

Tahoe authors snare readers with evocative readings

By Kathryn Reed

CAMP RICHARDSON – The outdoors and sex. Those are the overriding themes of people in Lake Tahoe want to hear about.

Seven books were featured during the annual Celebration of Writers earlier this month at the Valhalla Grand Hall. Tahoe Writers Works each fall brings together a group of authors who either live in the Lake Tahoe area or write about the region.



"Edge" -- now in its sixth volume -- is put out annually by Tahoe Writers Works.

It gives people a chance to hear the words – and then be inspired to pick up a copy of the book to read it in its entirety. One of the great things about the reading is the inflection of the writer's voice is real as opposed to what the reader might hear in her mind. And then there is the back-

story to the passage being read that is only available during a reading like this one.

Frank Riley and Joan Douglas started the evening by reading their essays that are captured in "Tahoe Blues" – which is 60 micro-essays and flash fiction all about Tahoe. Bona Fide Books in Meyers published the book earlier this year.

Riley takes people on a hiking escapade that involves getting close enough to know what a bear's breath smells like.

Douglas' was a bit eerie to read – not to mention disturbing. Hearing it was even more ominous. Living in the lake after dying. The sounds of people on shore, but unable to make any noise. All the children she is surrounded by. It is haunting. While it's well written, it's just not a Tahoe I want to even think about.

A much happier take involving the outdoors was next. Tim Hauserman spoke from his cross country skiing book about all the types of snow – from boilerplate to butter to mash potatoes.

Suzanne Roberts was able to combine sex appeal and the outdoors as she read a chapter out of "Almost Somewhere" – a book about hiking the John Muir Trail. This vignette is about how three recent female college graduates go about getting a quarreling couple to leave their campsite.

Roberts and Scott Lukas, who was the next reader, teach at Lake Tahoe Community College. Roberts is in the English department, while Lukas is a professor of anthropology and sociology. Their books clearly reflect their different specialties.

Lukas read from "The Immersive Worlds Handbook: Designing Theme Parks and Consumer Spaces".

Steve Robinson's delivery is so refreshing it makes me want to

read "Why Stevie Can't Date". He describes the book as a collection of autobiographical short stories that are not all connected. The section he read this particular Friday evening was about when he was a 17-year-old who looked older than 21 working at the Sahara in Stateline and what a second date in the showroom meant. This was the time when Tahoe had its A-game when it came to attracting entertainment.

Author Stefanie Freele offered the audience a choice of topics – sex, revenge and Tahoe. The listeners picked sex and revenge. These were part of her collection of short stories in "Surrounded by Water".

Last up for the evening was Jared Manninen who read segments from his book about his experience on the Appalachian Trail.

It was an evening that proved Tahoe is rich with writers.