

Fall writing workshops available in Truckee

Tangled Roots Writing resumes its Monday Night Workshops on Sept. 10 in Truckee.

The 6:30-8pm six-week sessions are a way to invigorate your writing and how you think about your creativity. Classes explore different approaches to inspiring people so you aren't waiting around for inspiration.

Use the workshops to develop ideas or come with an open mind to write something you had never thought.

For more information, click on the flyer or call (530) 386.3901.

Relaxation takes some practice

By Mandy Kendall

I just came back from a wonderfully relaxing 10-day trip. However, having been home for 24 hours, the relaxed bit already seems to be wearing off. I'm back to the old schedule of emails, errands, chores and work, making the memories of the trip already seem like a lifetime ago.

Why is it so difficult to relax and make it last? I think relaxing is like exercise, you have to keep doing it in order for it to be effective.



Mandy
Kendall

Why do we need to relax? Back in the days when we encountered stressful situations (e.g. a hungry saber toothed tiger) we produced lots of adrenaline that allowed us to respond by running or fighting (the fight or flight response). These days there aren't so many saber toothed tigers, but lots of situations that prompt the same increase of adrenaline in our bodies. Unfortunately, most of the time, it is not appropriate to fight or run away so we build up all this stress in our bodies without releasing it.

As a result, if stress is prolonged or repeated, it can have some serious health consequences such as high blood pressure and reduced immune function. The symptoms of prolonged stress can manifest in a number of ways such as headaches, neck or back pain, digestive problems, changes in sleep and appetite, muscle cramps or shaking. Emotional issues can also be rooted in long term stress situations with feelings of hopelessness, depression, irritability and anger being some of the common symptoms.

Stressful situations are often difficult to avoid but we can devise ways of dealing with them, so here are a few *Qwik-e* tips on how to deal with day to day stress and help keep that relaxed feeling all the time:

Calming foods:

Green Tea – is a natural source of L-Theanine which has been shown to reduce mental and physical stress, improve cognition and boost mood

Chocolate – dark chocolate especially helps regulate levels of cortisol, the stress hormone. The more pure the chocolate, the better. Unfortunately a small 1.4-ounce square is sufficient.

Honey – not only is honey a great antibiotic, it is also a wonderful natural anti-inflammatory and had a compound that has been shown to help fight depression and anxiety.

Your inner peace:

Just breathe – it is very easy, when we are tense, to forget to breathe properly. Long slow deep breaths that make our stomachs push out, with shoulders relaxed will help diffuse tension. Thinking the word ‘accepting’ when you breathe in and ‘releasing’ when you breathe out will also help stress melt away.

Stop thinking – no need to spend hours meditating (unless you want to). Recent studies have shown that just five minutes, twice a day, spent just focusing on breathing in and out can relieve stress and depression. If not thinking about anything is a challenge just count your breaths as they come and go. If thoughts still enter your mind, try counting backward from 100 and subtract 7 each time.

Visualizing – this does take some practice but imagining a calm tranquil scene does have an actual calming physical effect on the body as the brain finds it hard to distinguish between what’s real and what’s imagined. So try to be mindful about what you think about and imagine.

Body relaxing:

Muscle clenching – sometimes we don’t realize what tension we are unconsciously holding in a muscle until we consciously use it then relax it. Shoulders are often held in tension without us realizing it and just focusing attention there will alert us to any habitual over use. Tightening a muscle for a few seconds (at least one breath) and then letting it totally

relax will help calm the whole body.

Stretch out the tension – releasing physical tension will put your whole system in a calmer state. Even some quick shoulder rolls or a chest opening stretch will help increase blood flow and perk up your energy levels. A few minutes of stretching just before you get into bed will release some of the tension from your day and so aid a more peaceful night's sleep.

Stroll out stress – sometimes a stroll around the block is all that is needed to re-focus, calm down and put things in perspective

Scents for the senses – essential oils have been used for centuries for all kinds of healing therapies. Lavender is known for its calming effects but whatever scent works for you is fine. Just a few drops in some warm water or in some carrier oil that you rub into your skin may help to take some of the stress out of your day.

Laugh it off – science shows that laughter boosts the immune system and increases blood flow as well as just making you feel better.

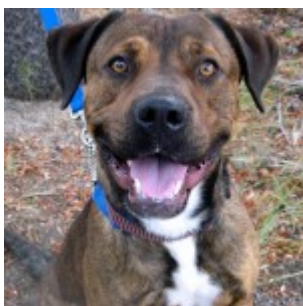
A hug a day keeps stress at bay – we thrive on contact so, whether it's human, feline or canine, a jolly good cuddle will help reduce your blood pressure and perhaps make all of those stresses seem that little bit less important.

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.

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe

Jude is one of those dogs who takes a while for shelter visitors to notice. Adopters just seem to pass up darker and brindle dogs, no matter their personality.



But he is a favorite of the shelter staff and volunteers because no matter what he looks like, he acts like a pure bred Lab – he is super happy and affectionate, and his tail is always wagging.

Keep your feet out of the way because he will probably sit on them. And look at those eyes and his big smile.

Jude 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 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

Study reveals the demographics of charitable giving

By Pam Fessler, NPR

Ever wonder how charitable the people are who live in your state or community? It turns out that lower-income people tend to donate a much bigger share of their discretionary incomes than wealthier people do. And rich people are more generous when they live among those who aren't so rich.

That's according to a new study by the Chronicle of Philanthropy, which breaks charitable giving down by ZIP code. It found that generosity varies greatly from one region of the country to another. (Explore charitable giving in your state, city and neighborhood using the Chronicle of Philanthropy's new interactive.)

Take the 20020 ZIP code area in Southeast Washington, D.C. It includes the Fairlawn and Anacostia neighborhoods, which are among the city's poorest. Many in the area turn to charity for help.

One of those charities is a nonprofit called Bread for the City, where people line up daily for help with housing, health care, legal aid and food. But in this neighborhood, where the need is so great, charitable giving is also relatively high. Using Internal Revenue Service data, the Chronicle of Philanthropy found that the median household contribution is almost 19 percent of discretionary income – that's money left over after taxes and living expenses. This rate of giving is four times the national average.

Kristin Valentine, Bread for the City's development director, says she's not surprised. Even their clients give when they

can, though it's often a few dollars at a time.

Read the whole story

TOCCATA commemorates 9/11 with 4 performances

Tahoe Symphony Orchestra and Chorus commemorates the 11th anniversary of the 9/11 tragedy with a concert series that features famed violinist Elizabeth Pitcairn performing Brahms Violin Concerto on the legendary Red Stradivarius Violin and features the TOCCATA Chorus in Brahms mighty German Requiem.

Performances are:

Sept. 12 at 7pm at St. Theresa Catholic Church in South Lake Tahoe;

Sept. 13 at 7pm at Assumption Catholic Church in Truckee.

Sept. 15 at 4pm at the North Tahoe Hebrew Center in Tahoe Vista.

Sept. 17 at 7pm at Trinity Episcopal Church in Reno.

Tickets are \$30 adults, \$25 seniors, \$5 students (19–23), and free for youth 18 and under. Preferred seating is available for \$40 and can be reserved online. Tickets can be purchased in advance by credit card online or at the door by cash or check.

For more information, call (775) 313.9697.

LTCC instructor to give talk about wildflowers

Lisa Berry, wildflower aficionado and Lake Tahoe Community College adjunct instructor, says the fickle weather in the Sierra can result in a distinct advantage for wildflowers.

Berry has been leading wildflower hikes and studying the area's wildflowers for almost a decade. This year's dry winter season resulted in something she said she has never seen before.

"The light winter did take its toll on the flowers," Berry said in a press release. "You didn't see the explosions of color like we are used to, but what I found was when the conditions aren't right for the normal flowers they are perfect for other flowers that usually don't get a chance to bloom."

Berry will be talking about her findings and presenting a slideshow of her discoveries on Sept. 5 at 7pm in LTCC's Aspen Room. The talk is free and open to the public.

Lake Tahoe on pilots' list of places to linger over

By Scott McCartney, Wall Street Journal

Sometimes the best vacation sightseeing begins before the wheels touch down on the runway.

A number of regularly traveled commercial flight paths showcase some of the nation's most beautiful vistas, from the Grand Canyon to Alaskan glaciers to historic lighthouses en route to Portland, Maine.

Pilots have their favorites views, and some tell stories of days before high fuel prices when they would seek permission from air-traffic controllers to pass close by prime sites or even double back to give passengers on both sides of a plane a great view.

A "canyon tour" of the Grand Canyon used to be a popular request to air-traffic controllers—pilots would descend to 5,000 to 10,000 feet above the canyon and fly over the top of the Colorado River for spectacular views while approaching Las Vegas.

Some pilots still request permission for a procedure known informally as the "Bay Tour" on southbound flights leaving San Francisco. Controllers instruct pilots to level off at 2,000 or 3,000 feet above sea level as they follow the bay out to sea, flying over the Bay Bridge, past Alcatraz and then over the Golden Gate Bridge. At the Golden Gate, flights turn to a southwesterly compass heading and climb to 10,000 feet to continue to Southern California.

"This takes special coordination with air-traffic controllers, but if they are not too busy, they will usually comply with the request," said Russ Webber, a US Airways captain based in

Phoenix. He's also asked controllers for routings that offer great views of Half Dome and El Capitan in Yosemite National Park and Lake Tahoe.

Read the whole story

Ambleside beckons the tourist who likes to play outdoors

By Susan Wood

AMBLESIDE, England – Billed as one of the most beautiful places on the planet, England's largest national park may be vast and full of superlatives – but it also holds the distinction as having a small-town spirit. The region of northwest England is welcoming, friendly and oh, so comfortable.

This is the place to feel at home – especially if you hail from another lake with stunning scenery and you grow up in the rolling, emerald hills of New England.

From the minute a visitor steps off the train at the Windermere station and boards a bus for a 10-minute ride to Ambleside, it's difficult to not be taken in by views that take your breath away. The scenery is filled with grazing sheep and cows, lush landscapes dotted with rocks dating back 500 million years, as well as England's largest, deepest lakes as serene as a plate-glass window.



Ambleside, England, is the perfect place to travel for people who like the outdoors. Photos/Kathryn Reed

Arriving in the small, quaint village of Ambleside is like entering another world – with its notable stonewalls, cobblestone streets, tiny abodes and gorgeous flora that includes vivid purple foxgloves standing 6-feet high.

London has William Shakespeare. Bath relishes its past with Jane Austen. But this fantasyland of sorts has gained a worldwide reputation as being the home of Beatrix Potter, who wrote a series of children's books based on the lovable "Peter Rabbit." Potter's legendary rabbit, which turned 110 years old last month, makes up the vacation plans of thousands of Japanese parents who have religiously taken their children through the book series as they grow up. One may tour her nearby home.

Ambleside serves as the inspiration to artists, creative types and adventurers for hundreds of years. Poet William Wordsworth and C.S. Lewis, professor and author of the "Chronicles of Narnia" known to escape in its sheer beauty and embrace its atmosphere.

The small town is appropriately named. Many visitors can be found holding walking sticks, carrying packs and wearing hiking boots – ambling along.

Before going out to explore, it's highly recommended that visitors park their hiking boots in the front-entry of the Haven Cottage. There's a reason it won the AA B&B Friendliest Landlady of the Year in 2011. With rooms averaging about 85 pounds a night, the bed and breakfast owned by Tim Hall and Lindsey Kinley is homey. They take hospitality to a level beyond the highest peaks found in the Lake District.

"People come from all over. It was like the (United Nations) around here (recently)," Hall said, noting his guests from the United States, Belgium and Germany. One Scottish woman has returned to the Haven Cottage 30 times. The place "stays busy every weekend throughout the year," Hall added. The Lake District has come to be known as a four-season destination, but it's summer that keeps the place hopping.

The B&B has much character in its exquisite décor, which is complemented by Hall's insatiable humor. He bravely hung a sign at the entrance reading: "Hot beer, lousy food, bad service – welcome."

In fact, visitors may want to stay just to hear Hall spin a yarn, tell a joke or serve up a puzzle for each guest before they devour the inn's famously delicious breakfasts. (Note: If the intoxicating smell of his own vegetarian sausage recipe and roasted tomatoes grown locally isn't enough to fill the senses, wait until the fresh baked bread comes out of the oven.) In the evening, a nightcap of liqueur or wine on the sofa in the living room is the perfect activity to cap off the day.

Ambleside sits on the northernmost corner of Windermere Lake in the Lake District.

Windermere Lake Cruises, which can be accessed out of Ambleside or Bowness to the south, runs a variety of cruises across England's largest lake, which spans 10 miles and goes to a depth of 219 feet.

The boat cruise company uses old steamers, with one – the 122-year-old Tern – carrying the Olympic torch into the Bowness harbor in June amid a regatta of boats alongside and thousands of cheering spectators awaiting its anticipated arrival into port.

“Ten thousand people were gathered at Bowness,” said Windermere Lake Cruises staffer Jacqui O’Connor, who was on board at the time.

She was still smiling widely as she recalled the experience aboard the Tern’s sister boat, a 75-year-old triple-decker steamer called the Teal. It takes out hundreds of visitors on its sunset jazz cruise in the summer. The enchanting two-hour cruise is one sure way to slow down life for the evening. Jazz from a local band and a full, tasty buffet complement the backdrop of amazing views. The scenery, especially as the sun dips into the horizon, is nothing short of spectacular. White swans float along the shoreline. Sprawling estates that look like mini castles poke out of the waterfront forest lining the lake. Vast green meadows dominate the hillsides behind the forest.

Those green hills also provide an excellent scenic route pedaling south to Coniston Lake – touted by Bing.com as one of the 10 most beautiful lakes in the world. It is one of 80 lakes in the Lake District in the Cumbria region. An 1859 steam yacht also takes visitors across its northern section. At half the length of Windermere, the lake also holds speedboat records.

The destination is definitely worth the trip via bike. (BikeTrek in Ambleside has hybrids for rent and suggestions for where to ride.)

The roads from Ambleside to Coniston are filled with offshoot paths where the national government trust has secured arrangements with local farmers to allow visitors to walk and

cycle through the ranchland with its captivating green meadows, colorful flowers, clear streams and pretty mountains in the background. (Just remember to close the gates when passing through.) The single- or double-track paths are fun and sometimes challenging without ever feeling like too much for novice technical mountain bikers.

The round-trip ride, which provides a few elevation gains that are not for the faint of heart, takes about three hours to complete. But afterward, one of England's famous ales may await a hardy rider in Ambleside without guilt. (Note: Ambleside Tavern or Royal Oak Pub – especially the latter if a Wimbledon tennis match is on – are worth visiting.)

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‘A Note of Scandal’ – a romance worth reading

By Kathryn Reed

Escaping to a place that does not resemble your life is a good reason to read books – especially fiction. I had to be reminded of this fact this summer because normally non-fiction is what I choose.



“A Note of Scandal” is not something I would normally choose to read. But because my friend and former colleague Nicky Penttila wrote it, I downloaded it. (The book is available only as an ebook.)

I didn’t know it was set in post-war London until I started reading. This presented a certain irony because it was in London that I was reading it.

This romance novel, according to the publisher, is at Level 2 on the heat index. While, admittedly, I think a little more steam would have added more to the book, I was captivated by how Penttila spun her tale through a time when such scandal would have been provocative.

Knowing Penttila’s newspaper background made it personally fun to read how a publisher plays such a prominent role.

“A Note of Scandal” will not be for everyone. But the writing is superb, the storytelling captivating, the scene-setting excellent, and the story fun and lively.

3-day workshop in Tahoe for divorced people

Divorced people suffer common problems – from financial issues to re-entering the dating world to helping their kids heal after divorce. And an event happening at Lake Tahoe will show divorced people how they can solve all those challenges.

Rebuilding Your Life After Divorce Mountain Retreat is Sept. 15-17 at Granlibakken Resort in Tahoe City.

The retreat will bring together 15 authors and experts from around Reno and the country, who will show divorced people how to:

- Overcome nervousness over dating again.
- Get back on your financial feet.
- Let go of post-divorce anger and sadness.
- Avoid the losers and meet the good ones when venturing back out into the dating world.
- Use four questions to get your child to cooperate with your every request.
- Begin the steps necessary if you're as unhappy with your job or career as you were with your marriage.
- Feel whole again now that you're a single person instead of part of a couple.

Use code Local for \$200 off the retreat fee through Aug. 25. To sign up, go online.