

EDC auditor candidates distinguish themselves



Joe Harn and Mike Owen are running for El Dorado County auditor.

By Kathryn Reed

Even though Joe Harn and Mike Owen went to El Dorado High School, with four years separating them, friends they are not. Owen wants Harn's job.

June marks the second consecutive election that Owen has tried to unseat Harn as auditor-controller of El Dorado County.

Harn is endorsed by District Attorney Vern Pierson. Owen is endorsed by Sheriff John D'Agostini.

Harn has been auditor since 1994. Owen once worked for the county and is now owner of a winery on the West Slope.

A requirement to be a county auditor in California is to be an active certified public accountant in good standing with the California Board of Accountancy. Last fall when Owen started

actively campaigning for the June election he **falsely claimed** he had kept his CPA license active.

One of Owen's allegations in his campaign material is that Harn doesn't pay bills on time. Legally a county auditor couldn't do that even if he wanted to.

While Harn's campaign material says El Dorado has zero debt, the truth is the county has a sizable unfunded liability for CalPERS and it has loans to repay such as for the new sheriff's facilities – both things the average person would consider debt.

Owen questions Harn's demeanor, citing **past grand juries** that said the entire county was dysfunctional. Those reports led to Harn being investigated by the California Attorney General. That **case was dropped** and Harn was never asked to testify.

Owen has his own baggage. Campaign financial reports submitted to the El Dorado County Elections Department indicate he was penalized at least \$600 for violating the California Political Reform Act. Owen's campaign financial report for the period ending April 21 indicates he paid prior year campaign committee fees to the secretary of state in 2018. The Political Reform Act requires candidates pay a \$50 annual fee to the state if they have an active local campaign committee. In 2018 Owen paid \$450 to the secretary of state for "prior years' annual fees."

Of the \$450 paid, \$300 was a penalty for failing to pay on time. In 2017, Owen paid \$400 to the secretary of state, again \$300 was a penalty for failing to pay on time.

His campaign financial reports call the payments filing fees when actually the majority of the payments are for state imposed late payment penalties.

On top of all of that, Owen's winery in Camino, Crystal Basin Cellars, has had various tax liens recorded for failure to pay

property taxes on time. Owen has also had to pay penalties to the county for not paying his business taxes on time.

The election is June 5, with several county offices on the ballot.

Rivers rushing for stellar rafting season

By Tom Stienstra, San Francisco Chronicle

The first summer tease, with temperatures in the 80s, arrived last week in the Sierra foothills. But the real treats are in the rivers that cascade down the flank of the Sierra Nevada for rafting, water sports and camping.

Memorial Day weekend is two weeks away and the rafting and camping season is a go for summer.

Earlier this month, after an analysis of the High Sierra snowpack and downstream reservoir levels, water agencies and rafting outfitters met in friendly talks to reach a near-guarantee of rafting flows through summer for many rivers on the flank of the Sierra, said Nate Rangel of Adventure Connection.

California has roughly 20 rivers on which pro outfitters run trips. Snowmelt is feeding many rivers with clear, clean flows. In many watersheds, releases from near-full reservoirs guarantee rafting flows all summer.

Read the whole story

Supreme Court allows sports betting across the country

By Pete Williams, NBC News

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Supreme Court acted Monday to bust Nevada’s monopoly on legal sports betting, allowing more states to get in on the action and reap the tax benefits.

The court, in a 6-3 ruling, struck down a federal law that required states to ban gambling on the outcome of sporting events. The Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act was highly unusual: It did not ban sports gambling nationwide as a matter of federal law, but it said the states were not allowed to permit it. (Nevada was grandfathered in when the law was passed in 1992.)

[Read the whole story](#)

Conference highlights importance of rivers

By Linda Fine Conaboy

OLYMPIC VALLEY – One of the popular terms heard during the River Network’s River Rally was “citizen scientist.”

In workshop titled Restoring and Connecting a Wild & Scenic River, presenter Carrie Banks from Massachusetts said that she

uses citizen scientists to prioritize projects, secure funding, document crossing and stream function, among other jobs.

Bank's presentation was followed by another, Sierra Headwaters: Protecting and Restoring Rivers at the Source, where Rachel Hutchinson discussed the Yuba River watershed and Beth Christman from the Truckee River Watershed Council gave an informative overview of the Middle Martis Wetlands Restoration Project.

The task, to ameliorate the situation with the wetlands, started with a creek that was too small to handle the job, Christman said. The Middle Martis Creek channel was undersized for even moderate flow, there was lots of undercutting and meadow degradation, as well as highway flooding.

After bringing different entities together, they completed the job just before the advent of one of the largest water years ever recorded in the Sierra—the record-setting event of 2016-17. The restoration came through brilliantly, doing its job efficiently and with very little damage, much to their satisfaction.



Nicole Silk,
president of
conference host,
River Network.

Photo/Linda Fine
Conaboy

“Besides surviving that winter, we learned that a restored meadow is able to retain much more carbon, so the project is considered a huge success,” Christman said, referring to the fact that many meadows within the Sierra are highly degraded because of their carbon-rich soils, which allow a large amount of carbon dioxide to be disseminated into the atmosphere.

More than 500 people attended the April conference at the Resort at Squaw Creek in Olympic Valley. Each year the event is at a different locale, attracting water warriors from at least 40 states and representatives from Canada and Australia. The purpose is to connect local water champions, and empower organizations and individuals with the tools, training, and resources needed for success.

“Every year we move to a new location to connect with people whom you wouldn’t know or be able to learn from,” said Nicole Silk, president of conference host, River Network. “It’s the only conference of its kind where you can connect with people who are working at the local level on healthy rivers and clean water all over the country. The conference offers knowledge to fill your tool kit; it is inspiring and we do a lot of celebrating. We step back and recognize river heroes—we don’t do that enough. We connect people to save rivers.”

She explained that this is the 19th anniversary of River Rally and that they decided Lake Tahoe and environs were the perfect environment in which to celebrate. “We knew we wanted to be on the West Coast, close to water and the snow is beautiful. Lake Tahoe is just down the road, and the water quality of the lake is extraordinary,” she enthused.

As organization president, it is Silk’s fondest hope that people come away inspired to do more for local waters and leave with more tools than they came with to get that job

accomplished.

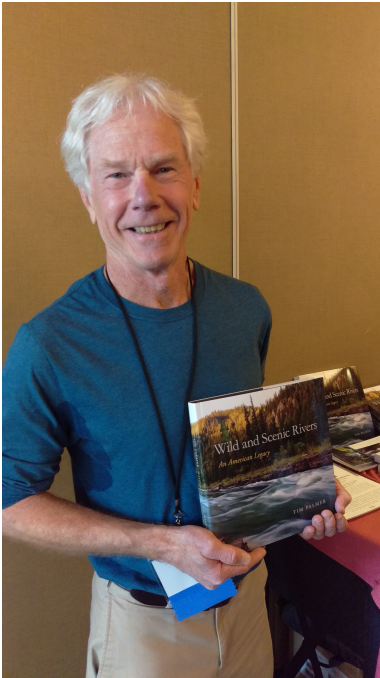
With 91 learning opportunities including six keynote speakers and plenaries, 74 workshops and 11 field trips over a three-day period, the atmosphere was definitely upbeat and inclusive. Workshops at the event included Defending the Waters of the United States; Partnering up for Conservation; Connecting People to Rivers; Water Infrastructure for a Sustainable Future, with more than 30 in all.

“We are the foremost national nonprofit connecting water-focused organizations, agencies, businesses and communities for greater local impact and healthier rivers across the U.S. We are the only national non-profit with this unique focus,” Silk told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Kick off speaker was author, adventurer, photographer and river master Tim Palmer, who offered his audience an enlightening overview of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968, which is a rivers system created by Congress to preserve certain rivers with outstanding natural, cultural, and recreational values in a free-flowing, un-dammed condition for the enjoyment of present and future generations.

Palmer showed a film highlighting some of the beautiful, free-flowing rivers with scenery so stunning you definitely wanted to book a trip on the Snake, the Klamath, the Rogue or any of the other unfettered wild rivers where Palmer is privileged to navigate his boats.

Now, there are more than 300 rivers across the U.S. possessing the Wild Rivers designation; in 1968, there were only 12.



Tim Palmer is an advocate of keeping rivers wild and scenic. Photo/Linda Fine Conaboy

Palmer explained that the 1950s is also known as the era of the big dams, with many being built during that period on numerous unsuspecting rivers—this was a state of affairs not to the liking of three-term congressman from Arizona, and secretary of the Interior from 1961-69, Stewart Udall. Udall enlisted the help of then-first lady Lady Bird Johnson, who was perhaps instrumental in convincing her husband to begin the protection of rivers.

The Wild and Scenic River Act became law with its nearly unanimous passage 50 years ago. It carried two stipulations, Palmer said: 1) that the waterway be free-flowing and; 2) that it contain one or more outstanding qualities, such as unique geology.

Considering that within the United State, a water crisis looms that includes issues of security, affordability, quality and access—more than one-third of Americans are at risk of losing

affordable drinking water and more than half of all of our rivers remain in poor health.

And, as Palmer said, “The advent of global warming makes it even more important to protect our rivers. That, and the push from the mining industry, which is battling to strip away designations so they can begin mining along wild rivers.”

According to Palmer, this makes it even more important to protect as many rivers as possible and provide them the protection of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Many rivers, he said, are now queuing up to receive the protected designation. The good news, he reiterated, is by vision and planning, the program has grown from just 12 to more than 300.

“We are all children of the Act,” Palmer said. “Rivers are lifelines; they connect us. They deserve protection.”

Investment kick-starts Tahoe City's economy

By Melissa Siig, Moonshine Ink

There was a time this winter when, on the surface, Tahoe City's future looked grim. The downtown commercial core was facing a plethora of empty restaurants and storefronts. The old Zia Lina space in the middle of downtown, vacated last year, was still empty, as well as the adjoining space that once housed Subway. Moe's Original Bar B Que, which had become a bright spot in Tahoe City since it opened in 2014, was leaving its waterfront location that hosted popular music shows. The Burrito Window was preparing to move to Kings Beach in anticipation of the demolition of the Henrikson building,

Sen. Tammy Duckworth, the first United States senator to give birth while in office has been seen on Capitol Hill with her newborn nestled in her lap.

Two Democratic gubernatorial candidates, Maryland's Krish Vignarajah and Wisconsin's Kelda Roys, made waves with campaign ads that, in addition to touting their capabilities as leaders, also show them nursing their babies.

A Democratic congressional candidate in New York, Liuba Grechen Shirley, was just granted permission from the Federal Election Commission to use campaign funds to cover the cost of child care while she runs for office.

Plus, women are running for office in record numbers this year. Among their many experiences, roles and identities, many are emphasizing being a mom.

What does this acknowledgment of motherhood tell us about U.S. politics today? As I have discussed in my work as a scholar of gender and politics, women running for office have not traditionally made motherhood central to their candidacies.

Here's why that appears to be changing.

Mothers of young children

In the past, women who ran for office typically did not have young children. Research shows that women who are professionally best positioned to run for office are less likely to have children than men, and that female officeholders are more likely than their male counterparts to not have children.

If female candidates did have children, they were often adult children – making their role as a mother less intensive and less central to their personal narrative at the time of their candidacy. Scholars have shown that women who hold office at various levels of government tend to do so when their children

are older.

Enter Hillary Clinton, whose groundbreaking presidential candidacy made motherhood central to her political appeals and policy agenda. While Clinton fit the traditional mold of a woman by running when her child was an adult, she made motherhood a major theme in her campaign. She spoke about her own experience of raising a child. She elevated the voices of other mothers and drew attention to their concerns.

And she relied on her own daughter, Chelsea Clinton – who gave birth to her second child just weeks before the 2016 Democratic National Convention – as a key surrogate for her on the campaign trail. By focusing on motherhood in so many ways, it's possible that her historic nomination may have empowered more women with young children to run for office.

Negotiating motherhood

Previously, female candidates with children had to deftly negotiate their role as a mother, rather than fully embrace it. While being a mother fulfills a strong societal expectation associated with womanhood, social psychologists have found that motherhood may be at odds with public perceptions of what strong, competent leadership looks like.

Moreover, women who highlight their children in campaigns may open themselves up to greater scrutiny. Voters may wonder, "Who is caring for your children while you are governing?"

These are the types of questions that Republicans Jane Swift and Sarah Palin faced during their political careers. These are questions that similarly situated male candidates do not receive.

Ironically, today, women without children may face the highest hurdle. There is some evidence that women running for office who do not have children are judged most harshly by would-be voters because childless female candidates violate traditional

expectations of women.

Running as a woman

Scholarship, that focuses on the issues that female candidates highlight and the types of voters they reach out to, suggests that making motherhood front and center may be a smart strategy. Scholars have found that in some electoral contexts, female candidates who highlight their gender and target female voters can build a strategic advantage.

For example, as the only woman running in the Democratic primary for the Maryland gubernatorial seat, Krish Vignarajah may distinguish herself from her six male competitors when she highlights her role as a mother. Research suggests she might build an advantage if she talks more about issues that affect women and spends more energy courting women primary voters, because these same approaches may be less effective for her male competitors.

Risks and rewards

The current focus on motherhood in U.S. politics is a mixed bag.

Running “as a mom” may open some female candidates up to the negative impact of gender stereotypes. On the other hand, some recent research suggests that gender stereotypes may no longer hinder women in the ways that they previously have. Other scholars argue that while gender stereotypes shape perceptions of female candidates, many voters ultimately cast their votes for the candidate of their preferred party, making gender and its stereotypes less consequential.

Candidates who highlight motherhood risk oversimplifying their own complex motivations. They may end up perpetuating the myth that women – perhaps because of motherhood – are best at legislating on issues related to family life, thereby keeping them tethered to the home and hearth.

Moreover, images of motherhood seen in electoral politics often reflect just one form of mothering. They do not embrace many other forms of motherhood and mothering across racial, ethnic and other identity groups.

On the other hand, when we ignore motherhood altogether, we do a disservice to all women. And, importantly, we may perpetuate the myth that women cannot or should not, to paraphrase Rep. Patricia Schroeder, “have a brain and a uterus, and use them both.”

Jill S. Greenlee is associate professor of politics at Brandeis University.

Food tourism something Tahoe could cultivate



Erik Wolf talks about how food tourism can be a bigger draw for Lake Tahoe. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – Food. It's what matters to many travelers. But it's not a reason to visit the South Shore – not yet, any way.

The importance of being a culinary destination was illustrated during a presentation last week by Erik Wolf. He is the executive director and founder of the World Food Travel Association. Besides being a keynote speaker during the annual tourism forum hosted by the Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce and Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority, he then led a break-out session just about food service.

Lake Tahoe, especially the south end of the lake, as a whole has nothing to brag about when it comes to cuisine. Wolf said this is a shame considering 25 percent of visitor spending is on food and beverage. He lumps libations – which doesn't mean it's alcoholic – into the overall food component.

Food tourism, Wolf told the audience at the Hard Rock on May 10, is like an attraction, it has the ability to get people to share with others and then inspire those people to experience it.

“Food tourism is something that is unique and memorable. People take home memories and then their stories are told,” Wolf said. “People want to experience what's local.”

He said it's about selling a lifestyle.

People think just serving a good meal is food tourism. Wolf said that is so wrong. In the break-out session he showed a picture of two hamburgers with the question – Is it a meal or a memory? One was rather an ordinary burger on a plate. The other was a burger loaded with toppings well beyond lettuce and tomato, along with onion rings in a separate container

that was artistic in its presentation, along with a beer.

The group agreed the second photo was memorable.

No matter what a destination's primary attraction is, there is no arguing everyone has to eat and drink. That is why food tourism should be part of the equation – especially in a place like Tahoe where tourism is the No. 1 industry.

Tourism is also a huge part of California's tourism. According to stats released this month by Visit California, "California's robust tourism economy expanded in 2017, fueling more than \$132 million in travel spending, \$10.9 billion in tax revenue, and 1.1 million jobs in communities across the Golden State. The report's findings show tourism spending jumped 4.8 percent in 2017, signaling the industry's eighth consecutive year of growth."

Wolf's assessment of the South Shore is that it is an emerging food destination, with work still needed before it registers on the radar of food travelers.

"You have opportunity," Wolf told the group.

What he liked when driving through the area is that there are not a lot of chain restaurants. While they have their place, Wolf said, they are not a reason someone will choose one locale over another.

Wolf's company has created 13 food profiles of the food tourist. Most (46 percent) want an authentic experience. "Don't artificially fabricate experiences."

Destinations can distinguish themselves by touting locally grown, offering something unique, being creative, featuring chefs, having a unique product and so much more. It could be as simple as experiencing a **traditional afternoon tea** as is common in London or taking a **cooking lesson while in Beijing**.

Service is part of that memorable experience. Tahoe has plenty

of room for improvement in that category.

Most people don't make all of their food/beverage decisions before they leave. That is why it is important for local outlets to have a rapport with frontline staff visitors might be interacting with to get recommendations.

Wolf said the No. 1 complaint of Europeans is the breakfast served at hotels – powdered eggs, a lot of sugary items – including boxed cereal, and bruised fruit.

Millennials are who the food industry needs to be focusing on because by 2020 they are expected to account for 50 percent of all travel spending. They are sharing their experiences before they even leave the bar/restaurant. Word of mouth is how people decide where to eat and drink.

“Every visitor to Tahoe can be a future ambassador,” Wolf said.

Separating water and politics isn't easy in California

By Bettina Boxall, Los Angeles Times

The 2014 water bond included a novel funding approach designed to take at least some of the politicking out of deciding which projects get public money.

This week's tortured deliberations by the California Water Commission showed just how tough it is to do that.

By applying a complex procedure for grading proposals, the bond restricted state taxpayer spending to the pieces of a

project that would provide measurable benefits to the public.

Read the whole story

Impact of a warming climate on Sierra Nevada

By Tara Lohan, Water Deeply

Imagine a California where springtime temperatures are 7 degrees warmer than they are today, where snowmelt runoff comes 50 days earlier and the average snowpack is just 36 percent of the 1981–2000 average.

That may be the reality by the end of the century if we don't curb greenhouse gas emissions, say researchers from UCLA. A recent report from the UCLA Center for Climate Science analyzes how climate change will impact the Sierra Nevada and what that will mean for water resources.

In particular the research examines changes to temperature, the amount of snowpack and the timing of runoff and which elevations and watersheds will be most affected as the climate warms. It also compares how these factors may change with "business as usual" and do little to curb greenhouse gas emissions, versus a scenario in which greenhouse gas emissions begin to level off around 2050.

Read the whole story

Bus service on South Shore in state of flux

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – Public outcry is forcing the Tahoe Transportation District board of directors to take more time before deciding how to reconfigure public transit on the South Shore.

George Fink, who manages the bus system, painted a financially bleak picture for the board at the May 11 meeting. Part of the funding the agency receives from California is dependent on fare revenue. TTD isn't close to meeting those numbers.

In order to do so staff is proposing reducing hours, eliminating routes, and altering on-demand access. A 50 percent cut across the transit spectrum is being considered.

TTD is dealing with not having enough workers, an inefficient fleet, lack of funding and the inability to meet performance measures.

Fink explained two-thirds of the riders on Route 50 are paying a reduced fare, while half of those on Route 53 are not paying full fare. Fink said that is out of whack and not sustainable. He said it's time to reduce the number of discounts available.

The board on Friday agreed to raise the senior discount from age 60 to 65, with those ages 5-64 considered general public who will pay full price. The Emerald Bay shuttle prices are going from \$2 one way to \$4, with the discounted rate doubling to \$2.

Many who attended the Friday meeting spoke about how changing the on-demand service would detrimentally impact the lives of those who are dependent on the service and have no alternative to get where they need to go. Many who use the service can't

drive.

One person called the bus service a “stabilizer” and another said it is her son’s “life line.” Two people in the health care profession spoke of how patients rely on the service to get to appointments.

Taxis were said to be unreliable and for some cost-prohibitive.

TTD staff had recommended drastically cutting the service, which included no longer going to the Meyers area. The board delayed making any decision on changing accessibility.

“Until we know where the transit routes will be we can’t really apply changes to demand response areas,” Steve Teshara, chair of the TTD board, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

He said the compelling testimony and the possibility of partnering with others like Barton Health were reasons to not take action Friday.

As for changing the routes used by the masses, public comment was extended a month to July 13. Cutting service hours per day in half is being talked about. Potential changes include eliminating the ski shuttles. While those are well-used, they are subsidized by Heavenly Mountain Resort so riders don’t have to pay. What the ski resort might do in the future remains to be seen.

Board member Marsha Berkbigler, who represents Washoe County, said, “I’m concerned we are taking transit away from the people using it.”