# Earth Day celebration on North Shore

The 2010 Tahoe Truckee Earth Day Festival is slated for April 24 from 11amâ€“5pm at the Village at Squaw Valley. This all-ages, community sponsored event gives participants an opportunity to learn about recycling/composting, alternative energy, sustainability, watershed and forest health, and reducing ecological footprints via a diverse array of agency representatives and earth-friendly vendors. It is the largest eco-event in the North Lake Tahoe-Truckee area. More than 6,000 people attended in 2009.

Earth Day is a Zero Waste event. Typical trash receptacles will not be available in an effort to drastically minimize waste. Booth participants are requested to minimize handouts and implement other forms of waste reduction. All food vendors will be using biodegradable take-out containers made of either paper or PLA, a high tech starch-based plastic. Food and biodegradable waste will be collected and composted by Full Circle Compost in Minden.

In addition to Saturdayâ€™s festivities, there is an entire week of events scheduled to celebrate Earth Day.

For more information, click here.

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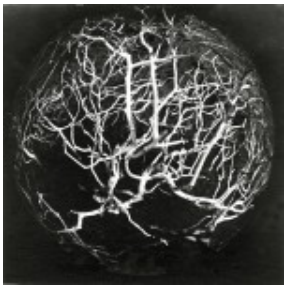
# LTCC student returns with

# photo exhibit

Roger Walker started taking photography classes at Lake Tahoe Community College about three months after he retired from Albertson’s grocery store. It was something he always wanted to do, but never had the time.

In 2008, his photographic entry “Corn Lily Suite” took best in show at the college’s annual student art exhibition. This month Walker will bring a new body of work to the college’s Foyer Gallery.

One interesting aspect of this exhibition is that all of the photographs were created with a plastic camera.



Roger Walker's photos will be on display at LTCC.
Photo/Provided

“The inspiration for this body of work was based on a desire to explore a new territory of image-making,” Walker said in a press release.

He learned about the Diana+ plastic camera from a fellow photographer. Without the usual optic lenses the images from the plastic camera are less controlled. Walker also used a plastic fisheye lens.

“Conceptually, my objective was to create a series of

photographs that present a new perspective of familiar and not-so-familiar images," Walker explained.

The exhibit titled, Roger Walker, "A Plastic Perspective," will be on display in the Foyer Gallery April 10 through June 19. There will be an opening reception April 15 from 6-8pm. It is free and open to the public.

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# Holocaust survivor to speak at LTCC

The American Association of University Women and Lake Tahoe Community College Library present author and Holocaust survivor Paul Schwarzbart on April 10 at 10am in the Aspen Room.

Schwarzbart survived the Holocaust as one of the so-called "Hidden Children." As a boy growing up in Belgium, he escaped the concentration camps by taking on a new identity and hiding out at a Catholic school.

By pretending to be a Catholic schoolboy, his life was spared. But the pain and loneliness of living under a false identity, and not knowing what had happened to his parents, took its toll.

Schwarzbart wrote about his experiences in his heartbreaking, yet hope-filled book, "Breaking the Silence: Reminiscences of a Hidden Child."

A movie detailing his life will be shown as well, and light refreshments will be served.

# Final peformance at STHS theater

The final performances in the “Little Theatre” at South Tahoe High School is of the Commedia dell’arte play “The Servant of Two Masters”.

The comedy will be presented April 1-2-3 at 7pm and April 3 at 2pm.

Tickets are $10 adults, $5 for seniors and students. Super ASB Card holders will be admitted free as space is available.

The play is presented in three-quarters round and the audience actually sits on the stage.

This play is not recommended for children under the age of 13 because of its sometimes bawdy nature.

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# STHS library needs books for its shelves

South Tahoe High School needs 175 new books for its library to provide students and teachers with the resources they need for reading, research and curriculum supplements.

“The library plays a critical role in increasing literacy and test scores among students, as well as contributing to the lifelong joy of reading,” Douglas Dilts, the school’s

librarian, said in a press release. “It is critical that we keep our library collection current and relevant.”

The library is looking to parents, community members and businesses for help in raising the needed funds. The school is participating in a new online fundraising program called Funds4Books, sponsored by Mackin Educational Resources, a school library and classroom vendor with 26 years of experience.

For every $15 donated, the library can purchase a new book that is ready to be shelved and checked out. Most important, 100 percent of every donation goes to the library.

The fundraiser will run from April 7 through May 19. To participate, donors go to the South Tahoe High School library’s website and click on the Funds4Books logo. Donors then log in to South Tahoe High School’s fundraising page with the code 135f. From there they can donate via credit card. For those without computer access or a credit card, the library will accept “Funds4Books” checks.

For more information about the fundraiser, please contact Doug Dilts at (530) 541.4111, ext. 240 or by email at ddilts@ltusd.org.

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# National honor for Tahoe Senior Plaza




Tahoe Senior Plaza Inc. recently received national recognition as a Community of Quality for outstanding management of Tahoe Senior Plaza in South Lake Tahoe.

Through the Communities of Quality National Recognition program, affordable multifamily rental properties can be certified as having achieved a high standard of excellence in the way they are maintained and managed, the services they provide residents, the experience and training of personnel, and other criteria.

To be recognized as a National Community of Quality by the National Affordable Housing Management Association a property must receive a high score based on: physical inspections; employee credentials; financial management; programs and services; endorsements; and photographs and reports.

Tahoe Senior Plaza was honored for resident services and programs, such as flu clinics, van trips, holiday parties, monthly commodities for residents, community involvement donating time to entertain residents with music, art and dance. Using the Plaza for local sign ups for HEAP, educational speakers, community awareness groups.

Among the endorsements received by Tahoe Senior Plaza Inc. were those from long time residents Gloria Shindelbower and Lorayne Taylor; David Kelly, board president of TSP as well as chairman of TACCD; John Phillsbury, senior vocational rehabilitation counselor for the state of California and long term secretary of TSP; and Delicia Spees and Daniel Masellones, TSP board members.

“There are thousands of providers of affordable multifamily housing in the nation,” NAHMA President Jim McGrath said in press release. “Tahoe Senior Plaza Inc. is among the select

few that have achieved the very highest standard of excellence in property management and in the provision of services to lower·income families. These services enable residents to attain high levels of self-sufficiency and success in their lives and for their families. The work done by Tahoe Senior Plaza Inc. is a credit to its entire community.”

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# Composter: Healthy plants need nutrient-rich soil

**By Kathryn Reed**

MINDEN – “America’s Garden Book” was first published in 1939. It talks about humus (not hummus) as the key to good soil composition.

In 1978, Craig Witt graduated from UNR with a degree in agriculture. Nothing in his textbooks said anything about humus; the organic matter that is created after plant and/or animal matter decompose. He left Reno for his family farm in the Carson Valley with a certificate to spray pesticides.



Craig Witt talks composting at Full Circle

Compost.
Photos/Kathryn
Reed

And spray he did.

“We kept adding more fertilizer and got less results,” Witt said. “My grandfather told me he was not sure about the stuff I was learning in college.”

The 350-head of cattle were producing less milk and the 600 acres they farmed didn’t turn out the quantity of produce they had before pesticides were introduced.

Witt, who had his first garden as a second-grader, knew things had to change. His mother’s diagnosis of liver cancer nearly 25 years ago also led him down the path of researching nutrition.

For 15 years he has been operating Full Circle Compost in Minden. In his backyard in Gardnerville last year he grew sunflowers 15-feet tall and tomatoes 12-feet high.

“Commercial garden soil looks like wood,” Witt said. “Humus is the end result if composting was done right.”

He is quick to point out that compost is a verb and not a noun.

The soil amendments he sells are so refined it’s delicate to the touch. It’s almost a silky texture instead of coarse. And there’s no smell.

What people grow their plants and produce in matters because if it’s not full of nutrients, the plants will suffer. Soil is like a food source for plants. What goes into the compost mix will dictate the richness of the end product.

“People are becoming more aware soil is living,” Witt said.

At Full Circle Compost recipes are used to create their different blends. It’s a combination of 10 percent horse manure, 10 percent cow manure, 30 percent green waste, 10 percent finished compost carbon, and 40 percent pine needles/wood waste, with the latter mostly coming from the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Witt will take green waste (for a fee) from people, as well as sell the different blends of composting material.

He said soil in this part of the Sierra Nevada is often deficient in calcium. So he adds some of the mineral to his mixture. Feather mill is added to another blend to boost the nitrogen content.

It’s possible with all the compostable matter being delivered to Full Circle Compost that a Tahoe Blend could be created. Witt says he’d need someone on the South Shore, like Tahoe Sand and Gravel or Aspen Hollow, to sell it.

For six years Witt has been composting at the Northern Nevada Correctional Center in Carson City – known casually as the Prison Farm.

All the food waste people want to give him goes here. Lira’s Market in Gardnerville was the first company to bring him food scraps. Whole Foods in Reno does now. A group in Truckee this year had a zero-waste crab feed and all the shells, compostable paper products, flatware and bag it was collected in ended up at the prison. South Tahoe Refuse’s collections from its pilot compost program end up at the prison, too.

Besides food waste, the crab shells, bones from meat products, meat, compostable food service products, and paper are part of the mix.

Grinders are used to blend everything together. Wood chips are mixed in. A machine turns the whole concoction. Water is regularly sprayed on the mix to keep it moist.

“When you turn it, it gives the bacteria fresh air, oxygen. You want aerobic bacteria in a compost pile,” Witt said. “When steam comes off, it means moisture is leaving.”

Temperatures of the mix hit 150 degrees, which is hot enough to kill any pathogens.

It takes 10 weeks for food waste to be turned into soil amendment.

Embassy Suites in South Lake Tahoe uses the compost from Full Circle for its plants. Zephyr Cove Resort, which is part of the pilot program on the South Shore, is considering using the end product in its grassy areas.

At the office in Minden, Witt has several worm bin containers that are more suited for the backyard gardener. He said they work at Tahoe because they don’t attract critters.

This is called vermicompost. It’s sold in stores. If it’s good quality, it won’t stick to your hands.

Worms till the soil and eat the pathogens.

“You don’t see worms in dead soil,” Witt said.

Not only is the end product a rich compound that is good to garden with, but a liquid that Witt calls “worm wine” is produced. This can be sprayed onto plants as a natural fertilizer.

His end result looked like root beer, whereas the commercial product looked like Mountain Dew, so it was severely diluted before it was sold.

For more information about Full Circle Compost, click here or call (775) 267.5305.

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# South Tahoe students win state Odyssey of the Mind

**By Bonnie Turnbull**

Try crafting a projectile from common materials like a hat, rubber bands, paper, pennies and pencils that will sail over a barrier, under a rail, then hit a target 20 feet away. Now do it in less than 4 minutes, graciously, with four other kids. Sound easy?



South Tahoe students wow Odyssey of the Mind judges. Photos/Jen Spina

Apparently, it was for four Sierra House Elementary students – Annabelle Dressler, Jessie Brown, Kale Spina, Zoe Greco; and Darcy Daly from Saint Theresa School. After this feat, they performed their original, humorous musical “Food Court” for judges who laughed and scored them as the best of the bunch.

As winners of last weekend’s state Odyssey of the Mind tournament, they now dream of competing against 25 countries at the World Tournament in Lansing, Mich., in May.

The tournament director calls it a Cinderella story. What were the odds against a first-year team from a tiny, rural town?

Please support our fundraising efforts through May.

There will be an awards assembly at Sierra House Elementary at 10am on Wednesday.



Tahoe students are headed for the world Odyssey competition.

*Bonnie Turnbull is coach of the Odyssey of the Mind Team.*

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# Splash of wildflowers just beginning in Sierra

**By Susan Skorupa, Reno Gazette-Journal**

While the first spring flowers are pushing up in people's yards, the earliest wildflowers are winking open around the Great Basin, the slopes of the mountain ranges of Western Nevada and Northern California.

Wildflower season is just starting, local experts say.

Depending on the weather from here on out, different types of blooms will pop up, beginning at lower elevations even now and expanding into



Flowers are popping up in South Lake Tahoe. Photo/Kathryn Reed

the high country throughout the summer.

**Read the whole story**

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# Genoa Cowboy Poetry & Music Festival

The first Genoa Cowboy Poetry & Music Festival is scheduled for April 29 to May 2, and organizers are working to combine Carson Valley's varied cultural heritage and history with music, poetry, performance and visual arts to create an event worthy of its location.

The festival will feature more than 50 performances in a variety of venues around Genoa during the four days as well as

exhibits, vendors, workshops and of course, opportunities to enjoy beverages and dining. Participants in all of those areas, from well known musical and cowboy poetry performers to crafters, instructors and vendors are being pursued by the festival’s Program Committee and other committees, including Marketing & Publicity, Logistics, Education/Workshops, Finance, Visual Arts and Food are moving forward to put their elements in place.

For more information, click here.