

Impossible to take the artist out of the art instructor

By Susan Wood

Despite being out of the public eye of college life, a longtime art instructor has remained rock solid in his commitment to sculpting.

Four years ago in June, David Foster left his post of 32 years at Lake Tahoe Community College. The fixture of the local institution began focusing much of his time on his own pieces – “steps away” from his log cabin home on Tahoe Mountain. The 1,600-square-foot studio is Foster’s version of his man cave. The gallery is upstairs, but most of the action happens downstairs.

The studio is dotted with sculptures, mostly marble – his stone of choice since touring Pietra Santa, Italy, where artists go to work and follow in Michelangelo’s footsteps. Foster, 69, gleams when he talks about the artists’ haven, as if fantasizing about one day being one of the 90-plus-year-old sculptors who call the place home.



David Foster's attention to detail allows him to create impressive works of art.

Photos/Susan Wood

After glancing around the studio, it's easy to see that moving seems out of the question. Marble weighs 160 pounds per cubic foot, a reality that surfaced when his wife Joanne lifted one of the pieces while fleeing their home from a racing Angora Fire a year before he retired.

"That's true love," Foster said, referring to her selecting irreplaceable valuables to pack. She grabbed one bronze and one marble works of art.

Foster felt helpless that day. He came out of Scotty's Hardware and noticed a huge plume of smoke from the North Upper Truckee area moving northeast toward his house.

"The sun looked red," he recalled. He scrambled up to a rock outcropping off Echo View Estates, but by the time he drove to Sawmill Pond, an El Dorado County sheriff's blockade was set up and he couldn't get home. After a quick call and a carload of valuables, the Fosters met up at his LTCC office and waited patiently for their next move. Ash and cinders fell on the campus grounds.

Foster sighed.

"If the fire would have hit the studio, this marble piece would have turned to white powder," he said, while running his hands through a pile.

Foster grew up in eastern Iowa where his father worked in a stone quarry. Taking over the business was his father's dream, but not David's. He wanted to do something else with stone.

"I told him: 'Dad, I gotta study art'," Foster said, with the conviction of a J.D. Salinger's "Catcher in the Rye" coming of age passion.

That he did. Then, he spent three decades teaching others –

after a brief reprieve as a driver's education instructor. For that: "I have stories," Foster said of the job.

Foster misses some components of teaching. He often filled the figure sculpting classes, employing a slew of nude models. Some of the students still keep in contact. He had an incredible knack for teaching – sometimes reminding the wannabe sculptors to carve "realism, not idealism" when it comes to working with live nude models. The students made Foster and longtime colleague Phyllis Shafer proud every year during the annual student art competition.

His teaching methods may have come across as unconventional at times. He recalled holding up an art book one might keep on a coffee table and called it a "coloring book."

"If they were having a hard time, I could tell from the book (not being highlighted and written on)," he said.

Foster has kept ties with the college by bringing President Kindred Murillo to his home for a tour. The artist was commissioned by a college patron for a piece called "Discovery." The sculpture will sit near the library and stretch 12 feet to the sky. It's being created in honor of a patron Kit Barkley's husband because of his flying background.

"It's a wonderful opportunity for the college to have a lasting piece of (Foster's) work publicly shown," said Melonie Guttry, who works for the LTCC Foundation.

The piece that has consumed him "for too long" he says represents a cross between a woman and cello. The aptly named "Donnacello" dominates the art studio as the centerpiece. Small shards of grinding rocks and other tools lay under the piece. After hours of "sanding," the shards take on the shape of the sculpture because the stone is usually harder.

He admits one must be in shape to take on this hobby. Foster is also a regular fixture at Sierra Athletic Club. His

patience is satisfied by moving from one piece to another. The heavy pieces get moved around by a 1-ton crane he bought for \$200 and later retrofitted for his own use for \$800. There's a hatch between the two studio floors where a pulley system transports the pieces from one floor to another.

The studio came about in 2005 after his carving dropped white dust that floated into the house from the garage and settled on the grand piano. His wife's hands on her hips let it be known the art needed a new home.

Before Foster selects what to sculpt, he surveys the stone yards like a true shopper. Then he studies how the stone may be situated in such a way to give the piece motion – for example, balancing on a corner. The trick teaches the appreciative art eye to stare in an attempt to catch the piece moving. Think of the Mona Lisa.

He draws it then makes mini versions of the sculpture called "maquettes."

"I try to find something that's never been done before," he said.

With its Portugal marble crystals glowing in the light, the Donnacello serves as an ideal example.

"I wanted the relationship of the figure and cello to unite," he said, while lightly stroking the smooth figure.

ngg_shortcode_0_placeholder (Click on photos to enlarge.)

Alan Tolhurst – 1950-2012

Alan Tolhurst, an architect who contributed to the community by serving on local boards, passed away on July 8. He died after a long battle with leukemia.

“Alan served his community of South Lake Tahoe in so many ways to insure economic improvement and environmental responsibility as a leader on the El Dorado County Planning Commission for 15 years and on the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Advisory Planning Commission,” said El Dorado County Supervisor Norma Santiago in a statement.

Mr. Tolhurst graduated from Homestead High School in Cupertino. He attended the University of Colorado, Boulder, graduating in 1974 with a degree in environmental design. He received his graduate degree in 1982 at the Southern California Institute of Architecture, an independent school of architecture in Los Angeles.

Working first with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Ames Research Center in Silicon Valley from 1985-88, Mr. Tolhurst was later employed by San Jose as an architect in 1988.

After moving to South Lake Tahoe, he opened a private practice as Alan G. Tolhurst, Architect in 1996.

“Alan was a deep thinker, a man of vision, and a

quintessential design professional with a light-sided sense of humor. He spoke from experience, presence and thoughtfulness. He felt compassion for everything he touched, decided and discovered. And, he also incorporated a broad vision in every professional application,” said Santiago.

“TRPA is deeply saddened by the passing of El Dorado County Planning Commissioner Alan Tolhurst, who served as a long-time member and past chair of TRPA’s Advisory Planning Commission,” said a statement provided by the agency. “Our thoughts are with his family and his young daughter, whom he was so proud of. We will miss his commitment and compassion.”

Mr. Tolhurst is survived by his wife Brigitte and daughter Zyeena.

The flags of El Dorado County fly at half staff this week in Mr. Tolhurst’s honor.

Ideas for fostering inspiration

By Mandy Kendall

I have to admit that when I came to sit down and write this week’s piece, I found I was somewhat lacking in inspiration. I sat, I paced, I sat again, but nothing sprang to mind. Then, when I was thinking about something else entirely, it struck me that inspiration itself should be this week’s topic. (Cue Homer Simpson ‘Doh’ moment.) So, I decided to do some research on inspiration and what it takes be inspired; as well as inspiring. It seems that as well as something that strikes us out of the blue, inspiration can be assisted using a few

simple tips.



Mandy
Kendall

So here are a few *Qwik-E* tips on how to create your very own inspiration.

1. **Get comfortable.** No one can expect you to be inspired when you feel tense or rushed. Give yourself plenty of time for the ideas to come to you.

2. **Brainstorm.** Jotting down ideas (even if they seem pretty random) will help trigger a flow of thoughts. Even better, throw around some ideas with someone else. It's amazing how refreshing, and enlightening, a different perspective can be. Studies have shown that a combination of brainstorming with others, and then working on those ideas alone, is the most productive.

3. **Don't think about it.** Sometimes our subconscious just needs a little breathing space. Trying too hard to force inspiration will most likely end up giving you a bad idea or a headache (or both). Try doing something mundane that distracts you and you'll probably find that something pops into your head.

4. **Be curious.** Finding out a little bit about lots of different things will keep your mental library fully stocked with material. The way you put all these snippets of information together will often be where the most innovative ideas come from and be unique to you.

5. **Be prepared.** Often our most inspiring ideas hit us when we

least expect them (when we are in the shower or drifting off to sleep). Most phones these days have a 'record audio' function. Or just a few post-it notes pads dotted around the place will help capture those potentially elusive thoughts.

6. Put yourself in someone else's shoes. If someone inspires you by what they do try putting yourself in their place and imagine what you would do if you were them.

7. Laughter is the best medicine. Studies have shown that having a good laugh encourages other feel good emotions that inspire us to be more creative.

If you prefer being an inspiration:

8. Share. Sharing your stories and experiences with others (the good and the bad) often inspires people to go for their dreams too when they see that challenges can be overcome.

9. Lead by example. Being a good example, and practicing what you preach, is the best way to encourage people to do the same.

10. Listen. Make someone feel important by giving them your full attention. You never know what you might hear that will inspire you if you are really listening.

11. Encourage. Sometimes people find it difficult to believe in themselves. By encouraging and believing in them you may just be the inspiration they need.

12. Challenge. We tend to do our best when we are challenged. Often all people need is a gentle nudge in the right direction. Just be careful not to push too hard.

Until next time.

Mandy Kendall operates Health Connective in South Lake Tahoe. If you have any questions, would like some advice, or would like to request some Qwik-e tips on any health and wellbeing

topic, please feel free to drop me an email at healthconnective@gmail.com, visit us on Facebook, 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.

Veteran Lake Tahoe showroom workers ensure a good time

By Susan Wood

STATELINE – In the diva world of entertainment, the “d” in maitre d’ could stand for David McClure with a capital D.

That’s because much like a shining star can carry a show’s performance, this host extraordinaire standing at the door in the dapper tuxedo can make an experience at the MontBleu’s showroom in Stateline.

After three decades on the job in September, McClure has seen it all over the years – including his casino change names, owners, management and budgets.

This modest local is the rock of the entertainment facility, where he caters to customers from high roller guests to visitors camping out around Lake Tahoe for the weekend.



David McClure talks about the performers who have been in MontBleu's showroom. Photos/Kathryn Reed

And this summer, McClure and company take the act out in the parking lot for the casino's new outside concert series that expands the concert venue from seating for 1,600 in the showroom to 6,000 outdoors. The concerts are designed to complement Harveys Lake Tahoe's longtime version across the street. A night of reggae led the series. In keeping with its youthful image, the next one features members of the Sublime group.

The 62-year-old host would be the first to admit he doesn't personally follow the hip, new music of the day. McClure preferred acts over the years involve the old-time entertainers. His favorite involved his mother. When his father died, he took her to see the late slapstick comic Red Skelton.

"I've still got the picture," he said.

McClure also enjoyed a show in the early years of Lionel Ritchie's career. Ritchie danced a lot, and his band played several instruments on stage. There was even a player piano carted in.

But it's the guests who bring McClure to work with a smile on his face.

"My job is to change people's experiences. You never know who will be standing in front of you," he said of the people waiting to be seated. "People plan their whole vacations around who they can see and when they can see them."

As an example, many women have asked to sit to see certain band members of the Moody Blues up close and personal.

"Women are the most vocal," he said.



Connie Bowland demonstrates working in the showroom isn't just greeting guests.

And many of the men seem to go along with seeing the shows to please their mates.

McClure's job involves customer service, entertainment and a little psychology. He's also a bit of a historian. For instance, he learned long ago that if Kenny Loggins ended up playing in Tahoe over a holiday weekend he would refrain from performing on the actual holiday back when he played here.

"He likes to relax (that day)," he said.

McClure knows all about that. He unwinds with his two cats and

loves driving around Tahoe in the wee morning hours.

"You have the road to yourself. It's an amazing time in Tahoe before people get up," he said of his night shift.

Opposite schedules – such is the world of entertainment.

McClure's brush with the industry started early when he grew up in Marin County, home to some huge celebrities from the San Francisco Bay Area. He would skip school to see the original Jefferson Airplane group, which spawned the careers of Grace Slick and Mickey Thomas.

"I wrote off Thursday classes to see them," he said.

He liked Lake Tahoe and would visit occasionally from the Bay Area. He took on odd jobs, including a construction stint at Squaw Valley in 1970 where he "could pound a nail."

After graduating from a San Francisco hotel and restaurant management school in 1977, McClure never looked back from the hospitality world. It's been a whirlwind – especially with the number of shows Caesars Tahoe once scheduled.



Anthony Whalen is assisted with his uniform by David

McClure.

The showroom wait staff used to see each other about every night. Now they'll go weeks apart – with the exception of the busy summertime. On the night of Bob Saget's show over Memorial Day weekend, the staffers enjoyed a reunion of sorts with longtime usher Artie Farokhpar and McClure's assistant, Connie Bowland, excited to get back to steady work. Before that show, Bowland breezed in to the main wait staff room from her other job, a common practice for hospitality types in Tahoe trying to make a living, Farokhpar pointed out.

At age 75, Farokhpar had worked for years with Horizon's Carnival Cabaret show before retiring, semi-retiring and coming on board with the MontBleu staff recently. He and his wife see it as a way of getting him out of the house, he joked with his coworkers.

The crew chats enthusiastically like a group of old friends while trying to get the pre-show work done. All this is done crammed into the small office space that resembles more of an oversized closet. McClure prepared 2009 South Tahoe High School graduate Anthony Whalen as his newest member of the staff on his first night. This meant getting him suited in proper dress attire. Meanwhile, Farokhpar needed a bow tie. McClure quickly came through and handed him one.

The staff has been forced to improvise as in replacing their own suits, having fewer steak-dinner-like perks and dealing with the loss of a wardrobe room. The latter was the result of remodeling at the casino, which the staff calls "the poor stepchild of Las Vegas."

In their one small space, signed photos of celebrities such as comedian Joan Rivers, country singer George Strait, rock guitarist Carlos Santana and pop singer Olivia Newton John line the walls. Six photos were missing as someone broke in years ago and stole them. Still, the loss goes unnoticed as

the staff is focused on the job at hand.

Bowland reviewed messages from management regarding who would be attending the show that night. A newsletter called “Bleu notes” laid on her desk. She admits special seating instructions may come in at the very last minute. She commended their “ringleader” – McClure – for pulling it all together when attendees surprise the staff with added guests at the door. And sometimes fewer employees for the night means jumping in to sell or take tickets.

There is essentially no room for divas – “except on stage,” a staffer belted out.

“We’re like a second family, but we haven’t worked that often all together, so we have to catch up,” Bowland said.

She enjoys the whole environment – meaning the staff and the work. She believes taking the shows outside will be good for the Lake Tahoe market.

“Anything new is going to be good,” said Bowland, who came on board at the casino in 1979 as a cocktail waitress before settling into the showroom under McClure.

“I like meeting people from all over. Everybody’s in a good mood. They can ask us anything, and we do it,” she said.

She especially relishes working for McClure because he demonstrates grace under pressure in tough situations.

Ditto was the sentiment from Farokhpar about working under McClure’s supervision.

“He is a nice guy, helpful and part of the old school where you help each other,” the usher said.

Farokhpar sees his job as giving their customers a “warm feeling” about being in the showroom set up to make them feel special.

He and Bowland agreed genuine customer service is a lost art at times – especially in Tahoe’s revolving door of businesses and transient employees.

“I just tell them a little smile and a little thank you won’t hurt you,” Farokhpar said.

How to keep kids happy on a long road trip

By Joshua Glenn and Elizabeth Foy Larsen, Slate

More of us will be traveling this summer, and travelers are increasingly seeking vacations with “substance.” For families, this can mean trading mouse ears for yoga mats, taking history tours, and spotting northern pintails in state and national parks.

There’s another advantage to such vacations with substance, of course: They can be money-savers. With airfares climbing, some airlines charging fees for families to sit together, and gas prices going down, more and more of us will be embarking on these soul-enriching outings in our cars. Unfortunately, for kids, there’s almost nothing meaningful about being strapped into the back of the family van while Missouri and Kansas whiz past. Not only are road trips boring, but they also require kids to sit still for hours on end, half-stoned on the same movies that are used to pacify them at home.

That’s a shame when you consider that most of us remember our pre-kid road trips so fondly. Part of the appeal of piling

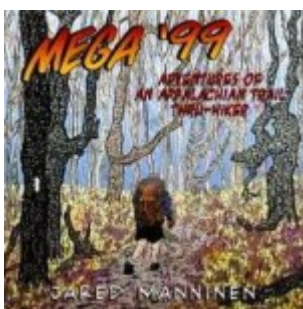
into a car with a group of buddies was that you'd inevitably get to know your fellow travelers in new, often surprising ways. From the minute you pulled into traffic, everyone tacitly agreed that for the course of the trip, the everyday rules of life would not apply. You'd eat differently, sleep differently, and have different kinds of conversations and experiences. In this liminal state, grown-ups often start to act more like kids: A bag of Twizzlers transforms into a perfectly acceptable breakfast, and acting out scenes from Life of Brian suddenly becomes a completely rational way to get through a two-hour stretch of freeway.

[Read the whole story](#)

S. Tahoe author brings Appalachian Trail through-hike to life

By Kathryn Reed

Who are Rockhopper, Peachy Keen, Green Bean and Numbnut?



They are much more than characters in a book.

These are trail names for some of the people who were hiking the Appalachian Trail when Jared Manninen was making the through hike in 1999. In 2011, Manninen published a graphic

novel of his account of this 167-day, 2,160-mile journey.

Manninen lives in South Lake Tahoe and operates Makoto Press with his business partner Joe Daley out of Scottsdale.

While many graphic novels are often more like a comic book in nature, this would not be the way to describe “Mega ’99: Adventures of an Appalachian Trail Thru-Hiker”.

The black and white sketches complement the words in a way that photographs would not have been able to. It keeps the feel of the ruggedness of the trail.

While plenty of books have been written about this famous trail that goes from Maine to Georgia, this book gives an interesting twist – in large part because of its being a graphic novel.

But don’t let the word novel fool you either. This is not a novel. It’s really Manninen’s journal. However, the journal has 110,000 words (which required the use of eight pens) and the book has been condensed to 46,000 words. It’s the good, the bad, the funny, the lonely times on an expedition of this type.

For anyone who likes the outdoors, has thought about doing a major hike or likes to live vicariously through others, “Mega ’99: Adventures of an Appalachian Trail Thru-Hiker” is definitely worth a read.

As with most books, if you purchase it from the publisher or author directly, it’s better for those people. Just so you know, Amazon takes a 55 percent cut.

To buy “Mega ’99: Adventures of an Appalachian Trail Thru-Hiker” go online to Makoto Press.

Learning is an 'emotionally charged experience'

By Annie Murphy Paul, KQED

When parents and teachers consider how children learn, it's usually the intellectual aspects of the activity they have in mind. Sidney D'Mello would like to change that. The University of Notre Dame psychologist has been studying the role of feelings in learning for close to a decade, and he has concluded that complex learning is almost inevitably "an emotionally charged experience," as he wrote in a paper published in the journal *Learning and Instruction* earlier this year.

During the learning experiments described in his paper, he notes, the participating students reported being in a neutral state only about a quarter of the time. The rest of the time, they were were experiencing lots of feelings: surprise, delight, engagement, confusion, boredom, frustration.

Another counter-intuitive contention made by D'Mello is that even negative emotions can play a productive role in learning. In this latest study, he and his coauthor Art Graesser examined the effects of confusion. They asked their subjects to interact with a computer program featuring animated agents discussing scientific case studies. The characters sometimes disagreed with each other, and sometimes conveyed information that was contradictory or just wrong. The students were then required to decide which agent's opinion was correct. Subjects who reported feeling confused by the exercise actually scored higher on a test following the computer interaction, and when presented with new case studies, they were better able to spot

the studies' logical flaws.

When the itinerary includes staying at strangers' houses

By Laura Bly, USA Today

It's billed as a "cozy and exceptional pool cabana" with a queen bed, "amazing 5-headed shower" and a "genuinely special location where connections deepen, hearts open and peace is found."

I've booked this yoga center retreat via Airbnb.com, a 4-year-old, rapidly expanding vacation-rental service that lets socially minded travelers stay in strangers' beds – or entire homes.

The professionally staged photos? Gorgeous. The four (first-name only) reviews? Glowing. And the rate of \$150 per night, not much more than what we would have paid for a room at the Motel 6 in this tony resort town? A certifiable bargain – at least until I factor in the additional \$75 cleaning charge, strict cancellation policy and 12% booking fee to Airbnb.

Within minutes of our arrival at the one-acre, Spanish-style compound in a residential neighborhood about a 15-minute drive from downtown Santa Barbara, my husband and I are quaffing complimentary poolside gin and tonics with owners Jenn Houser, 42, an international business consultant, and Martin Clarke, 50, a veteran commercial airline pilot.

Granted, our cabana bed lacks a box spring, the lightbulb on a bedside table has burned out, and there's no closet or hooks

for our clothes. And yes, it gives me pause when Clarke confides that the absent Airbnb host with whom I'd exchanged e-mails is actually their long-term renter – and that he, Houser and their disarmingly energetic Tibetan terrier, Tenzing, had flown in from Montana to make sure we were on the up-and-up.

Read the whole story

Travelers want more flights that hurts the environment less

By Peter Myers, Reuters

Over 60 percent of people worldwide want to fly more by 2050, but almost all – 96 percent – believe aircraft need to be more environmentally efficient, according to a study from aircraft-maker Airbus.

With findings drawn from a 10,000-strong survey, the planemaker also consulted with 1.75 million people in 192 countries over a two-year period to better understand the public perception of air travel's future.

Released three days before the Farnborough International Airshow, the study indicates that quieter aircraft are important (backed by 66 percent of respondents), while almost 40 percent felt the air-travel experience is increasingly stressful.

Respondents' gripes included queues at passport control; slow check-in and baggage collection; sitting on the tarmac; and

circling in holding patterns around airports.

“Capacity constraints are a sign of things to come unless the industry can work together to cut delays, and with aviation set to double in the next 15 years, that’s what we’re looking at,” Airbus executive vice president, engineering Charles Champion said in a press statement.

Airbus, part of European aerospace group EADS (EAD.PA), carried out the research alongside development of a “Concept Plane” which illustrates what air transport could look like as early as 2030, though more likely by 2050.

Read the whole story

Tahoe City nursery takes gardening to new heights

By Debbie Arrington, Sacramento Bee

TAHOE CITY – Leslie Hyche learned quickly that gardening at high elevations means being prepared for just about anything.

Snow in June? Plan on it. Unexpected windstorm? Keep everything tied down. Deer with the munchies? Persuade them to move on to another outdoor buffet.

“At first, I thought that gardening up here was very unusual,” she said. “It’s nothing like Davis, where I went to school. But then I realized, most of the country deals with the same stuff we do. They get snow, too. That helped me look at gardening here in a different way.”

Hyche is co-owner of Tahoe Tree Co. and McBride’s Nursery, a

Sierra fixture and go-to source for high-elevation gardening. Hyche also wrote the book “High Altitude Gardening,” which is no longer in print.

“The biggest challenge is the weather,” she said. “Not just snow, but the unpredictability.”

[Read the whole story](#)