodent research to anthropology and you come across a set of human evolution studies that suggest the human brain grew because of robust physical activity.

David A. Raichlen, an anthropologist at the University of

Arizona, is the primary author of at least two new papers exploring the thesis. Collaborating with colleagues in 2011, Raichlen published online his examination called "Relationships Between Exercise Capacity and Brain Size in Mammals."

This and other research say that aerobic exercise stimulates myriad brain-growth factors, including blood and an insulin-like substance "which appear to lead to exercise-induced neurogenesis in the rodent and human hippocampus."

This may be how human brains developed, proportionately, to three times the size of those in other mammals, experts say.

"Being sedentary was not really an option in the days when you had to chase your dinner," Carmichael said.

In addition, a 2011 paper in the EPMA Journal, a European science publication, offers hope to those recovering from brain injuries or concerned about dementia. Citing animal studies, the paper's authors said exercise may help in the creation of growth cells that surround injured brain tissue, and in the hippocampus.

The brain's hippocampus is ground zero for memory tasks, and atrophy as a result of advanced aging is a risk factor in Alzheimer's.

But according to the paper, "data indicate that exercise may alleviate disease progression in Alzheimer's disease, as well as in other neurodegenerative conditions like Parkinson's disease."

The European paper recommends further human study using tools such as magnetic resonance imaging and PET scans to measure brain size after activity.

Ted Smith is co-owner with his wife, Chaz Smith, of the Hangtown Fencing Club in Placerville, and has been fencing for

22 years. At 60, he has twice been the U.S. national champion in the 40-and-up divisions and regularly places in the nation's top four fencers in his age group.

Smith doesn't need studies to reinforce what he has observed among colleagues in the highly competitive international fencing field.

"People I know who compete in my age division are very athletic," Smith said. "A lot of these guys are amazingly energized at 60 and older. They are constantly mentally adjusting to the changes their opponents make every second. They are adjusting their own strategies instantly."

Besides providing challenging brain work, physical activity also trains the brain so that "your balance improves and your flexibility improves," said Smith, who coaches about 20 young fencers. "Your chances of slipping and falling are far less."

In a recent Public Broadcasting Service discussion of a book he co-authored called "Super Brain," Harvard professor of neurology Rudy Tanzi captivates television audience members with tales of the human brain's prowess.

Then, without explanation, he asks the studio audience to rise and run in place for several seconds. They do so, looking bemused and befuddled. When Tanzi stops them, he explains the purpose of the drill: They've just fed their brains.

Researchers say even the smallest amount of aerobic activity helps. But benefits to the brain are greater if you run rather than jog, jog rather than walk, walk briskly rather than stroll. This is because the more rigorous the activity, the greater the blood supply and insulin-like flow to the brain.

Evette Tsang, 43, of Sacramento is a four-year breast cancer survivor who embraces exercise as a means of living healthy. Tsang was not aware of the latest research but already was leading an effort of several wellness groups to make joint New

Year's resolutions in 2013 to step up aerobic physical activity.

"Definitely, when I exercise, it clears the mind and makes me feel better," Tsang said.

Or, in the lexicon of science, as expressed in a Trends in Neuroscience abstract in 2007: "Human and other animal studies demonstrate that exercise targets many aspects of brain function and has broad effects on overall brain health."

Sierra Avalanche Center workers to give lecture

The North Lake Tahoe Chamber/CVB/Resort Association kicks off its free First Fridays with Getting to Know the Basin Better.

The Sierra Avalanche Center will discuss how employees evaluate avalanche danger, how to use their website to assist those planning to ski and board in the backcountry, and how the public can support the center's efforts.

The Jan. 9 event is from 5:30-7pm at the North Lake Tahoe Visitors Center, 100 North Lake Blvd., Tahoe City. This had originally been scheduled for Jan. 4

The events will profile speakers knowledgeable about the Lake Tahoe Basin.

On Feb. 1, Lake Tahoe writer Mark McLaughlin weaves tales of love about the Sierra Nevada.

To learn more about First Fridays or for additional information, contact North Lake Tahoe Visitors Center manager

Kym Fabel at (530) 581.6900.

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe

Gigi is a pretty and friendly 4-year-old orange cat who ended up at the shelter because her owner became allergic to her.



Gigi is a great mouser, but she still enjoys sitting on laps and being petted.

Gigi is spayed, microchipped, and vaccinated. She 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 description 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

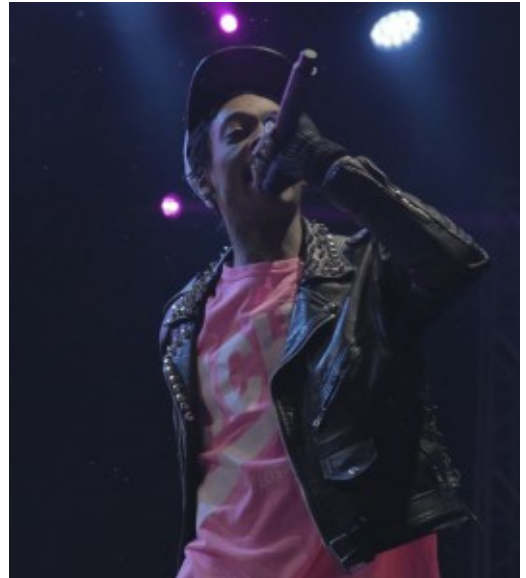
SnowGlobe neighbors change their tune from a year ago



For most people, SnowGlobe is going on and they don't even know it.

Snow on the ground to help absorb the sound, turning the stage 180 degrees, lowering the maximum decibel level and enforcing the maximum level allowed, and not allowing bands to play past the designated ending time are contributing to a better experience for neighbors of the venue.

"Around 4pm (Saturday), Day 1 of the event, I turned to my husband and said, 'Snowglobe must be delayed because I don't hear anything.' My kids even went outside and they were upset they didn't hear anything! It was great; we had dinner without the windows shaking, we could hear ourselves speak, I wasn't going out of my mind, it was awesome!," Gia Schraubens told *Lake Tahoe News*. "I don't know if it's the snowload absorbing the bass, changing direction of the stage, the guy walking around monitoring the decibel level, the city employees and SnowGlobe employees working diligently or what it is, perhaps a combination of everything, but it's great and all is good in Al Tahoe this year!"



Wiz Khalifa, one of the headliners, wows the audience Dec. 29. Photos/Bron Fong

Instead of bothering with going to all three days of the South Lake Tahoe music festival, a group of women from Southern California were enjoying a Sunday of skiing at Heavenly Mountain Resort.

The event on the grounds of the ball fields next to Lake Tahoe Community College is attracting a diverse crowd from all over the country. Ages are from teens to their grandparents' ages. But most appear to be thirtysomething.

Sunday's event will at 10pm, like the night before. Monday's festivities will conclude with fireworks after the music ends at 12:30am New Year's Day.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

SnowGlobe opens with less techno than a year ago

SnowGlobe is under way in South Lake Tahoe. The gates opened at 3pm.

The music is slated to go to 10 tonight.



Snow falls at the start of SnowGlobe on Dec. 29.

Photo/Kathryn Reed

This is the first of three days of the music festival on the ball fields next to Lake Tahoe Community College.

Traffic is backed up on Al Tahoe Boulevard, so those not needing to be on that street might want to find an alternative route. Also, there are groups walking in the street – wearing dark clothing.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Frigid temps no deterrent to fun at SnowGlobe

By Kathryn Reed

With temperatures below freezing, musicians were blowing on their hands to get their fingers working and the main stage of SnowGlobe included two heaters.

But for those in the audience Dec. 29, dancing and disrobing seemed like a good idea. People were looking for the coat check and others were showing skin on a night when the low was slated to be 16 degrees.

The most warmth could be found in the Techibeats.com Tent because heaters were keeping the sound technicians cozy and the entrance was narrow.



The music fest SnowGlobe starts its three-day run Dec. 29 in South Lake Tahoe. Photos/Kathryn Reed

At the Sierra Tent one side was completely exposed to the elements.

And the main stage was wide-open on the ball field.

Most people moved as close as possible to all the stages and were moving to the music. Plus, there was the body contact of friends and strangers to keep them warm.

The three-day music festival started off much better than a year ago when area residents were caught off guard by the bass-driven sounds of the techno rich music. Not all of the performers are traditional bands. Most acts are disc jockeys bringing together sounds through their computers. Even many of the musicians are assisted by technology.

Early feedback based on comments posted on *Lake Tahoe News* is things are dramatically different from 2011.

City officials said after the concert came to an end at 10pm no one complained about anything the city had control over – including noise levels.

Turning the stage 180 degrees so the audience on the community ball fields is facing Lake Tahoe Community College was done as an attempt to have the sound be less of a factor to the neighboring residents.

To make sure the decibel level doesn't exceed the limit, a guy wearing a backpack with a meter was measuring the output.

Those in attendance on the first night were clearly enjoying themselves – swaying and bouncing to the music, smiling and making snow angels.

Jared Clark brought his 15-year-old son Dylan up from Minden for the show. The elder Clark had seen Beats Antique before – and was excited when he found out they'd be the third act to take the main stage on Saturday. The younger Clark, a fan of Wiz Khalifa, was excited to hear his favorite next.

Sandy Meyer of Reno is also a Wiz Khalifa fan. That's why she bought a one-day ticket and made the drive to South Lake

Tahoe.

Ryan Wingo and his buddies from Santa Cruz opted for the three-day pass. Wingo was at SnowGlobe a year ago and wanted back for more fun.

The Santa Cruz guys were excited to hear Minnesota – the last act in the Sierra Tent on Saturday – because they are from the same beach town.

“He has progressed so much this year,” Wingo said of the disc jockey.

Wingo is glad there is snow this year – it meant being able to snowboard at Sierra-at-Tahoe the day before.

“It was beautiful, except there was no snow,” Wingo said of 2011.

No worries about that this year. The snow was coming down good at 3pm when the gates opened. The skies parted a bit more than an hour later and patches of blue sky could be seen. With the moon full the night before, the globe in the sky and the early snow made for a snow-globe of a different kind.

The combo of being able to ski and hear good music lured Brett Schwerin to Tahoe. The 30-year-old Maryland resident has an Epic pass, which allows him to ski at all Vail Resort properties – of which there are three in the Tahoe area. He’s here for 12 days – not just for the three-day concert.

This is Schwerin’s first time to Lake Tahoe. He said the combo of being able ski during the day, take a shuttle to the music venue and then be able to hang out with a California crowd that was putting out good vibes made for the perfect day.

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52 ideas to become more fit in 2013

By Rene Lynch, Los Angeles Times

This is the year you will resolve to ditch the diets, the “all or nothing” mentality and the “no-pain, no-gain” fitness goals. This is the year you will resolve to use common sense to eat less junk food, move more – and have fun doing it.

Remember what it was like when you were a kid and you thought nothing of playing tag for hours on end? That spirit still lives. You just need to wake it up. Maybe with a high-energy hula hoop workout or Shaun T’s “Hip Hop Abs,” done in the privacy of your own home. Or by walking your dog while listening to a Dan Brown thriller.

Instead of embarking on yet another diet, why not try to lose roughly 1 pound a week by creating a modest 500-calorie deficit each day. That’s easily accomplished by slashing about 250 calories from your diet (the equivalent of five Oreos) and burning about 250 calories through exercise, such as a brisk 2-to-3-mile walk. You can do that easy.

Here are 52 tips for each week of the year, but we know we’re just scratching the surface.

(1) You “work” all week. No wonder you don’t want to “work out. Find a way to move more and have fun doing it. Take a Zumba class. (Many studios will let you take your first class free.) Even if you never go back, it will redefine your definition of “exercise.”

(2) You know that lazy, sluggish feeling you get when you

drink alcohol? That's your metabolism slowing to a halt.

(3) Adopt an avatar. James Bond? Lara Croft? Put it in charge of slaying your food cravings. Or pretend you're the Terminator and someone is standing between you and your workout.

(4) Buy a pedometer. (We love the Omron HJ-112 Pocket Pedometer). Slowly work your way up to 10,000 to 15,000 steps a day. Parents can make it a game with kids: The person with the most steps for the day gets out of dish duty or earns more console time.

(5) Gardening and heavy-duty housework, like cleaning out the garage, do count.

(6) Write a loooong list of all the fun, sexy, sassy reasons you want to achieve your fitness goals. ("I want to rock a bikini!" "I want biceps worthy of the cover Men's Health.") Make copies of that list and stash them everywhere. Your wallet. Your car. Your kitchen. Review when weakness strikes.

(7) Recognize: Six packs are made in the kitchen, not the gym. If you have only 30 minutes, you're better off using that time to prep the following day's breakfast and lunch than working out. That's right. We just gave you an excuse to skip a workout, but only if you use that time wisely.

(8) Jump on the boutique gym bandwagon.

(9) Eat all the raw, non-starchy vegetables you can stand.

(10) Exercise while doing household chores. Put in a load of laundry before you press "play" on a fitness DVD, and pause partway through to make the washer-to-dryer transfer. Or plan dinner around a casserole that bakes while you work out in the living room.

(11) Give up extreme thinking. Don't give up chocolate for 2013. How about: Give up bingeing on chocolate in 2013, and

instead resolve to enjoy it in moderation.

(12) Ask yourself a magic question: “How can I reach my health and fitness goals and enjoy the process?” You don’t need to answer the question. Let your brain percolate on it. (Credit motivational guru Tony Robbins.)

(13) Got a tablet? Download a movie and prop it on a treadmill at the gym. The average movie should get you through four 30-minute walks.

(14) Stop trying to be Julia Child come dinner time. Store-bought rotisserie chicken + bagged salad = dinner. A corn tortilla quesadilla + bagged salad = dinner. A grilled steak + bagged salad = dinner.

(15) Use social media. Find fitness fanatics to follow, and then draft off their enthusiasm to bolster your resolve. Use Twitter to announce your goals, and ask followers to hold you accountable.

(16) Find more ways to move at work. Stand at your desk or while you’re on the phone. Instead of a stuffy meeting room, chat with a colleague during a brief walk.

(17) Home workout DVDs can get expensive. Band together with some like-minded (and trustworthy) friends or co-workers: Invest in a few DVDs and swap them every month to keep things interesting.

(18) You absolutely, positively have no time to work out? How about a 10-minute walk – five minutes in one direction, then turn around – in the morning, at noon and when you get home at night? Be careful, though. You just might inspire yourself.

(19) Register to walk a half marathon. You can download free training programs online.

(20) Don’t you wish someone would pay you to get in shape? Pay yourself. Put \$5 in a jar every time you work out. Or every

time you bring a healthful, delicious lunch to work. If you work out three times a week and take lunch two times a week, you'll be sitting on a sweet \$1,300 come the 2013 holiday shopping season.

(21) Your two best fitness buddies: Your kids and your dog. Walk to parks and just have fun. Kick a soccer ball around. Play Frisbee. Tag. Fly a kite. You won't just burn calories, you'll model healthful habits for your kids.

(22) Playing tourist in your hometown – crawling museums, hiking scenic trails, strolling boardwalks – is a blissful way to add steps to your pedometer.

(23) Earn your dessert. Craving ice cream? Make it a single scoop that comes at the halfway point of a four-mile round-trip walk. And then enjoy every creamy bite.

(24) Create a private Daily Mugshot account and commit to taking a picture of yourself every day in 2013. (Men go shirtless, women in a sports bra.) Take a spin through those photos when you need encouragement. And just imagine the photo gallery at year's end.

(25) Read fitness magazines that will inspire you with new workouts (and not depress you with ridiculously skinny models).

(26) Scour the Web for fitness blogs written by people like you, and bookmark them. The next time you feel like skipping a workout, tap into that community for motivation.

(27) Parents: You do more for your children than for yourself. Use that to your advantage! When you find yourself reaching for a doughnut, think of your kids: Do you want to saddle them with a morbidly obese, Type 2 diabetic mom or dad? That's right. Step away from the doughnut.

(28) Do some year-end, rear-end projections. If you slash your

Oreo consumption in half from eight cookies a week to four, you'll save more than 11,000 calories and lose nearly 4 pounds.

(29) If you have a salad bar at work, use it. Bring a protein from home – grilled chicken, hard-boiled eggs, tuna – and drop it onto some salad bar greens.

(30) Many people plan weekday meals and go wild over the weekend. Plan weekend meals too. If you are meeting friends for a celebratory dinner on Saturday night, make sure the rest of your weekend meals stick to your program.

(31) Let co-workers take the elevator. You take the stairs. (Pretty soon they'll be following you.)

(32) Keep a food and fitness journal, but don't beat yourself up about the findings. Instead, like a detective, use the journal to spot bad habits and find a way to gently correct them. We like the free tool Lose It!, which also has a smartphone app.

(33) Do not skip meals. Ever. If you miss breakfast, there's an extremely good chance you will end up overeating at some point during the day.

(34) Prepare for the apocalypse. Have healthful snacks, such as almonds or beef jerky, in your desk drawer. In your glove compartment. In your purse. In your gym bag.

(35) Supermarket survival tips: Just don't buy it and don't shop hungry. If you don't put it in your cart, you can't devour it at 3am. And how many times have you purchased chips and scarfed half of them before you pulled the car into the driveway? (Or is that just me?)

(36) When you hear the candy dish at work calling you, ask yourself, "Will that get me closer to my goals?"

(37) One personal trick: I like to download books, especially

thrillers and mysteries. But I have a rule: I cannot listen unless I am walking the dog. I'm so eager to find out what happens next that, more often than not, the dog gets a three-mile walk.

(38) Get a good night's rest. You are more likely to make poor food choices and skip workouts when you're tired and cranky. Plus, your body needs the rest when it's worked out regularly.

(39) Most Americans eat 250 to 300 grams of carbohydrates a day, the equivalent of 1,000 to 1,200 calories. The national Institute of Medicine recommends 130 grams. Look for small, easy ways to cut carbs. Eat the burger with half the bun. Scoop up hummus with cucumber slices.

(40) When you splurge, splurge smart. Example: Those stale, store-bought cookies at the holiday party? Not worth it. Homemade holiday cookies from Mom? Enjoy in moderation.

(41) Don't drink your calories. Reach for water instead of sugary drinks.

(42) Find ways to relieve stress that do not involve food. Pray. Meditate. Exercise.

(43) Take small, steady steps toward slashing your diet of processed food. Read the labels of anything you're considering buying. If you see ingredients you cannot pronounce, or lots of sweeteners, put it down and walk away.

(44) Sugar makes you want more sugar. That has nothing to do with self-control. You're not weak. You're human. And ask yourself: Do you want to control what you eat or do you want what you eat to control you?

(45) Get mad. Get mad at all the ads that bombard you with enticements to eat and drink yourself silly. Get in the habit of noticing those cues, and come up with a mantra to silently repeat to yourself when you see them, such as, "I am not a

billy goat. I don't eat trash."

(46) What's your favorite music? That's what you should be working out to. Turn down the volume on the fitness DVD and workout to your own score.

(47) If you don't like running and weights, don't do them. A perfectly good fitness regimen can revolve around yoga.

(48) Would you like someone to scare you into eating fewer carbs? Read "Wheat Belly" by Dr. William Davis.

(49) If you do a lot of casual or fast-food dining, read the calorie counts. Instant appetite suppressant.

(50) If you tend to watch too much TV, make a deal with yourself: no screen time till the workout is done.

(51) Consider your routines. How can you fit in some "flash fitness"? Can you ride your bike to work one day a week? Get your fruits and vegetables during a long stroll around the farmers market? Park your car two blocks from the dry cleaners?

(52) Realize that maybe the real reason you eat too much junk food is because ... you're normal.

Our lives are filled with more stresses and demands than ever. Sad but true, food is one enjoyable thing we can do for ourselves each day. Maybe the best resolution of all for 2013 is to find a healthy way to bring more joy into your life.

That one should be easy to keep!

Other adults taking over when parents fail to teach manners

By Matt Richtel, New York Times

It's dinnertime, and 6-year-old Joaquin Hurtado is staying in his seat. He hasn't stood up, run around the table or wrestled with his little brother. Good thing. It wouldn't take much unruly behavior to shatter the dishware or the mood in this upscale restaurant.

"This is a place where you come to eat," the boy says softly, explaining nice manners. "It's not a place to play."

The place is Chenery Park, a restaurant with low lights, cloth napkins, \$24 grilled salmon and "family night" every Tuesday. Children are welcome, with a catch: They are expected to behave – and to watch their manners, or learn them. Think upscale dining with training wheels.

Chenery Park has many allies in the fight to teach manners to a new generation of children. Around the country, there are classes taught by self-appointed etiquette counselors – Emily Posts for a new age – delivering a more decentralized and less formal approach to teaching manners than in years past. A few restaurants, like Chenery Park, and high-end hotels set aside space and time for families.

These etiquette experts say that new approaches are needed because parents no longer have the stomach, time or know-how to play bad cop and teach manners. Dinnertime has become a free-for-all in many households, with packed family schedules, the television on in the background and a modern-day belief of many parents that they should simply let children be children.

Some of these manners-minders acknowledge that they can sound like curmudgeons, just another generation of older folks

mourning the lost habits of more refined times. But they also say that parents welcome their efforts as a way of outsourcing the hard work of teaching youngsters to follow rules.

During a recent family night at Chenery Park, Joseph Kowal, an owner, roamed among the regulars and newcomers, saying hello and occasionally playing parental ally. He's got a twinkle in his eye but a steely commitment to having children – even if they're not etiquette role models – at least sit politely and not scream or throw food.

"Some parents will say, 'Uncle Joe's going to come up here, and he's going to be cross with you,'" Kowal said. "They use that to their advantage." He recalled one child who wouldn't settle down, and he threatened to tape the child's mouth. The child told him to go ahead and try.

"I went to my office, got some blue painter's tape, came back and ripped a piece off," he said. The kid piped down. "The parents looked at me like, 'We're going to try that at home.'"

All of which raises some intriguing questions: Is it Joe who brings out the best in his young patrons? Or something else? And what are the best strategies for training children to be polite, to pay attention to the world around them, whether they are in dim lighting with fragile dishware or at home?

Etiquette teachers, other parents and people who spend time thinking about how and why we mind our manners have some interesting ideas about new strategies.

"These days, you have to teach kids about return on investment," said Robin Wells, the founder of Etiquette Manor in Coral Gables, Fla., which holds classes on etiquette for adults and children. When it comes to children, she said, long gone are the days when you could tell them that they have to behave a certain way "just because."

So, even as she imparts lessons about using forks and the

importance of looking the waiter in the eye, she does so by framing the lessons in a constructively selfish way for the children. She often exhorts her young students: be polite to your mother because she'll be happier, and if she's happier, you're happier.

On the first day of her five one-hour sessions, which cost \$285, she tells the children to go home and do one unexpectedly kind thing so that they can see how wide-eyed and impressed their parents will be. "It's almost manipulation at its finest," she said.

Then she starts in with the knives and forks, and the proper way to address an adult or a waiter. On the last day of class, they attend a three-course meal at an upscale restaurant. (Among her lessons: she slams a clunky landline phone on the table and asks children if that seems O.K. No, she responds, so don't put your cellphone on the table either.)

Around the country, hundreds of entrepreneurs teach versions of etiquette and manners classes, said Elena Neitlich, the founder of Moms On Edge, a company, with offices in Osprey, Fla., that offers online certification for manners teachers through a course called Etiquette Moms, at prices ranging from \$250 to \$1,250.

She believes that teaching manners to children has grown more challenging, and necessary, in part because of technology.

"Kids have stopped making eye contact at one another," Neitlich said. "They bring their technology to the table. She added that it is true of parents, too: "Everyone is in a hurry. Things are clipped, clipped, clipped."

It all makes teaching manners at home challenging, said Faye de Muyshondt, the founder of Socialsklz, which teaches workshops in New York City on etiquette and social skills. Modern children seem to want no part of the conversation, she said.

“Say the words ‘manners’ or ‘etiquette’ to kids these days, and they run the other direction,” she said. She prefers teaching the children that they are “building the brand called ‘you.’”

“People don’t want to eat with someone whose plate looks like a science project,” she tells the children in her workshops. “If you want to be invited back on a play date,” she explains, be polite.

She thinks that one key aspect of her workshops, which take place in schools or with Brownie troops, is that they don’t happen in the home or at the dinner table. “The casual nature of the home makes it difficult,” she said, adding that most children she talks to say that their families have the television on during dinner.

Indeed, she and other experts talked repeatedly about setting, and how it affects manners and behavior.

It turns out that this concept is connected to science from a group of seemingly unrelated researchers: criminologists. They look at what is happening at a place like Chenery Park through a very different lens called ecological psychology, or its subset, broken-windows theory. It suggests that when an environment is dilapidated, it gives permission to people to misbehave. When the proverbial windows are not broken, neither is the behavior, or so the theory goes.

“A fancy restaurant gives off so many cues that this is a place for refined behavior,” said Ralph B. Taylor, a professor of criminal justice at Temple University who studies how environments influence behavior. And he and other people in the field say that the environment changes not just the youngsters. “The parents are changed,” he added. “You’re not talking loud; you’re not yacking on the cellphone. Everybody is with the program.”

Taylor and other experts said that parents can take some of

the ecological psychology lessons from places like Chenery Park.

“Take parts of the restaurant home with you,” he advised. Use a tablecloth or nice napkins to simulate the environment that changed children’s behavior. He suggested also introducing children to other environments – like highbrow concerts or museums.

Wells, the Florida manners teacher, made a similar point: take a child to the window of a nice restaurant, look inside and ask how people are behaving and what the child loves about the scene.

And when you bring the well-mannered rules back into your own home, don’t do it every night, counseled de Muyschondt, of Socialsklz.

“You turn into a nag,” she said. Given the less formal nature of our society, she suggested creating a “bridge” through periodic training, like one formal night a week.

On a recent night at Chenery Park, Joaquin, the well-behaved 6-year-old, sat in the upstairs dining area near the front, eating pasta with butter and Parmesan cheese. He was joined by his brother, Sisto, 4, eating a Hebrew National hot dog, one of the handful of inexpensive kid-friendly Tuesday night menu items, and their two mothers.

One of them, Arcelia Hurtado, said that the family regularly goes to Chenery Park, largely because the adults want a nice meal. But it’s a bonus that the boys think about being in “an adult space.” At home, Hurtado said, dinnertime is chaos.

“There’s something about the physical setting” of the restaurant, she said. “They see the cloth napkins, and they know to put them in their laps.” She sometimes has to tell them to remember to behave. “I kind of feel an obligation for kids to behave well, since Joe is doing this nice thing for

us.”

Kowal, who does not have children of his own, grew up in Rhode Island in a family that wasn't super strict, he said, but did require children to be polite. He started his family nights after the attacks on Sept. 11, 2001 – initially because business was slow on Tuesdays, but then it evolved as a popular training ground. The restaurant's website says, “We're here to help kids learn proper ways of eating in nicer restaurants with Mom and Dad.”

Kowal himself can sometimes come across as hurried and even brusque. He has been known to scold parents, too. He once reprimanded a woman for talking on her phone and ignoring her son, who was yelling loudly. The woman was offended and told Kowal she wouldn't be going back. He responded that that was her choice, and the people at nearby tables applauded.

Another night, two families were sitting at adjoining tables. At one of them, a 5-year-old starting yelling and jumping up and down.

“The second or third time it happened, one of the kids at the other table goes over to the one jumping up and down and said, ‘You can't do that,’” Kowal recalled. “That was the best.”

Tahoe Snowcial melds snowsports-social media

Tahoe Snowcial, slated for Feb. 27–March 2, will bring top minds from the worlds of digital storytelling, snowsports and social media to Heavenly Mountain Resort.

The fifth annual Tahoe Snowcial is a winter social media and technology festival that celebrates a common passion for snow and provides attendees with insights from some of the most innovative players in the market today.

Speakers include:

- Tariq M. Shaukat, executive vice president and chief marketing officer of Caesars Entertainment.
- David Armano, managing director at Edelman Digital Chicago.
- Patrick Harrington, technical team lead of Walmart Labs.
- Michael Jaquet, vice president and chief marketing officer, U.S. Ski and Snowboard Team.
- Stanley Hainsworth, chairman and chief creative officer, Tether.
- Barbara DeLollis, travel reporter for USA Today.
- Chris Steiner, co-founder of Aisle50.
- Ian Swinson, senior director of user experience at Salesforce.com.
- Chris Heuer, specialist leader of social business at Deloitte Digital.

Register online. Early-bird rates starting at \$500 are available through Dec. 31.

Stamate – figure in landmark forfeiture law dies

Local resident Byron Stamate has just passed away and will be remembered as the key figure in a landmark case that helped upend California's asset forfeiture laws.

In 1994, when he was 74, Stamate was charged with cultivating marijuana in his El Dorado County home. He said that the marijuana was used by his live-in companion, Shirley Dorsey, 70, to treat chronic pain from arthritis. Prosecutors relentlessly sought to forfeit Byron's home and life savings of \$400,000 under a new state law modeled on the federal one, which did not require a conviction for forfeiture.

Dorsey committed suicide rather than be forced to testify against him. The text of Shirley Dorsey's suicide note follows:

"They want to take our property, security and herbal medicine from us, even though we have not caused harm to anyone.

"It is not fair or in the best interest of the people of society.

"I will never testify against you or our right to our home. I will not live in the streets without security and a place to sleep.

"I am old, tired and ill, and I see no end to the harassment and pressures until they destroy us."

The prosecution backfired, generating intense adverse publicity against forfeiture abuse. Stamate's case was settled for a nominal \$1,000 fine. Subsequently, California's forfeiture law was repealed and radically reformed thanks to a

lobbying campaign led by Stamate's attorney, Brenda Grantland, and an expose on forfeiture abuses by *San Jose Mercury News* reporter Gary Webb.

– *Steve Kubby*