Life’s realities told through poems

By Kathryn Reed

MEYERS – A hike gone wrong, the perfect birthday party, secrets from a hotel room.

All of these are wrapped into Janet Smith’s book “All of a Sudden Nothing Happened.” The Tahoe resident and Lake Tahoe Community College instructor read from her book of poetry on Friday at Bona Fide Books to a crowd that asked for an encore from this poet.

Though she jokes many of her poems are less than happy, feel-good works, many touch on the realities of life.



Janet Smith reads from her book of poems Aug. 20. Photos/Kathryn Reed

“You are invited” is about the perfect child’s birthday.

“When you are a kid your expectations are so big,” Smith told the nearly 40 people gathered to listen. “It’s never what you think.”

Despite what seems like a book of sadness, she did dedicate it

to her parents.

Before reading “We hiked to a lake where I was unhappy” she said, “If you have a partner you hike with, you have been there.”

This was Bona Fide’s inaugural event. The publishing house is operated by Kim Wyatt. The offices on the street behind Getaway Café in Meyers are open for people to sit, read, exchange a book, get some writing done, commune with others.



Fire spinner Aleassa Anzelone.

To start and end the evening, fire spinners Aleassa Anzelone and Dalton Tutt dazzled the guests.

“All of Sudden Nothing Happened” ($15) is available at the college bookstore, Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and will be at Bona Fide in September.

TOCCATA coming to South Lake Tahoe

Baroque Brassy is Classy is the program being brought to St. Theresa Catholic Church in South Lake Tahoe by TOCCATA on Aug.

23 at 7:30pm.

Mark Lord, Robert Nagel, William van Meter and Joe Savage on the trumpets will perform Baroque Concerti for 1,2, and 3 trumpets and strings. Also included in the program will be the Handel Organ Concerto OP 4 No. 2 and the Bach Cantata. Also featured are Toni Healy, flute; Marianne Maytan, oboe; Darrell Moore clarinet; Ben Benson, bassoon; and Bruce Kanzelmayer, French horn.

For more information, visit www.ToccataTahoe.com.

Tickets are $20 for adults, $15 seniors age 62 and up, and $5 for students.

Green lodging conference embraces eco-capitalism

By Joann Eisenbrandt

Composting. Recycling. Energy-efficient lighting. Everyone knows these are good for the environment. Organizers of the West Coast Green Lodging Conference taking place Aug. 22-25 at Embassy Suites in South Lake Tahoe are convinced they're good for a hotel's bottom line as well.

Embassy Suites, the conference host, has been in the forefront of environmental sustainability at the lake, implementing over the last several years a number of green initiatives that have significantly reduced the hotel's carbon footprint and shown a profit for the property.

David Hansen, Embassy's director of engineering, has been a driving force in this effort. Terming himself an "eco-geek,"

Hansen emphasizes, “Lodging uses 25 percent of all the energy in the U.S. If we can attack this sector of the economy, think how much energy we could save.”



David Hansen is the leader of green lodging in Lake Tahoe.

He “got the green bug” while working for Robert Redford as director of facilities at the Sundance Ski Resort, where he built a totally-sustainable day spa. “I was addicted,” he said. When he came to Tahoe to work at Embassy Suites Lake Tahoe Hotel & Ski Resort, he was determined to turn it into a sustainable property.

The four-day Green Lodging conference brings together hotel general managers, chief engineers, innkeepers and owners to share ideas on sustainability as it specifically relates to hotel operations. Tahoe was an obvious venue. The Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce website lists 82 member entries under the “accommodations” category.

“The Lake Tahoe Basin should rightfully be the world’s sustainability leader,” Hansen believes.

Conference speakers, including Hansen and chamber President B Gorman, will address why and how to go green and the benefits it affords the individual property and its community. Participants will also have the opportunity to take a “back-of-the-house” tour of Embassy Suites’ Green Program in action.

The conference keynote speaker is Glenn Hasek, publisher of the Cleveland-based *Green*



Glenn Hasek is the keynote speaker at the Green Lodging Conference.

Lodging News, an online portal for the lodging industry offering a potpourri of green information and links. A former managing editor at Hotel & Motel Management Magazine, Hasek is sold on the wisdom of Green Lodging. As he told *Lake Tahoe News*, "Green lodging is synonymous with smart lodging. It's running your business in the most efficient manner possible, using green technology and green teamwork."

But after all, business is business, so green lodging advocates are quick to point out that going green isn't synonymous with going broke. Given the right planning and management, the additional costs of some changes, like replacing Styrofoam serving ware with compostable plates, cups and utensils, can be more than offset by cost savings gained elsewhere by boosting income from recycling and greatly-reduced power and water bills.

"For corporate America," Hansen believes, "environmental sustainability might not be a driving factor, but saving money is. It's eco-capitalism – saving money and saving the planet at the same time."

Eco-capitalism is putting down roots in the lodging industry.

Creation of a nationwide Green Lodging Association to represent the industry is being seriously talked about. Twenty states, including California, now have Green Lodging programs. The state's website offers information on building, buying, traveling and working green, a listing of 200 green hotels in California as well as some convincing statistics on the impacts lodging properties have on the environment. For example, average-sized hotels purchase more products in a week than 100 families do in a year and use 218 gallons of water per day per occupied room.

Locally, a visible "green-mindedness" has emerged. Aramark's Zephyr Cove Resort and Fire & Ice at Marriott Vacation Rentals have joined Embassy Suites in South Tahoe Refuse's pilot commercial composting program. STR picks up the properties' compostables (plates, cups, utensils and food waste) and transports them to Full Circle Compost in Minden. Compostables, unlike biodegradable materials, break down completely into soil, water and carbon dioxide.

Jeanne Lear, human resources manager at STR, says of the innovative pilot program, "We're hoping the costs and benefits of these sustainable practices will be able to be expanded to other commercial properties."

Compost Tahoe, a grassroots organization of community sustainability advocates, offers composting education, including a program in which volunteers go to local food service establishments and train employees in sustainable food waste practices. South Lake Tahoe is developing its own Green Building Program, and has added a Sustainability Commission to its roster of community advisory groups. The Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce initiated a Sustainability Measures Project, is holding green forums for businesses and formed a Green Business Cooperative, where local businesses can share ideas and get support for implementing sustainability practices.

Why this spike in interest now?

“The economy has tanked,” Hansen explains. “Tahoe isn’t drawing the gaming crowd as in the past. What we are about is this pristine lake, the environment; we should be showcasing that. We should be purchasing locally, reinventing our own area. Business is what allows us to live here.”

But green lodging won’t work if the traveling public doesn’t buy in. Hasek’s blog has a posting seeking participants for a Green Traveler Survey conducted by CMI Green of San Francisco, which will gather information about lodging purchasing practices and how much they are impacted by a property’s green policies. Last year’s survey showed travelers are embracing the “green” changes.

Hasek and Hansen agree. Hansen says at least 50 percent of their guests are “ecstatic” about the hotel’s sustainability program. For the rest, the changes are so subtle they’ve gotten no complaints. For the most part, they’ve been so well-integrated into hotel operations that they go unnoticed.

Registration for the West Coast Green Lodging Conference is from $300/person with room rates from $149/person. A conference program and registration information are available here.

Life’s universal topics come to the stage at Valhalla

Unbearable loneliness, crises of confidence, bereavement, loss of hope and struggles with faith are just some of the universal topics being talked about on the stage of the

historic Boathouse Theatre at Tahoe's annual Valhalla Arts, Music and Theatre Festival on the South Shore. "Talking With" is a collection of 10 monologues by 10 characters.

"Talking With" will take the stage Aug. 25-28 at 7:30pm and on Aug. 29 at 2pm. Tickets are $18/$15 per person. On Aug. 26 there will be a Wine Tasting and Play sponsored by Après Wine Bar for $28/person, $50/couple. Tickets are also available without the wine tasting.

'Blindsight' captures struggles of life in darkness

By Kathryn Reed

So much of life is about the journey, not the destination.



This was pointed out in the movie "Blindsight" that tells the story of six blind Tibetan teenagers attempting to climb Lhakpa Ri. This 23,000-foot mountain is to the north of Mount Everest.

These youngsters live in a part of the world where blindness is akin to leprosy. Families disown them, villages spurn them – many end up on the street.

But it doesn't have to be that way.

Sabriye Tenberken and Paul Kronenberg are changing how Tibetans define blindness. They created the first school for the blind in Tibet as well as the organization Braille Without Borders.

This film could easily fit many genres – documentary, history, adventure. Like most films shot in the Himalayas, the scenery is stunning. But it's the stories of these children and their blind hiking guides that is inspirational.

Erik Weihenmayer leads the expedition. In 2001, he became the first blind man to reach the summit of Mount Everest. He knows what these youngsters are facing as they ascend the ice fields and cross crevasses that could swallow them alive.

The film delves into the lives of the teens, the adults and struggles they each have and what they have overcome.

It's a movie about testing oneself and defining accomplishments by the journey involved.

The movie came out in 2006, is 1 hour 44 minutes and available on Netflix.

Goldman illustrates climate change realities to Lake Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – Proving scientists are not all nerds stuck in some cubicle plotting the future, Charles Goldman sprinkled his talk to a receptive group Wednesday with food tips – like the best way to dry bushels of lettuce is in a pillowcase on the spin cycle.

It all made sense at the time of his noon talk to Soroptimist International of South Lake Tahoe at Harrah's Tahoe.



Charles Goldman gives a scientific lecture of sorts to Soroptimist on Aug. 18. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Goldman's name is most often used with lake clarity and Secchi disk. The latter is the instrument that looks like a dinner plate for testing how clear Lake Tahoe is.

Limnology, the study of inland waters, is what Goldman is all about. He's been doing so for more than a half century, with the bulk of his work at Lake Tahoe while employed by UC Davis until just retiring. Now he is an adjunct professor at UNR's Desert Research Institute.

In those 50 years, the lake has lost about a third of its transparency. Although the rate of decline has been curbed, Goldman approaches the news with cautious optimism. The lake mixes its waters about every four years.

"If it doesn't mix, transparency gets better," Goldman explained.

After his recap of Tuesday's annual environmental summit, Goldman delved into a variety of topics, most of which centered on the impacts of climate change to Tahoe and the far reaches of the globe.

“The Himalayan glaciers are retreating. You can’t imagine the impact when those go dry,” Goldman said. “Global warming is a very severe reality.”

People in the room nodded as he said fewer blankets are needed at night than years ago. This is because the daily minimum temperatures in the basin are rising.

The water temperature is also increasing. In the last 30 years the surface temp has increased by 4 degrees, Goldman said.

“Sea levels are going to come up. Florida at the current rate will be under water in the next 100 years,” Goldman predicted.

Plant and animal life are affected by the changes – even if the numbers sound minimal.

He said for 20 years he has been trying to get Harold Singer, executive director of Lahontan Water Quality Board, to put up a dam at Tahoe Keys to isolate the water so the invasive milfoil weed could be eradicated. As it is now, about $100,000 is spent on continual mowing. The duff washes into the main body of the lake and spreads.

Goldman said he gave Singer and others an earful again about his idea at the Aug. 17 summit and thinks he may be making progress.

“People didn’t used to slip-side on rocks (in Tahoe) and now they do,” Goldman said, illustrating how the lake is changing with the algal growth as the water warms.

Wellness weekend at Hyatt Lake Tahoe

Lake Tahoe Wellness Weekend is Sept. 24-26 at Hyatt Regency Lake Tahoe.

The weekend includes four fitness classes with top fitness experts inspiring Vinyasa Yoga classes with San Francisco instructor Ginger Layden-Braun held outdoors on Hyatt's Cottage Green, and Balletone and Aikina Aerobics with former Russian competitive gymnast Alyona Aikina. Also included in the weekend: wellness breakfasts and snacks, a wellness seminar by top instructors and experts, spa treatment at Stillwater Spa, wine tasting, outdoor activities that allow you to make the most of the spectacular location, and a wellness-themed gift bag. It costs $449/per person single-occupancy, $649 double-occupancy; day-only rate (excluding breakfast and accommodations) is $100/per person per day.

Click here for more information.

Book release party for LTCC instructor

Join hosts Bona Fide Books and Suzanne Roberts in celebrating the release of Janet Smith's book "All of the Sudden Nothing Happened" on Aug. 20 at 7pm



Smitht is the past recipient of a Nevada Arts Board Fellowship in poetry, and has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize. She is on faculty in the English Department at Lake Tahoe Community College.

Libations, appetizers, and cupcakes will be provided, and the work of Truckee artist Carole Sesko will be shown.

Bona Fide Books is located at 1069 Magua, No. 4 in Meyers behind the Getaway Cafe on Highway 50.

Taj Mahal to join Dylan in concert at Harveys

Taj Mahal Trio has been added as support for the Bob Dylan concert on Aug. 22 at Harveys Lake Tahoe Outdoor Arena.

The Dough Rollers open the show.

Tickets are on sale now via Ticketmaster outlets, ticketmaster.com and apeconcerts.com.

Composer, multi-instrumentalist and vocalist Taj Mahal is one of the most prominent and influential figures in late 20th century blues and roots music. Though his career began more than four decades ago with American blues, he has broadened his artistic scope over the years to include music representing virtually every corner of the world – west Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America, Europe, the Hawaiian islands and so much more. What ties it all together is his insatiable interest in musical discovery. Over the years, his

passion and curiosity have led him around the world, and the resulting global perspective is reflected in his music.

With more than 50 original albums and collections to his credit, beginning with 1962’s landmark debut LP, Bob Dylan, Bob Dylan stands alone as the most prolific and influential singer/songwriter in the small pantheon of artists who can rightfully be recognized as “living legends.”

Tickets are $59.50, $69.50, $89.50 and $125. Show time is 6:30pm.

Dissecting the creativity crisis in America

By Po Bronson and Ashley Merryman, Newsweek

Back in 1958, Ted Schwarzrock was an 8-year-old third grader when he became one of the “Torrance kids,” a group of nearly 400 Minneapolis children who completed a series of creativity tasks newly designed by professor E. Paul Torrance. Schwarzrock still vividly remembers the moment when a psychologist handed him a fire truck and asked, “How could you improve this toy to make it better and more fun to play with?” He recalls the psychologist being excited by his answers. In fact, the psychologist’s session notes indicate Schwarzrock rattled off 25 improvements, such as adding a removable ladder and springs to the wheels. That wasn’t the only time he impressed the scholars, who judged Schwarzrock to have “unusual visual perspective” and “an ability to synthesize diverse elements into meaningful products.”

The accepted definition of creativity is production of

something original and useful, and that’s what’s reflected in the tests. There is never one right answer. To be creative requires divergent thinking (generating many unique ideas) and then convergent thinking (combining those ideas into the best result).

In the 50 years since Schwarzrock and the others took their tests, scholars—first led by Torrance, now his colleague, Garnet Millar—have been tracking the children, recording every patent earned, every business founded, every research paper published, and every grant awarded. They tallied the books, dances, radio shows, art exhibitions, software programs, advertising campaigns, hardware innovations, music compositions, public policies (written or implemented), leadership positions, invited lectures, and buildings designed.

Read the whole story