

Polar Express rolling into Carson City for holiday season

Carson City is getting a big present this upcoming holiday season with the return of the Polar Express train that will roll through the frosty Northern Nevada landscape on 15 dates throughout November and December.

For the second year, the Virginia & Truckee Railroad is one of the officially licensed Polar Express Train Ride events nationwide this holiday season. This historic 100-year train, complete with decorated passenger cars and Christmas music, leaves the Carson City Eastgate Depot and travels nearly two miles before staging at Santa's mythical North Pole retreat.

The Polar Express train rides are based on the holiday feature film from Warner Bros. Pictures and the beloved children's book, by Chris Van Allsburg, about a doubting young boy who takes an extraordinary train ride to the North Pole on Christmas Eve.

Set to the sounds of the motion picture soundtrack, pajama clad passengers will relive the magic of the story as this nighttime train whisks families away for an unforgettable ride to the North Pole.

Tickets include keepsake silver bell, hot chocolate, cookies, entertainment and reading of the Polar Express. The Polar Express departs Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays at 5pm, 6:30pm and 8pm, from Nov. 23 to Dec. 23. Times are subject to change.

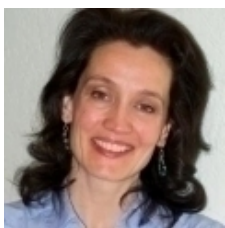
Tickets are \$27 for children ages 2-12 and \$34 for 13 and older. To book tickets in advance, call (775) 687.7410.

Tips for those living with restless leg syndrome

By Mandy Kendall

There is a very prevalent condition that affects an estimated 10 percent of the population and, for a change, its name actually describes what it does. Restless leg syndrome is a condition with an unknown cause and currently is without a known cure.

Symptoms reported by sufferers are generally very similar; an irresistible urge to move the legs, mainly when sitting or lying, usually improving with movement or walking and getting worse in the evening or at bedtime. There is often also an aching sensation to the legs, or even a creepy-crawly sensation experienced when sitting for prolonged periods of time – a miserable situation to be in.



Mandy
Kendall

As for what causes RLS, there doesn't appear to be any definitive documented causes, but there are many theories put forward by health professionals.

There are theories that the central nervous system plays a part in RLS, especially the dopamine neurotransmitter system.

RLS symptoms have been shown to respond well to medications that improve dopamine neurotransmission within the central nervous system. However, there are also medications that have been linked with causing RLS, including antidepressants, so professional advice should be sought before considering taking medication for the relief of RLS.

Studies have shown that iron deficiency can also be a major contributor to RLS and treating sufferers with supplemental iron has been shown to be an effective method of improving symptoms. There is some literature to suggest that being deficient in some of the B vitamins and magnesium might trigger limb movements, so exploring these questions with your doctor and taking the appropriate supplements might be helpful.

All of the symptoms associated with RLS will often disturb sleep, making RLS one of the most health disruptive of the non life-threatening conditions. RLS is also often reported more frequently by those suffering with kidney disease and diabetes, and they often report that symptoms increase during times of stress.

While there is no known cure for RLS some lifestyle changes have been shown to reduce symptoms for some sufferers.

So what can you do about RLS? Here are some *Qwik-e tips* that may help minimize the effects and symptoms.

Sleep tactics – Avoid chronic sleep deprivation by trying to maximize total sleep time.

Exercise – Avoid exercising too close to bedtime, but try having a regular exercise program to keep circulation at optimal levels.

Caffeine/alcohol – Avoid caffeine (which can sometimes trigger symptoms late in the day), and alcohol near bedtime.

Blood tests – Have iron and vitamin levels checked with a blood test and take advice from a professional on possible supplementation requirements.

Stress – Use breathing or relaxation techniques to help reduce the physical side effects of stress on the body.

As always, the *Health Connective Qwik-e* articles are for information only and are not meant to serve as any form of diagnosis or treatment plan. Any readers of *Health Connective* articles should contact their healthcare provider for further information and treatment.

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.

Barton awards \$24,000 in health grants

Barton Health's Community Advisory Committee along with the Barton Foundation gave \$24,000 in health grants to nine organizations at the foundation's annual Philanthropy Day Lunch last week.

The CAC is comprised of individuals who represent different entities in the South Lake Tahoe area. They identify and advise the Barton board of directors regarding the unmet

health needs of our community and serve as a catalyst for relationship building and partnering with organizations, businesses and individuals.

The recipients of this year's grants include:

South Lake Tahoe Police Activities League (PAL), Six-week athletic programs and sports sponsorships: \$2,000

The Drug Store Project, Drug Store Project for all sixth-graders in the Douglas and Lake Tahoe Unified school districts: \$3,000

N.A.M.I., Funding for emergency medications and temporary housing for mentally-ill patients: \$3,000

Boys and Girls Club, Bike Safety for Youth Program: \$1,500

Live Violence Free, Child counseling services: \$5,000

A.Y.S.O., Soccer Scholarship Fund: \$1,500

O.P.E.N., Transportation for medical treatments: \$3,000

South Tahoe Library, summer reading program: "Reading Is So Delicious:" \$2,000

Tahoe Youth & Family Services: "Tahoe Collaborative Mentoring Project:" \$3,000.

Politics leading to unfriending on Facebook

By Katy Steinmetz, Time

Chris Adamson is a let-live libertarian, but he didn't mind that most of his Facebook friends are uberliberal—until this election season. That's when the Grand Rapids, Mich., computer programmer noticed a stream of less-than-subtle posts invading his News Feed.

The breaking point came when one of his buddies pledged to post every single day in an effort to understand “why his friends could possibly vote for” Mitt Romney. “Given the nature of my friend group, I'm getting this very one-sided argument that I don't even want to participate in anymore,” Adamson says.

Politics, classic etiquette tells us, is a subject best avoided when friends come to dinner. It may be time to amend that advice to include Facebook. The Pew Research Center found that nearly 1 in 5 social networkers has blocked, hidden or unfriended someone over political material that was too frequent or too disagreeable.

Though social networking played a big role in the 2008 race, spurring fundraising and helping candidates get out their message, it was still the province of earlyish adopters. Since then Facebook has grown tenfold; it just hit 1 billion monthly users worldwide. Today's bigger friend groups are also more diverse, which makes it easier to offend.

Some Facebookers have decided just to sever the online ties. Jake Sherlock, a communications coordinator in Colorado Springs, says he unfriended one of his long-distance in-laws over political chum. “The final straw for me was a post about how Obamacare requires all Americans to get chips installed in their skin,” he writes. A less drastic alternative is blocking a person's updates from your News Feed so you don't see their posts unless you go looking for them. Leslie Hassel, a graduate student at the University of Mississippi, says that “in an effort to salvage my relationship with my mother,” she has unsubscribed from posts by the “rabid Republican” who

raised her.

Political oversharing is facilitated by what psychologists call the Internet's disinhibition effect. John Suler, a psychology professor at Rider University in New Jersey, observes in an article for *CyberPsychology & Behavior* that people feel emboldened by the lack of real-time response and the sense that the things they do online are less serious than actions in the real world. We get on the Web, and "out spills rude language and harsh criticisms, anger, hatred, even threats," Suler writes.

Etiquette gurus provide some guidelines for dealing with politics on Facebook. "Sharing what you like is generally better than sharing what you don't," says Anna Post, a scion of etiquette legend Emily Post. Also, now that many people can count everyone from close friends to crazy uncles to far-flung professional contacts among their Facebook friends, it's important to keep the whole audience in mind, says consultant Jacqueline Whitmore. The original rule about politics and conversation, after all, was about having consideration for others' feelings.

For his part, Adamson is fighting back in iambic pentameter. Every time one of his friends posts something political, he posts one line, in order, from Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*. "We'll see if we get through the whole play by November 6th," he announced on his wall in late September. At this point, he's at least reached his favorite line, from Act II, Scene 1: "Some rise by sin," the Bard wrote 400 years ago, "and some by virtue fall."

Child actors sought for ‘The Secret Garden’

The Missoula Children’s Theater via Tahoe Arts Project is having auditions for “The Secret Garden” Nov. 13 from 4-6pm at South Tahoe Middle School’s multipurpose room.

Auditions are free. If cast, there is a \$35 fee per child to participate.

There are more than 50 roles for ages 5-17.

Rehearsals are Nov. 14-16 from 4-8pm, and performances are Nov. 17 at 2 and 6pm. All are at STMS.

For more information, call (530) 542.3632.

Millions could hit the streets to trick-or-treat

Halloween, which dates back to Celtic rituals thousands of years ago, has long been associated with images of witches, ghosts and vampires. Over the years, Halloween customs have changed dramatically. Today, Halloween is celebrated many different ways, including wearing costumes, children trick-or-treating, carving pumpkins, and going to haunted houses and parties.

The estimated number of potential trick-or-treaters in 2011 – children age 5 to 14 – across the United States was 41 million, according to the Census Bureau. Of course, many other children – older than 14 and younger than 5 – also go trick-

or-treating.

The value of pumpkins harvested from the top six pumpkin-producing states – Illinois, California, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Michigan in 2011 – was \$113 million, according to the Agricultural Marketing Resource Center.

Some places around the country that may put you in the Halloween mood are: Transylvania County, N.C., Tombstone, Ariz., Pumpkin Center, N.C., Pumpkin Bend, Ark., Cape Fear, N.C., and Skull Creek, Neb.

Safety tips for kids going trick-or-treating

Ghosts, vampires and scary monsters aren't the only things to be wary of when you are out trick-or-treating on Oct. 31, accidents and unfortunate mishaps increase dramatically on Halloween.

To help keep children safe while out trick-or-treating, and avoid potential hazards, the Washoe County Sheriff's Office recommends parents follow the basic precautions below. Some are commonly known child safety tips, while others focus on the possibility of victimization on an evening when thousands of children may be walking in unfamiliar neighborhoods.

The sheriff's office urges parents to communicate with their children about prevention and detection of potential dangerous situations throughout the entire year. Have a plan for what your child should do if they become separated. Discuss with

your child before heading out.

Always trick-or-treat with an adult. Don't allow a child to go outside alone;

Accompany children to the door of every house they approach;

Stay outside. Never enter a home or apartment without adult supervision;

Children should not approach any vehicle, occupied or not;

Remain visible. Wear bright clothing or use reflective strips on costumes. Carry a glow stick or flashlight;

Obey all traffic and pedestrian regulations. Look in all directions before crossing, walk on sidewalks, and obey traffic signals and stop signs. Always walk; never run across streets or lawns.

With all the extra pedestrian traffic on Halloween, drivers are reminded to be extra cautious at all times by eliminating distractions

Children should be warned to never approach a house that is not well lighted and does not have a porch light or outside light on

Do not go onto properties that are marked "Keep Out", "No Trespassing", and "No Solicitors Allowed."

Never eat any treat until it is thoroughly checked by an adult. Dispose of anything that seems to have been tampered with, has been opened, or isn't wrapped.

Children should immediately report to their parents and/or law enforcement if they see or experience anything suspicious. Instruct children to shout for help and make a scene if anyone tries to grab them or force them into involuntary situations.

Placerville resident injured in Afghanistan coming home for visit

Army Spec. Charles Douglas Harris is coming home this week to Placerville for a visit.

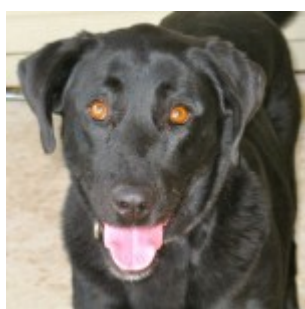
On May 3, the 22-year-old Harris received serious injuries in Afghanistan to both legs and his right arm when an improvised explosive device was set off. His right leg was removed below the knee, his left leg was removed from the middle of the knee down and he received extensive treatment to a broken elbow and damaged arm muscle.

Harris has been receiving medical treatment at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Maryland. This will be his first visit home since he was injured. He will have to return to the hospital for further

Harris will arrive at Sacramento International Airport on Oct. 31 at 7:10pm. The Harris family invites anyone to the airport or at any safe location along his route back to Placerville. He will be picked up at the airport by a Hummer limo and will be taken to the Placerville Veterans Hall at 130 Placerville Drive, Placerville.

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe

Are you looking for an companion for runs or long walks? Someone with short, easy to groom hair? A big smile with beautiful white teeth?



Katie could be your new best friend. She is a sweet, young adult black Lab, who is quite affectionate.

She'd probably keep your yard clear of squirrels, and would probably keep your feet warm. (She likes to sit on feet!) Katie will make a great addition to just about any household.

Katie 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

A howling good time at canine Halloween party

By Kathryn Reed

Kiss, sit, dance, do a trick, eat fast – oh, and look really cute.

Halloween games aren't just for kids. They aren't even just for humans. Dogs got into the act Saturday during the second annual Howl'ween Party at Tahoe Best Friends in South Lake Tahoe.

Owner Paige Rice loves Halloween almost more than she loves dogs. And she isn't the only one.



Susan and Ernie compete in the Oct. 27 dancing competition at Tahoe Best Friends. Photos/Kathryn Reed

More than two dozen four-legged critters showed up at Oct. 27

party. And most were in costume.

According to the National Retail Federation, pet owners will spend more than \$370 million this year on costumes for their dog or cat. Considering this is an increase of about \$40 million from 2011, people clearly have money for their animals. And this compares to the \$80 million people spend on candy and decorations for Halloween.

Chelsea found a hot dog out fit for Shiloh in San Francisco. This seemed appropriate for the wiener dog.

And the Dachshund had lots of kisses to give her owner – enough to tie for first in the licking contest. Tony and his “Angora Brindle” Ollie were the other winners at Tahoe Best Friends. The contest was to see whose dog gave their owner the most kisses. A few people took Rice’s advice and rubbed bits of hotdogs on their face to entice their dog.

The afternoon started with a form of dog musical chairs. As soon as the music stopped dogs had to sit. Not only that, they had to stay. Each round one dog would have to step aside. The last dog sitting – AJ – came away with a coupon to make her stay at Tahoe Best Friends a little cheaper next time. (AJ, who was dressed as a San Francisco Giants fan, is this reporter’s dog.)

But when it comes to tricks, sitting is ordinary. Just say “touch it” and Hailey, a 1-year-old pocket beagle, will do that. Pixie the Chihuahua jumps and jumps like a yo-yo. And with her costume, that is just what she looks like – a yo-yo. The two won the trick contest.

Many of the dogs enjoying the fun aren’t even regulars at Tahoe Best Friends, but instead have owners who love to have a good time. TBF is a doggie day-care center that offers “dog sitting” by the day or overnight. And a human is always on site.

People definitely are making their pets a member of the family. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, families spend an average of \$58 per month on their pets. That is an increase of 99 percent since 1999. All together, \$50 billion is what Americans are expected to spend on their pets (not just dogs) this year – from grooming, boarding, pet hotels, pet-sitting and day care – according to American Pets Products Association.

While the afternoon was all about Halloween fun for four-legged family members, Oct. 31 can be stressful for them. That is why the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals offers these tips:

- Limit treats to trick-or-treaters. Chocolate – especially dark or baking chocolate – can be dangerous for dogs and cats. Candies containing the artificial sweetener xylitol can also cause problems.
- Pumpkins and decorative corn are considered to be relatively nontoxic, but they can produce an upset stomach in pets.
- Wires and cords from electric lights and other decorations should be kept out of reach of pets.
- Use battery powered lights instead of candles. Pets can easily knock a candle or candlelit pumpkin over and cause a fire.
- Don't put your dog or cat in a costume unless you know he or she loves it. For pets who don't like them, wearing a costume might cause undue stress.
- If you do dress up your pet, make sure the costume isn't annoying or unsafe.
- All but the most social dogs and cats should be kept in a separate, quiet room away from the front door during peak trick-or-treating hours. Too many strangers can be scary and

stressful for pets.

- When opening the door for trick-or-treaters, take care that your cat or dog doesn't dart outside.

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