

# Opinion: Takela, the true tale of the name

To the community,

How did Takela Drive in the city of South Lake Tahoe get its name? Only three people have the answer, and they aren't descendants of the Indian named Takela who sunbathed on Bijou's beach during the 1800s. He's dead, and dead men, especially mythical ones, tell no tales. But I can. I ain't dead yet, nor are the other two who give witness to this mundane bit of Tahoe lore. Put that Indian and other apocrypha aside. Here's the real deal.

A damnable property developer in the late 1950s had the outrageous idea of building a South Shore Safeway. The local press argued that there goes the neighborhood, but there wasn't any neighborhood. So, this developer, my father, proposed "progress" to the El Dorado County Planning Commission. The project lacked street names. Dad turned to child labor. "For every name the Planning Commission approves, you get a dollar." I took the challenge. Where does an unimaginative kid get ideas? From his limited world, of course. Mine was where I lived and the family power boat.

Here then is the answer. Takela was our boat's name and our pronunciation is in your margarita, tequila. My sister, a private woman of few words, decodes for you: "Ta-Tav; Ke-Kevin; La-Laurie." My boat savvy brother tells us that this "was an old, old way of naming boats, but not real popular ... not a big thing." His recent email from San Rafael, goes on to say "people generally think that its pronunciation is tec-lell-ah and led to the assumption that it is an Indian name because the Washoe Indians made their way over the mountain to summer at South Tahoe from the Carson Valley. The most popular area they chose was from Bijou southward." My brother signed

his deposition, Chief Know It All.

Is there any additional evidence for the family connection to Takela and thus credibility for this striking revelation? We find it not far away by way of the winter address of family Mactavish during that period. Continue motoring to the end of Takela Drive from Lake Tahoe Boulevard in South Lake Tahoe. Note the Safeway as you pass, and after a short distance, what's the street you meet? Remember, I wasn't very imaginative. We lived on Treehaven Drive, but in San Rafael

Puzzle solved, witnesses deposed, story's end, although a sunbathing Indian might be more colorful for credulous tourists. A new tale might dissuade anyone from changing the street's name due to its prosaic origin. I offer to spin that tall one with the translation of Takela as Chief Know It All, sunbathing woman of few words.

I earned \$9 that year for street naming, the following year \$5. The shortfall in earnings reflecting a growing interest in word-smithing in the back seat of the family car at the drive-in theatre down the road from Takela Drive. You know, experimenting with more advanced language tasks to expand the limitations of my world.

**J.K. Mactavish, Italy**