STHS students get a taste for Hollywood jobs

By Kathryn Reed

When the $13 million Theater Arts and Design Academy opens in August it will be like a Hollywood studio.

Just how much like one students got to find out this month as they toured the real deal in Southern California. Five students and four adults ventured south to learn how what they will do in the classroom will translate to the real world.



Principal Ivone Larson takes a photo of students by old film cameras. Photo/Provided

Although retired teacher Doug Sprague started making this trip 24 years ago, the significance now is South Tahoe High School will begin offering more specialized classes that have applicable skills to post-graduation jobs.

The career tech path is part of the California Arts Media and Entertainment sector. The building is part of the $64.5 million voter approved bond.

Some of the professionals the group met were South Tahoe High grads. Casey Adams works in the stunt field, while Matt Lucas does promos for Warner Brothers.

Scott Ramirez, IT guru at the high school, was one of the adults on the trip. He will be an integral player in keeping everything running.

“By taking our tech person we gain experience in how to translate this to the classroom,” explained Principal Ivone Larson. “It gave us ideas for great lessons for the kids.”

The structure of the TADA building will be finished in two months, with the fun components put in place over the summer and ready for when school starts in August.

Classes like video editing, digital media arts, Garage Band, and website creation will be offered among others.

A collaborative approach is being taken so one student may be working on sound editing, while another is doing promotional work, someone else is directing, and others are getting things ready for the stage or campus television.

“South Tahoe High is where arts and academics take center stage,” is how Larson is billing it.

Elizabeth Taylor leaves a lasting impression

By Bill O’Driscoll, Reno Gazette-Journal

The eyes.

To an impressionable college intern dispatched to the then-MGM Grand Reno to pursue an Elizabeth Taylor sighting one February night in 1979, it was her eyes that made a first – and lasting – impression.



Elizabeth Taylor died March 23.

That, and a cast with a splint on the 46-year-old actress's left wrist that glared against her cardinal-red evening pantsuit.

I got within 5 or 6 feet of her before the bodyguards closed in. It was really nothing, I was told, just a fall on ice, somewhere in New York, they thought.

Thirty-two years later, news of Elizabeth Taylor's death Wednesday at age 79 evoked memories of that encounter at the MGM, now the Grand Sierra Resort, when the diva strolled down the plush corridor lined with photographs of MGM legends, including herself.

Taylor had been to the area before for the 1951 movie "A Place in the Sun" filmed on location at Lake Tahoe and nearby Cascade and Echo lakes.

Read the whole story

Pets act as emotional power brokers in families

By Benedict Carey, New York Times

First, he tore up his dog toys. Then shredded the furniture, clothes, schoolbooks – and, finally, any semblance of family unity. James, a chocolate-brown pointer mix, turned from adorable pet to problem child in a matter of weeks.

“The big bone of contention was that my mom and my sister thought that he was too smart to be treated like a dog; they thought he was a person and should be treated as such – well, spoiled,” said Danielle, a Florida woman who asked that her last name not be published to avoid more family pet strife. “The dog remains to this day, 10 years later, a source of contention and anger.”

Psychologists long ago confirmed what most pet owners feel in their bones: that for some people bonds with animals are every bit as strong as those with other humans. And less complicated, for sure; a dog’s devotion is without detectable irony, a lap cat’s purring without artifice (if not disapproval).

Yet the nature of individual human-pet relationships varies widely, and only now are scientists beginning to characterize those differences, and their impact on the family. Pets alter not only a family’s routines, after all, but also its hierarchy, its social rhythm, its web of relationships. Several new lines of research help explain why this overall effect can be so comforting in some families, and a source of tension in others. The answers have very little to do with the pet.

Read the whole story

SLTPD retired K-9 Buddy dies

At the good old age of 16½, retired South Lake Tahoe police canine Buddy has passed away.

Buddy served as the canine partner for now retired SLTPD Officer Brian McGuckin between the years of 1999-2005. As with most canine/handler teams, Buddy and McGuckin had a strong connection.

Buddy had a tremendous work drive and was among the most athletic dogs employed by the department. Buddy had an extraordinary ability to leap over tall obstacles in his job performance. McGuckin was occasionally teased by fellow officers that Buddy should have been equipped with a Superman cape as part of his uniform.



Buddy

Buddy was particularly skilled in narcotics detection, building searches, apprehension of fleeing felons, and master/officer protection.

Buddy was originally purchased through the voluntarily sponsorship of the South Lake Tahoe community. In July 1997, when an SLTPD German Shepherd named Kris was hit by a car during off-duty hours, the department turned to the community for financial help filling the void. There was no budget to

replace Kris. Learning of the need, the people of Lake Tahoe's South Shore generated approximately $10,000 to replace this valuable asset. The money was used to bring Buddy to the police department, who served the community and the canine unit faithfully for just more than six years.

After his retirement, Buddy enjoyed family life with his similarly retired partner McGuckin. According to McGuckin, who now resides in another Northern California city, Buddy always seemed to miss police work. He had a true love for it.

Although he will miss his long-time companion and faithful partner terribly, McGuckin notes that Buddy enjoyed a comfortable long life and left a strong working legacy for the police canine program at the South Lake Tahoe Police Department.

Services set for Cocores

The celebration of life for Mike Cocores will be April 2 from 2-6pm at the Flight Deck restaurant at Lake Tahoe Airport.

Cocores always liked to stop there during a storm to watch the lightning show.

Green building doesn't have

to be expensive

By Jason Hildago, Reno Gazette-Journal

Going old vs. going new.

That’s apparently the key question when tackling a renewable building project.

Once associated mostly with free-spirited hippies and tree-hugging nature lovers, going green has made serious gains within the general public’s consciousness in just the past few years.

“The perception of green building used to be of people living out on the sticks and off the grid with windmills and battery packs,” said Allyson Wong, co-owner and architect at GuiDenby, a design-build construction company in Reno. “But that’s not what green building is about anymore. It’s become very sophisticated and more mainstream than it was just a short time ago.”

So much so that solar installations now account for 90 percent of the work done by Aspen Electric, a Reno-based electrical installation and repair company.

“In the last two-and-a-half years, we’ve really started to focus on solar electric installations,” said Shawn O’Meara, a managing member for the limited liability company. “Almost everybody’s somewhat familiar with it now. Even if they don’t know much about it, a lot more people are definitely thinking about it.”

Read the whole story

Pro athletes express climate change concerns to students

By Stephen Ward

RENO – Carbon emissions and global warming are not concepts easily conveyed to teenagers. Telling them what it might mean to their ability to ski in Tahoe in the future made it real.

“It wasn’t a boring way of learning,” student Tyler Groves said.



Alliance for Climate Education takes it show to Reno and Truckee. Photo/Provided

The nonprofit Alliance for Climate Education is on a road trip in the Reno and Truckee era; bringing extreme athletes to high schools to give testimonials blended with fast-paced cartoons to get the message out.

That’s what ACE’s presentation consisted of Tuesday morning at North Valley High School in Reno. The group recruited acclaimed snowboarders Iris Lazzareschi and Moss Halladay to speak with students about the ways climate change has affected their sport.

“It’s something we got to take care of,” Halladay said to the crowd of about 400 fervent students.

Lazzareschi was quick to add her voice, explaining how she and Halladay had to cancel a trip to Alaska this year because of a lack of snowfall.

“We can’t shoot when there’s no snow,” Lazzareschi said of needing to interrupt the film schedule.

ACE spokeswoman Rebecca Anderson did most of the talking; telling students they need to reduce their carbon footprint and staying informed about the environment.

Anderson’s roughly 30-minute presentation ran consecutively with a fast-paced animation meant to illustrate all her main points. Trees reducing greenhouse gases were shown eating away at the gases as if they were malnourished animals.

The video also offered an array of statistics like the average young person needs 21 football fields worth of waste to accommodate for their consumption of energy.

“You don’t have to live large to live well,” Anderson said.

A cartoon depicting a teenager running quickly across an endless stretch of connected football fields brought the students into an uproar.

“That’s tight!” a student in the front of the auditorium shouted.

Shortly before ending the presentation, the discussion’s mood became somber. Halladay, who is from Tahoe City, explained how many of his friends cannot find work in the Tahoe area because of low snowfall, which ultimately creates a vicious cycle of unemployment and turmoil for the region.

“It doesn’t care, like, what you think about it,” Halladay said. “It affects you.”

When shown an idyllic video where world carbon emissions are restrained and clean energy is the standard, students broke into commotion and raised their hands in unison when asked whether they would like to make that vision a reality.

“I think (the talk) was informative,” senior Jaffar Richardson said.

As the event came to a close, many students rushed the stage to snag autographs before heading back to class.

In the end, Anderson said her motive is more than just scaring kids about the future environmental outlook.

“As the next generation, they have the opportunity to change (the situation),” Anderson said. “It’s not going to be easy, but it needs to happen. After all, they’re going to be the ones most affected by it.”

More information is on the ACE website.

Other dates:

• March 24 9:30am: Nine-time Big Mountain Snowboarder of the Year and POW Founder Jeremy Jones visits his hometown of Truckee at Truckee High School

• March 24 10am: Pro snowboarder Ralph Backstrom at McQueen High School in Reno

• March 24 11am: Pro snowboarder Nick Visconti at Truckee High School

• March 28 12:05pm: Visconti at Damonte Ranch High School in Reno.

Generation Y embraces entrepreneurial spirit

By Bill O'Driscoll, Reno Gazette-Journal

Ashley Gonzales is all of 23 years old, but she has mapped out a clear future. She plans to open her own business, a teen center, in Carson City.

First will come night classes this fall leading to a business degree. Then, she said, she'll be ready to pursue a haven for Carson-area teenagers.

"I want to see youth succeed rather than get into trouble. I saw it firsthand," she said. "The way society is going, with gangs and drugs, I fear for children. I really want to do this."

Gonzales' drive to control her future is reflected in a recent nationwide survey by Reno-based Employers insurance showing nearly half – or 46 percent – of Generation Y Americans ages 18-25 plan to start their own business in the next five years.

Of the next age group, Gen Xers ages 26-45, about 35 percent stated the same goal, according to the survey.

The do-it-yourself spirit doesn't surprise local entrepreneurs, especially in the face of economic recession. In the greater Reno-Sparks region, unemployment topped 13 percent in all but one of the past 12 months.

Read the whole story

Michael David Cocores – 1966-2011

Michael David Cocores passed away suddenly at his home in Gardnerville, Nev., on March 17, 2011.

He was 45.

Mike was born Jan. 24, 1966. He was raised in South Lake Tahoe. He attended Tahoe Valley Elementary, South Tahoe Middle School, and graduated from South Tahoe High in 1984. Mike took all honors classes, but was best known for his music ability. He was awarded Best Musician his freshman, sophomore, junior and senior years.



Mike Cocores

Mike also loved basketball, and played until his junior year when a knee problem forced him to quit.

Mike was instrumental in getting his childhood friend his first guitar and taught him how to play bass. That person is Chuck Garric – the current bass player for Alice Cooper.

Upon graduating high school Mike spent a year at the Musicians Institute of Technology, where he met and tutored a student who later became Michael Jackson's bass player. During his time in Los Angeles, his rock group was named the No. 1 "underground rock band."

After a few years, Mike returned to South Lake Tahoe and went

to work with his Dad, Pete, and became the third generation to join the business. He worked for more than 20 years at Ted’s Electric.

He continued to play his music with many bands in the Lake Tahoe Basin, and was written up several times regarding his outstanding ability. Mike’s love of music never left him, but did take backstage with the birth of his son, Taylor Michael Cocores.

Mike eventually moved to Gardnerville, and commuted to the lake each day for work. He spent all his leisure time watching Taylor learn to motocross, and taking him to various competitions in Nevada. Taylor loves his dirt bike, but also took after his Dad’s love of music and plays guitar. Mike was so proud of Taylor’s accomplishments and many times the phone would ring and all you could hear was the sound of dirt bikes and Mike yelling into the phone reporting how Taylor was doing in the race.

Mike is survived by his 14-year-old son Taylor Michael Cocores of Gardnerville; parents Pete and Peggy Cocores of South Lake Tahoe; brother John Cocores (Cheryl) and his sons Christopher and Ryan of South Lake Tahoe; sister Heather Cocores-Thomas and her children Sierra, Aaron, and Rachel Thomas of South Lake Tahoe; and his faithful dogs Coda and Stitches.

The family plans a celebration of life in the next couple weeks and will announce the date as soon as possible. Any questions may be directed to Mike’s sister Heather at (505) 944.5729, or Mike’s brother John at (530) 544.2918.

We will always miss you Mike.

Your Loving Family.

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe

Princess is 6 years old and loves to cuddle.

She came to the animal shelter wither her grey and white friend Grable when their owner moved away to college and her grandparents could no longer look after us due to their ill health.

They have never been outside and have never been apart, so they are looking for an indoor only home where they could be together.

They have lived with children, but no other cats or dogs.

They are is spayed, microchipped, and vaccinated. They 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.

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

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

– Susan Baumflek



