

# Truckee woman leaves software for wool

By Angela Haines, Forbes

It's getting easier to make a living doing what you really enjoy. Especially since there seem to be enough customers who can afford to indulge their taste for artisanal or handcrafted products. Jimmy Beans Wool was founded in 2002 by software engineer Laura Zander who, afraid of losing work during the slump in Silicon Valley, decided to move to Truckee. Spending a lot of time in the car on weekend ski trips Laura had become obsessed with knitting. When she took a part time job building a website for a graphics designer, she sold an ad to a local hand-dyed Yarn Company, which sparked the idea for what has become Jimmy Beans Wool. A shop built around her knitting hobby seemed like a good idea, and with their tech backgrounds, Laura, with her husband Doug, figured in time they could extend their reach with an internet business. They invested \$30,000 of their own money in a 500-square foot retail store offering coffee to the knitters too. And customers came and loved the yarns and the service.

Taking An Exit But Not Saying Goodbye 85broads 85broads Contributor

Today, 10 years later, after dropping the coffee, Jimmy Beans Wool (Jimmy is Laura's nickname and beans were for the coffee) offers knitters around the world a wide selection of the finest yarns and knitting supplies available. With more than 98% of revenues derived from internet sales, Jimmy Beans Wool customers are spread across the US, Canada, Australia, with a recent order from Uzbekistan too. The company imports yarns from South America, Turkey and Italy. Revenues have been increasing by 30%, every year, and are expected to exceed \$7 million in 2012.

Laura Zander attributes her success to timing because she started the company when “magazines were filled with pictures of Sarah Jessica Parker, Cameron Diaz and other celebrities knitting.” Then too scarves were in vogue, so a group of Lake Tahoe women would pop in and spend \$100-\$500 on yarns to take home to knit into scarves. But the other ingredient in Jimmy Beans’ success is customer engagement, which has won the company several awards. Along with her tag line, “your local yarn store—online,” Laura writes bimonthly newsletters keeping her online customers informed of trends and fashions; her site also offers 1100 free instructional videos, helping customers with everything from the practical, such as how to turn a heel, to the more exotic, such as how to do Tunisian crochet. In addition, all the instruction is explained in simple, encouraging words which make a customer feel she is asking a good friend for help. Whenever there is a question about an order, or a pattern, customer service is a click or phone call away—always answered promptly by a friendly voice.

**Read the whole story**

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## **Learn about life under water**

Kenny Broad doesn’t shy away from tough physical conditions or tough issues. Through a unique combination of underwater cave exploration, photography and environmental anthropology, he tackles challenging expeditions to unexplored caves and probes controversial problems ranging from climate change to inequity in natural resource management, focusing on the potential use and misuse of scientific information.

Broad is the April 10 guest speaker at the Squaw Valley Institute. The lecture begins at 7pm.

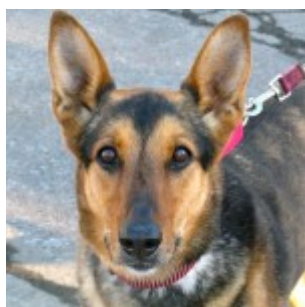
In 2011, Broad was named National Geographic's Explorer of the Year for his extraordinary achievements in documenting the Blue Holes of the Bahamas. His presentation is designed to be fun and fascinating, leading people to the unimagined world underwater.

For tickets and more information, go online.

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## Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe

Lady is a beautiful German Shepherd who is about 6 years old and on the small side, perhaps 50 pounds.



She loves to play with other dogs, and didn't chase the cats that she met at the shelter.

Lady is an active, friendly girl who will do best in a home where she'll get regular exercise.

Lady 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 to Pet Finder 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

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# Yo-yo historian takes this toy seriously

By Sam McManis, Sacramento Bee

CHICO – Some time ago, when Alex Trebek's people telephoned the gregarious Bob Malowney, he might have considered saying he'd have his "people" call them back. Just to, you know, mess with those haughty TV types.

But "Jeopardy!" researchers sincerely needed information on yo-yo history, and Malowney takes his yo-yoing seriously, so who was he not to oblige?

Though too modest to admit to it, Malowney is a veritable font of yo-yo lore, a scholar of the spinning art, the go-to guy for a pastime that has had its ups and downs but always provided generations of kids-at-heart like him with endless delight.

If you're passing through Chico, or staying the weekend in this lovely college town, be sure to drop in on Malowney, 63, a docent deluxe who likely will spin the "Jeopardy!" yarn for you.

"They asked me about whether the yo-yo was once used as a Filipino weapon," he recalled. "You go to (the book) 'Ripley's Believe It or Not' in 1953, and it shows this guy sitting up in a tree with a water buffalo down there and he's going to bonk the buffalo on the head with the yo-yo."

A total urban (jungle?) myth, Malowney told them.

**Read the whole story**

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## **TOCCATA sets dates for Bach performances**

J.S. Bach's "Passion According to St. Matthew" will be presented by TOCCATA – Tahoe Symphony Orchestra and Chorus – from March 31 through April 6.

Many consider this to be Bach's greatest masterpiece.

Performances are March 31 at 4pm at Sierra Bible Church in Truckee; April 2 at 7pm at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church in Reno; April 4 at 7pm at St. Theresa Catholic Church in South Lake Tahoe; and April 6 at 7pm at St. Patrick's Episcopal Church in Incline Village.

Tickets are available at the door with cash or check or online with a credit card.

For more information, call (775) 313.9697, or email [ToccataTahoe@gmail.com](mailto:ToccataTahoe@gmail.com).

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## **Graffiti being encouraged in**

# South Lake Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

Drab utility boxes mixed with graffiti are becoming commissioned works of art throughout South Lake Tahoe.

“When people see this, they see what we can do with graffiti and spray paint,” Dakota Jensen told the South Lake Tahoe City Council.



Green utility boxes, left, are being turned into art, right, throughout South Lake Tahoe.

Photo/LTN

Instead of being paid for his talents, Jensen and others in the 4-year-old Sphere of Influence program are being given the tools (paint) and the canvas (utility boxes) to express themselves.

That’s how Jensen and Bernardo Ayon, two South Tahoe High students, described what they are doing. Ayon said it shows urban art can be a positive thing.

When the city in 2008 started experiencing a surge in graffiti

on public and private buildings, including dumpsters, in stepped a local businessman with the idea to have local students create approved artwork throughout town.

Sphere of Influence was born. Matt Kauffmann oversees the program that has had about 40 students go through it.

He would like to have a wall to showcase this type of art.

For the dumpsters, South Tahoe Refuse sanitizes them before the young painters do their wizardry.

All designs are first OK'd by the city. They must have a mountain-sports theme like flowers or mountain bikes.

Kauffman said more than 100 sites have been painted, with plenty more needing something other than the standard green they come with.

The public is noticing – including Phyllis Shafer, chairwoman of Lake Tahoe Community College's art department.

She wrote a letter to the city saying, "Not only have I been impressed with the artwork that has been presented in the applications for these projects, but also the ability and willingness of the artists to work within certain stipulations and still produce highly creative works of art."

# Rotary celebrating St.

# Paddy's Day a day early

The 44th annual Tahoe Douglas Rotary St. Patrick's Day celebration is March 16 at 6pm at Harrah's Lake Tahoe.



The evening includes a silent auction, live auction, full Irish buffet, wine tasting, entertainment and dancing.

A new addition this year is the wine grab. For \$10 people can buy a bottle of wine that will be inside a bag, so you won't know if you're getting a \$50 bottle of wine or one that is \$10 or \$20 in value.

Tickets to the event are \$55 each or a table of 10 is \$500. There will be a week in Hawaii and \$1.000 in cash raffled off during the evening.

Silent auction are available on line until March 14.

Funds raised during the evening stay locally.

For more information and tickets, email [spdc@tdrotary.com](mailto:spdc@tdrotary.com) or call 800.576.8372.

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## Soroptimist recognize 6 women making a difference

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – Jen Gurecki summed up the night the best: “I believe service is the rent you pay for life.”

She was one of six women recognized March 8 – on International Women’s Day – for her contribution to the South Shore community and beyond.



For years Seroptimist International Tahoe Sierra and South Lake Tahoe have given the Violet Richardson Ward, Women’s Opportunity and Ruby awards, with this being the second year for the clubs to do so at a joint dinner.

Gurecki and Sue Jackson were recipients of the Ruby Ward, which is bestowed upon women who have worked to improve the lives of women and girls through their professional and/or volunteer lives.

Gurecki started V Day South Lake, which puts on the “Vagina Monologues”, and is the force behind the Zawadisha Fund that helps women in Kenya.

Jackson has for years been a tireless volunteer for a variety of entities that cross generations – from Lake Tahoe Boys and Girls Club to Meals on Wheels.

The first awards given out Thursday at Harrah’s Lake Tahoe are named after Violet Richardson Ward, the first president of Seroptimist. Girls ages 14 to 17 whose volunteer efforts help others can be nominated.

Kate Albrecht is a junior at South Tahoe High who started the school year getting chemotherapy for Hodgkin’s lymphoma. Now she is back on campus, maintaining a 4.0 gpa and a member of the National Honor Society.

She created a program for young cancer patients to have stuffed bears they can call buddies, who they can talk to, who listen, who give them comfort in ways family members and

medical professionals can't.

Morgan Kaufer also received the Violet Richardson Ward Award. She has been active with the Invisible Children Foundation.

"Invisible Children taught me to see, care and react," Kaufer said.

The Women's Opportunity Award is given to individuals who have overcome substantial obstacles. Each received a \$2,000 check to continue their education.

For Kim Nesbitt, she overcame a life of domestic violence that included temporarily leaving her children until she could get on solid ground. She regained custody of her two sons, overcame being downsized by El Dorado County and is in school to obtain a degree in business.

For April Torrez, her story is one of survival. She was taking care of her siblings at age 5, at 11 sent to live with her father who was into drugs, by 13 was running away, and at 19 gave birth to her second child.

She is in a healthy relationship, going to school and raising her daughter.

Torrez told the group through tears that getting an education for herself is the only way she will be able to provide her daughter with the life she envisions.

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# Girl Scouts – 100 years of creating tomorrow's leaders

By Kathryn Reed

When Girl Scouts was formed 100 years ago this month, women did not have the right to vote, Title IX was 60 years away, and leadership roles for women were rare.

On March 12 the world celebrates the group of girls who number 10 million in 145 countries. Though the numbers are much greater because there is the saying, "Once a Girl Scout, always a Girl Scout."



Some well known women who started their leadership training in Girl Scouts are: Hillary Rodham Clinton, Laura Bush, Madeleine Albright, Janet Reno, Sandra Day O'Connor, Joyce Brothers, Katie Couric, Lucille Ball, Grace Kelly, Gloria Steinem, Mary Tyler Moore, Dakota Fanning and Queen Elizabeth II.

While the organization is often only thought about this time of year because of the annual cookie sales, Girl Scouts is much more than a box of Thin Mints.

"The emphasis has always been empowering girls and valuing girls and what they can do," explained Shelly Martinez. She was a troop leader in South Lake Tahoe while her daughter, Ali, went through grades K-12. Martinez took a four-year break from Girl Scouts and is now helping again.

On the South Shore about 100 girls are divvied up in the 11 troops that stretch from Meyers to Round Hill.

Karen Tucker, who is a service unit coordinator, which means she oversees the individual troops, said there would be more

troops if leaders could be found.

It's one of the least expensive activities available for youth. It costs \$12 a year, plus any expense the individual troops have.

"It's a great place for girls to grow up being girls. It's a really nice organization. They get to do lot of fun stuff and learn a lot of skills," Tucker said.

While all are Girl Scouts, there are five divisions based on grade level: Daisy is kindergarten-first grade, Brownie is grades 2-3, Junior is 4-5, Cadets 6-8, and Senior is high school.

The name Daisy comes from Girl Scout founder Juliette Gordon Low whose nickname was Daisy.

At the senior level they are working toward silver and gold awards. A gold is similar to an Eagle Scout for boys.

Projects under way include one teenager creating a movie about the dangers of texting and driving, while another is organizing a band to play at the senior center and other places in town for free.

No longer do girls wear the brown Brownie or green Girl Scouts uniforms. There was a time, in this reporter's lifetime, when that brown dress was regularly worn to school on meeting days.

Today, the girls buy the sashes that are worn on special occasions. They also have all their badges on the sash.

Cookie sales are a big part of what Girl Scouts is about.

"Cookies are definitely a fund raiser, but for me it was also a way for girls to learn skills," Martinez said. "They are out there using leadership, learning how to market a product, setting goals, and knowing how much money they earn per box. They set goals not only for themselves, but also for community

service to help others.”

Money from the sales funds activities and camp. The North Shore group has a permanent camp, while the South Shore contingency often finds various places to go. Last year it was to Sugar Pine Point State Park on the West Shore and this year they will be in the cabins at the 4-H camp in Stateline.

Cookie sales will continue through March, with girls setting up in front of local grocery stores. Cookie sales have been going on nearly since the beginning. According to the Girl Scouts’ website, “The earliest mention of a cookie sale found to date was that of the Mistletoe Troop in Muskogee, Oklahoma, which baked cookies and sold them in its high school cafeteria as a service project in December 1917.”

On March 12, Girl Scouts throughout the world will celebrate the 100-year mark. On the South Shore they will be gathering at Embassy Suites at 6:15pm.

For more information about Girl Scouts, call Karen Tucker at (530) 541.1204.

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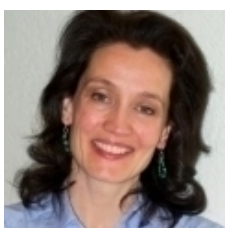
# Connecting to people starts with listening

By Mandy Kendall

I have to admit (in a very un-British way) to being very excited. We had the first meeting of the South Lake Tahoe Health Connective this week and, well, I thought it was great.

A group of like-minded natural health practitioners, passionate about their work, meeting to connect with each other and figure out ways to better serve their patients and the whole community. Personally, I don't think it gets any better than that.

So, making connections has been forefront in my mind this week and I decided to focus this week's piece on the aspect of life that we all deal with every day – connecting with people.



Mandy  
Kendall

Some of the time it happens without us even being aware of it. We interact with family, friends and co-workers automatically. We know them, they know us and it's what we've done all our lives. Then there are occasions, like meeting someone for the first time, when we are very conscious of the act of connecting. Do we like them? Do they like us? What will they

think of me? What do I think of them? Apparently, when we meet someone for the first time, we decide, fundamentally, whether we like them or not in about 3 seconds. Not much time to make a good impression, is it?

So what do we do to make a good impression? Well, to be brutally honest, in general, human nature tends to lean us all toward the “what’s in it for me?” school of thought as we go through life. (I think it must be a survival thing.) We are not necessarily being selfish. It just seems to be the way people work.

So, how do we change that bias when making connections? How do we make sure we are making the best connections possible with the people who are right for us?

**Here are my thoughts, and *Qwik-e* tips, on how to help make those connections special:**

**Listen** – Just let someone talk and when they’ve stopped talking ask them something about themselves. See how long you can get them to talk without them being able to ask you anything about you. You might find out things about them you’d never known before.

**Be interested** – Once you’ve listened to what they have to say, let them know you’ve heard and understood them. Affirming what someone has just told you is a great way to let them know you care. If they return the interest, and ask you about yourself before you’ve had a chance to tell them, then you know you have a genuine connection on both sides. If they only talk about themselves, well at least you know how this relationship is likely to pan out.

**Start slowly** – Think of it as a bit like dating. No one really wants to reveal too much about themselves too quickly. (There’s that survival thing again.) You start with small talk and move on to more intimate things as the relationship grows. After all, you would normally have a few dates before you get

engaged. Ask someone what interests them, what makes them tick (this doesn't need to be with someone you've just met either, it's amazing what you can find out about the people you think you know just by asking).

**Make them feel special** – Just taking the time to listen will make someone feel pretty special, but if you want to go the extra mile just tell them how much you've enjoyed talking with them, even if they haven't asked you a single question.

**Be present** – In today's fast-paced world it is easy to end up trying to do two or more things at once. But we all know how frustrating and, let's be honest, downright disrespectful it is if someone is half-listening to us while they are trying to do something else as well. If someone is important to you, then they deserve your full attention. If it's not possible to give them that at that moment, then be honest and say, "I'm sorry, I really want to hear what you've got to say but I have to (fill in the blank) right now. Can you give me 5 minutes and then you'll have my full attention?" Who could get upset at that?

Until we connect next time.

*Mandy Kendall operates Health Connective in South Lake Tahoe. If you have any questions, feel free to drop me an email at [healthconnective@gmail.com](mailto: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.*