

Aspects of Reno incorporated into debut novel

By Forrest Hartman, Reno Gazette-Journal

When Ben Rogers received his first published novel last month, he couldn't help but sleep with a copy by his bed.



"Other than my kids and my family, it's the thing I'm most proud of," the 34-year-old writer said. "It's just this little book, but so much of my heart and soul and tears went into it, and so much of what I believe is in the book."

That book is "The Flamer," a coming-of-age story centered on a Reno youth named Oby Brooks. But Oby isn't your everyday kid. He likes fire and explosives – a lot. What's more, his sexuality is in question through much of the novel, thus the double entendre of a title.

Renoites should take joy in the book's expertly rendered local setting, and they can rest assured that it was crafted by a native. Rogers is a product of the region, where he still lives with his wife, Jill, and their two young daughters.

"The Flamer" is fiction, but Rogers said readers can find pieces of him on every page, and the Reno setting is part of that.

Read the whole story

3-day photo workshop combines STHS facilities with Tahoe scenery

Lake Tahoe's inaugural state-of-the-art Digital Photography Institute will take place June 29, 30 and July 1 on the South Shore.

After shooting the natural beauty of Emerald Bay, Taylor Creek, Hope Valley and Lake Tahoe, participants will have access to the newly constructed \$65 million facilities at South Tahoe High School. The Tahoe Arts and Design Academy includes Mac labs, cutting edge software, experienced instructors and trained staffs.

Institute participants will begin their photography adventure June 29 with keynote speaker Tim Peare, a professional snowboarding photographer.

All proceeds from the \$750 three-day workshop go to support student scholarships and grant funding through the nonprofit Lake Tahoe Educational Foundation. Registration ends May 31.

For more information or to register, go online.

Truckee Donner PUD has money for businesses

The Truckee Donner Public Utility District is continuing efforts to help local business owners save on energy bills by covering part of a lighting upgrade cost. This includes a “last chance” opportunity to receive a rebate to replace old, inefficient T12 fluorescent lamps and magnetic ballast lighting with new, cost-effective fixtures.

Fluorescent T12 lamps and magnetic ballast started being phased out by federal regulatory bodies as of July 2, 2010. The TDPUD’s commercial lighting rebate program covers one-third of the cost for businesses to upgrade to high-efficiency T8 lamps and electronic ballasts or better. By switching out the old T12 lights with more energy efficient lights, businesses can reportedly see as much as 33 percent in energy savings, which can translate to hundreds of dollars of savings per year.

This rebate program on T12s is being phased out this year. After Dec., 31, 2012, the TDPUD will no longer be able to provide rebates on T12s. The total commercial lighting rebate limit is \$10,000 per customer. If a proposed project cost is greater than \$30,000, businesses can contact the TDPUD conservation staff to discuss rebate opportunities.

The TDPUD has helped 75 local businesses and agencies invest in cost-effective lighting projects by providing more than \$250,000 in rebates in the last three years. These 75 combined projects will continue to save more than \$250,000 per year. That translates to 2 million kilowatt-hours of energy saved.

The TDPUD offers many commercial lighting programs which help businesses be energy smart and save money. Commercial TDPUD customers can draw upon any of these four programs to save

precious cash each month:

- Commercial Lighting Rebate Program: Replacing old fluorescent tube lights and magnetic ballast lights is not only energy smart, but it saves money. This program allows businesses to upgrade to a wide variety of high-efficiency commercial lighting. Contact the TDPUD to learn more or to find out if your commercial lighting project qualifies.
- Business Green Partners: The TDPUD offers free screw-in CFL and LED lights for Truckee business owners to install themselves.
- LED EXIT Sign Retrofit Program: Available to any TDPUD electric business customer, this program offers a free exit sign light retrofit. This includes free installation by a TDPUD contractor to replace exit sign incandescent or fluorescent lights with high-efficiency LED Lights.
- LED Building Accent Lighting Program: The TDPUD will provide free LED light bulbs to Truckee businesses to replace accent lighting on store windows, roof eaves or trim. Businesses interested in this program should contact the TDPUD, which offers free LED replacement bulbs for these strands.

For more information on these and other money-saving conservation programs, contact the TDPUD Conservation Department at (530) 582.3931.

Interactive event launches poetry month at Bona Fide HQ

Bona Fide Books is hosting an art reception, poetry slam and

reading for Reno-based poet and artist Benjamin Arnold on April 7, 7-10pm at Bona Fide HQ.

This event is free and open to the public. Singer-songwriter Athena McIntyre of Rockin' Minerva will provide music starting at 9pm.

This interactive National Poetry Month kick-off will feature an "imPROMPTu" poetry slam. Participants are given paper and a pen – no existing poems are allowed – then given 10 minutes to create a poem to slam. There will be three rounds of competition, and the judge-selected winner gets to choose one of Arnold's prints as a prize.



Benjamin
Arnold

The art reception will feature Arnold's latest work, including digital art printed on aluminum, broadsides, "smallsides" and acrylic and oil paintings.

Benjamin Arnold is a teacher, poet, writer, and artist living in Reno. He is the author of "Synaptic Traffic: Intersections of Prose & Poetry".

Bona Fide HQ is located at 1069 Magua St., No.4, behind the Getaway Café in Meyers.

For more information on this or other Bona Fide events, contact Kim Wyatt at editor@bonafidebooks.com.

Chief justice credits dealing blackjack to helping her in courtroom

By Diana Lambert, Sacramento Bee

Tani Cantil-Sakauye's first home was in an alley at Third and O streets near a house of prostitution and a flophouse.

"We thought everyone lived that way," said Cantil-Sakauye, who went on to graduate from UC Davis School of Law and become the chief justice of the California Supreme Court.

On Thursday, she spoke to about 40 women leaders in business, education and government as the inaugural speaker for the She Shares Conversation Series.

Two young women from each of Cantil-Sakauye's alma maters – C.K. McClatchy High School, Sacramento City College and UC Davis School of Law – also were invited to the lunch.

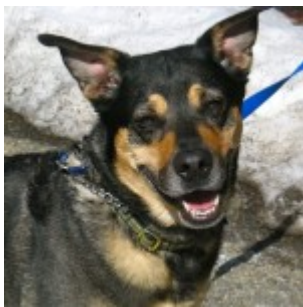
"Behind every amazing woman is an amazing story," said Karen Breslau, of the Dewey Square Group, the Sacramento public relations firm that launched the speakers series. "We don't take the time to hear from other women."

Cantil-Sakauye – the first Filipina American and second female chief justice in California – said it was her experience working as a blackjack dealer at Harrah's Lake Tahoe in her early 20s that helped her to learn to read people, making her better at jury selection when she was an attorney.

Read the whole story

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe

Chloe is a great all-around dog who will fit into just about any household.



She is a 4-year-old shepherd mix, about 50 pounds, and she's house trained. Chloe is great with other dogs and doesn't mind cats. She has lots of energy, but in a friendly and fun way. She is crate trained, and would love trips to the dog park and the beach.

Chloe 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 descriptions of all pets at the shelter.

Call (530) 573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet.

For spay-neuter assistance for South Tahoe residents, go online.

– Karen Kuentz

Learn about Lake Tahoe maritime history

Capt. Jeff LaRoche, a local yachtsman, will present “Early Lake Tahoe Maritime History”, including underwater video of the Steamer Tahoe and the restoration of the 1921 Kneass built cruiser Quic-Chakidn on March 28 at 6pm.

This is part of the Explore Tahoe Winter Speaker Series at 4114 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe.

A \$5 donation is requested. A \$5 flat rate is offered in the public parking garage after 4pm the day of the program.

For more information, call (530) 542-4637 or email crystalrangeassociates@yahoo.com.

Simple solutions for trouble sleeping

By Hanna Brooks Olsen, Huffington Post

You don't have to be one of the 70 million Americans who suffer from a sleep disorder to wish for ways to sleep better. Between heavy work loads that keep many of us up late, the lure of late-night TV and our social lives, we may skimp on shut-eye – and then wonder why we're tossing and turning when we finally do hit the sack. This week is National Sleep Awareness Week, so let's take this opportunity to be aware of why exactly a good night's rest is so important – and learn some non-drug-related ways to sleep better.

Insomnia and sleep disorders don't just mean you can't fall asleep – they can also impact your quality of sleep. Even if you sleep a full seven or eight hours, if your sleep quality is low (i.e., not enough deep, restful sleep), your body does all kinds of wonky things that basically make it hard to exist. Aside from a lack of concentration, too little REM time may actually make you more prone to cancer, heart disease and diabetes. It also leads to poor job performance, mood disorders and can trigger depression. Plus, there's research that shows crappy or insufficient sleep may also lead to weight gain, as tired folks try to eat more to wake up.

Read the whole story

Digital evolution not touching all corners of California

By Mike Anton, Los Angeles Times

DARWIN – Here on the shoulder of the information superhighway, smartphones turn stupid, streaming videos shrink to a trickle and a simple download drags like a flat tire.

Darwin is a former mining town cloistered in the high desert mountains between Death Valley National Park and the China Lake naval weapons testing center. Finding it isn't easy – a sign that marked the turnoff from California Highway 190 was stolen recently.

In Darwin, there is no food, gas or lodging – or any businesses, for that matter. There is one stop sign. People

emerge from their mobile homes and reclaimed miner's shacks shortly after 11:30 each morning and walk to the post office to greet the mail's arrival.

A sign at the edge of town announces Darwin's population as "50 or so." It's actually about three dozen, and they are outnumbered 3 to 1 by abandoned cars. There are retirees, artists, loners, eccentrics – independent souls who've accepted that the price of living in California's tranquil outback is a 90-mile drive to the nearest shopping center.

"We're a little more than rural," said John Rothgeb, 67, who has lived in the desert since the late 1970s, first in his van before settling down in Darwin. "Frontier is more like it."

But the 21st century frontiersman needs more than food, water, shelter and elbow room. He needs connectivity. He needs high-speed Internet. And the federal government is spending billions to bring it to him.

Darwin is emblematic of the nation's digital divide – the disparity between those with broadband access and those suspended in the technological amber of the 1990s, with dial-up connections to the Web.

In 2000, just 3 percent of American adults used broadband at home, according to the Pew Internet & American Life Project. Today, about 60 percent do. Only 3 percent use dial-up.

The difference in performance is like that between a bullet train and a steam locomotive.

Want to stream movies on Netflix or video-chat on Skype in Darwin? Forget it. Check out Wal-Mart's weekly sales flier? Schedule an hour. Peruse the latest funny-cat videos on YouTube? The incessant buffering might induce a seizure.

Read the whole story

Spring training – where the score is secondary to the fun

By Kathryn Reed

SCOTTSDALE – Eighty-degree days in March and beer vendors meandering through the outfield grass. Clearly this is not AT&T Park in San Francisco.

It's Scottsdale Stadium – where the Giants call home during spring training. They will be playing there for another week to get ready for the real season.

It's appropriately named the Cactus League based on the flora throughout the Phoenix area where 15 teams play in 10 stadiums.



Fans are closer to the field at spring training.

Photos/Kathryn Reed

There is something special about spring training. Parks are more intimate, fans of the sport – not just of the teams

playing – fill the stands, beer is brought to you, a slew of players fill the lineup, and the sun is beating down. It's less intense – maybe because the score doesn't have the same meaning as during the regular season.

It's hard not to run into someone from Tahoe. The Merkleys were sitting a few rows in front of us on the grass, with one of the boys wearing a South Tahoe High shirt. John Rice's trip overlapped with ours. For many in Tahoe, it's an annual ritual – where that crack of the bat sounds rhythmic and the thought of snow melts.

Players make a habit of signing autographs for throngs of fans. It's almost like you could be on a first name basis with them. If only Buster would want to play a game of catch.

Load up your wallet

Spring training is big business for Arizona. And it's not cheap.

Bring cash. Many vendors at this particular park wouldn't take plastic. Food prices are creeping up to what AT&T charges, what with \$6 garlic fries and \$8.50 for Gordon Biersch beer.

Tickets, too, are pricey – \$25 to sit on the grass on a Sunday. This is more than any of my season ticket games at AT&T ballpark. The price dropped to \$12.50 for a Tuesday afternoon game.

In addition to the ballpark prices, extra taxes are levied on visitors to provide all the fun. The Arizona Sports and Tourism Authority collects a 1 percent hotel tax, which will expire in 2031. Maricopa County adds a 3.25 percent tax on car rentals.

But tax revenue for the tourism agency is short \$165 million, in large part because of the recession. That money was supposed to go for stadium improvements. Individual towns may

need to pony up the cash for the upgrades to satisfy agreements with various baseball teams.

The state brings in about \$350 million a year off people coming to the region for spring training, according to the *Arizona Republic*. A record 1.59 millions fans filled the 10 stadiums for about 230 games in 2011, the newspaper said.

How to save

But not everything is expensive. We parked in the free, unlimited parking lot owned by the city of Scottsdale. Parking on city streets was available for free for three hours.

And the trolley is free, too. And the sign for it makes sense – visitors know it's public transit and the schedule is posted. How refreshing.

Meandering up and down the streets of Old Town Scottsdale can fill hours. It's just a couple blocks from the stadium. Stores are varied, sidewalks wide and most are covered – which on a hot day would be incredibly welcome. It's touristy without having the feeling it was created just for tourists.

The Old Town Tavern is perfect to sip a local brew after the game. Baseball chatter echoes from most of the tables.

Lodging is all over the board. We stayed at a friend's condo in Scottsdale at the Troon North Golf Club. Perfect accommodations for the four us – me, Sue, mom and my sister, Pam.

For golfers, this is an ideal location. For those more interested in listening to songbirds announcing the arrival of a new day, bunnies hopping at twilight, and cacti flowers sprouting, then Troon North is still the place to stay.

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