Opinion: Brexit played to Britons' Imperial nostalgia

By Philippa Levine

Shortly after the result of Britain's referendum on the European Union was declared last week, an academic colleague remarked to me, "the final curse of the Empire is that the imperial dream is destroying the imperial heartland."

Britain's long association with imperialism was a major undercurrent in the campaign to leave the EU. Disregarding the realities spelled out by economists and others as to the impact of a leave vote, the Leave campaign emphasized what Britain might once again become, if freed from what they described as the yoke imposed by the EU. (You could practically hear the strains of "Rule, Britannia!" in the background). The Leave campaign was a potent reminder of how imperial politics have long played out in Britain, the self-declared guardian of individual freedom bent on a civilizing imperial mission in the rest of the world.

The U.K. Independence Party's notorious poster showing long lines of migrants allegedly clamoring to enter the country conjured a mythic colonizing era: a time when Britain controlled the regions from which today's would-be migrants have fled, when Britain "ruled the waves," when Britain truly was "Great." That the migrant worker in the UK does the jobs that these voters don't want and won't do was lost in the dream of imperial greatness.

But what, realistically, would a return to empire look like almost two decades into the 21st century? After all, it's obvious there can be no return to imperial conquest or dominance for Britain. But the Brexit dream worked precisely because it was steeped in nostalgia and regret for a past that

many “Leavers” believe should never have been abandoned in the first place.

The Leave campaign’s appeal to patriotic imperialism was inevitable; it has long been used by those in power to rein in a fractious working class, and to conjure associations with white skin and nationalism. National pride in Britain has repeatedly rested on misty remembrances of the glory days of Empire, a vision already riven with the easy racism now rapidly re-emerging in an impossibly divided Britain. With a vote as close as we saw in the referendum (52 percent leave; 48 percent remain), the substantial divides in British society can only get worse.

Britain’s relationship to the EU itself—and its predecessor, the European Common Market— is rooted in its own imperial legacy. After initially opting not to join the EU in the late 1950s, Britain changed its mind and launched what became an increasingly desperate campaign to gain entry. The French leader Charles de Gaulle twice vetoed Britain’s application (in 1961 and again in 1967) for membership, largely on the grounds that its principal ties were more imperial than European. And Commonwealth leaders around the world did not look kindly on Britain’s bid for European recognition, fearing that it would diminish Britain’s commitment to trading relations with their countries.

It would be 1973, and after a change in French leadership, before Britain would be granted admission. Two years later, a referendum on whether Britain should continue its association with Europe was met with resounding approval—more than 67 percent, with a turnout approaching 65 percent.

The 1975 referendum took place as the empire was disintegrating and the greater part of Britain’s former colonial possessions had been lost. In light of this immense change, Britons overwhelmingly saw Europe as offering, in effect, a realistic alternative to what they understood to be

a loss of power, economic prowess, and British dignity.

The reason empire mattered in 2016 was precisely why it didn't 41 years earlier—remaking Britain in the image of imperial greatness was far more persuasive at a moment when it could be clothed in a nostalgic post-colonial glow than when colonies were disappearing at a clip.

How different were the issues in 1975 from those that have dominated in 2016? The Leave campaign, 41 years ago as now, was an odd mix of far-right and radical left concerns. In 1975, the British Communist Party and the white supremacist National Front, as well as the Scottish National Party and their Welsh counterpart Plaid Cymru, opposed membership as did about a third of Prime Minister Harold Wilson's cabinet. (Only the radical shift in attitudes among the Scottish National Party, now firmly pro-Europe, has changed much since in this roster of opponents.) Back then the arguments for leaving Europe were not so different from the arguments heard in recent months—national concerns about the loss of British identity and sovereignty to critiques of an over-weaning capitalist bloc in Europe. In 1975 and again in 2016 the vote was cast in the shadow of de-industrialization, unstable employment outlooks, and a vocal anti-immigration lobby.

Margaret Thatcher, prime minister from 1979 to 1990, began as a pro-European but became increasingly unhappy about the direction of the EU. Only two years after she signed the Single European Act, designed to make European laws and policies more uniform, she expressed concern over a European superstate dominating local needs. Her ideas were increasingly rooted in a nostalgic idea of Britain's former imperial greatness even as she implemented often-ruthless programs of economic modernization. In the campaign she waged in the Falkland Islands off Argentina in 1982, a vision of glorious imperial Britain stamping out foreign despotism and corruption captured the public imagination, and helped immensely in securing her re-election in 1983 even against the backdrop of

relentless working-class immiseration. With most of the empire now gone, the business of yearning revival could begin in earnest. Under Thatcher, Britons were urged to admire and revive Victorian values and imperial dreams.

Notwithstanding the fact that the Thatcher years saw the final episode in the dismantling of Britain's once vast empire—the last territories in southern Africa, most of the Caribbean, pockets in the Pacific and, of course, the agreement to return Hong Kong to Chinese rule—this idea of restoring the "great" in Great Britain was, and remains, a potent propaganda move.

Across England the theme heard most often in the past few weeks has been that an independent sovereign Britain could once more be great. Of course, that has been the battle cry of right-wing politicians and demagogues since the early 20th century. It was the message of pro-imperial politicians when Germany's rise threatened British power in the early 1900s. It was again the message when migration from former colonies became substantial after 1945, giving rise to increasingly draconian immigration laws. And it was at the core of the success of the Leave campaign last week.

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Opinion: What Ancient Greece tells us about U.S. democracy

By Daniel H. Foster

Times are hard for democracy. Trump wants a wall. Senators

refuse to question judicial nominees. And anti-Hillary liberals seriously contend that she is “as bad as” the opposing party’s presumptive nominee, vowing not to vote if she wins the nomination.

But when were they ever otherwise than hard? Democracy has always been vulnerable to extreme opinions and dogmatic certainties. Sometimes the price of free speech is listening to things you don’t want to hear.

Theater holds a possible remedy, though, to some of our worst tendencies. It’s pretty simple. We need more tragedy.

Of course, tragedy might seem remote and irrelevant. To many it is dimly remembered as something to do with hubris, catharsis, and tragic flaws. We hear the word tragedy in the news mainly when it’s misapplied to some disaster, natural or otherwise. But it needn’t be either irrelevant or misappropriated. Tragedy is not just the stuff of English tests. It has a long and illustrious history as a salve for self-government. No coincidence that democracy and tragedy arose around the same time in ancient Athens.

While scholars disagree about exactly how tragedy arose, we are certain that it evolved alongside Athenian democracy. Athenians understood that what they saw onstage taught them truths and ways of thinking vital for their roles as citizens. Like the law courts, tragedy was a civic institution. Funded by the state, it was perhaps the greatest citizenship class ever.

The most important tragic lessons warn against extremism. Tragedy centers on heroes who, paradoxically, are passionate to do precisely what the gods decree. They are men and women who invite their fate with extreme self-regard combined with all-or-nothing thinking.

Consider Oedipus the tyrant, eponymous hero of Sophocles’ most famous tragedy. Witnessing a plague ravage his home city of

Thebes, Oedipus boasts that he, “whom all men call the great,” is the only person who can save the day. Sound familiar? “I am the only one who can fix this,” tweeted Donald Trump last month. He was stumping on the loss of American jobs to Mexico, but it’s an attitude he uses throughout his political performance.

And tragedy offers its comeuppance. The plague in Thebes is caused by the unsolved murder of the previous king of Thebes, Oedipus’ father—who was slain by his only son. That is the very definition of tragic irony. Admittedly less tragic but no less ironic is the fact that, tweets to the contrary; Trump has been accused of outsourcing jobs to foreign employers. No one is the “only one” to fix anything, tragedy tells us. In fact, thinking that way is a trait of those who cause problems.

A related insight comes from Oedipus’ own headstrong daughter, Antigone. In her eponymous tragedy, having apparently learned nothing from her father’s example, Antigone is certain that she alone knows what piety is and what the gods want—the burial of her rebel brother. But self-righteousness runs in the family, on both sides. Antigone’s maternal uncle Creon, current ruler of Thebes, is just as adamant that he knows best. The gods do not honor traitors, he asserts, punctuating his assertion by burying his niece alive. Antigone, always swift to stress her independence, even in the choice of death, ends her own life by hanging before she can serve out Creon’s sentence. As Hegel almost said once, tragic heroes have one-line bucket lists. Once that item is crossed off, you can cross off the hero as well.

Such single-minded, black-and-white thinking dominates politics today. Pundits, politicians, and private individuals a like love to make noise about the doom that will overtake us if we even consider the opinions of their opponents. Overlooking his misuse of the term, there is nonetheless something tragic in the French Prime Minister Manuel Vall’s

recent prediction that a UK “Brexit” would spell “tragedy” for Britain.

Like tragic heroes, such people are convinced that they alone know what’s what and what’s right. They are especially self-righteous when it comes to self-knowledge. Oedipus was positive he knew himself inside out: He was a simple man, a straightforward man, a self-made man. (“Men of the people” are a dime a dozen in American politics. Remember George W. Bush’s gestures of folksiness from atop a trust fund?)

But despite the Delphic injunction to “know thyself,” we never quite succeed. Even the brightest light, when shone against the self, casts a shadow. Oedipus may be able to solve the Sphinx’s riddle, but he must also recognize that he himself is a riddle that defies reason—his children’s brother, his mother’s husband, his father’s slayer, his city’s savior and its destroyer. The consequences of this forced recognition are horrific: He loses his sight, his homeland, and his wife and mother at one fell swoop.

Such consequences are not restricted to tragic heroes. Politicians are by custom if not by nature in the business of projecting false images of themselves. And then, when we find out the “truth,” that they are not really what they seem, we are horrified, ashamed, and feel betrayed. Richard Nixon swore he was not a crook. The White House tapes proved otherwise. John Edwards seemed a model of sympathy. The handling of his extramarital affair tells another story.

As classics scholar Jean-Pierre Vernant realized, tragedy teaches us that those who blindly adhere to a single-minded perspective will, like Oedipus, inevitably be forced to confront the opposite point of view, the perspective they had hitherto refused to even consider. In comedy we laugh. In tragedy we cry. But the cause of both is the same: We recognize a yawning chasm between what should be and what is. Tragedy teaches by negative example. The great stage and

literary tragedies reveal the horrible consequences of seeing things in black and white and so encourage us to discern shades of gray. They promote what the Greeks called sophrosyne, one of those "untranslatable" words usually translated as "moderation."

Smack dab in the middle of a speech in the middle of "Antigone" a character called Haemon advocates this middle-of-the-road approach to life. "Don't think that you alone know the truth and everyone else is wrong. Such individuals, when they are opened up, are found to be hollow inside." Unfortunately, it is often such "hollow men" who seem to make the biggest noise and to have the greatest courage of their convictions. But sometimes these people are heard above the rest simply because they are empty inside. Their souls are echo chambers, amplifying pin drops to thunder claps.

Tragedy diagnoses this hollowness—and listens for the softer voice of sophrosyne that might better guide our governments and our lives. Tragedy challenged Athenian citizens to question their own black-and-white thinking, to open their minds to the perspectives of others. This is not to say that ancient Athens was perfect. Far from it. It was rife with xenophobes, demagogues, and warmongers. It was propped up by slave labor. Its women residents not only did not have the right to vote, they were almost certainly dissuaded from attending those very tragedies that extolled democracy. It was a culture with a lot of work to do.

But so is ours. Which is why we can't afford to discard the millennia-old art form that can help us address very contemporary problems. Athens needed tragedy. We do, too.

Daniel H. Foster is a senior lecturer in literature, drama, and creative writing at the University of East Anglia. He is the author of "Wagner's Ring Cycle and the Greeks" (Cambridge 2010) and is currently at work on "The Minstrel's Progress: British Bards to American Blackface, 1750-1850".

Letter: Don’t build the loop road

To the community,

Building the loop road using the triangle alternative will negatively affect the community. The loop road may reduce travel time and pollutants, but benefits it may provide don’t make the cost, removal of families and businesses, and the negative effects on businesses worth it to the community.

The triangle plan would reroute traffic away from the casinos, connecting Highway 50 and Pioneer Trail, possibly reducing travel time and making the area safer. Supporters theorize that reduced time in traffic may reduce pollutants entering the lake, but many locals feel that these benefits don’t outweigh the negatives of the plan.

Construction of the loop road will negatively affect the community through increased taxes and the cost of removing homes and businesses. Construction of the loop road will cost $70 million to $80 million and affect 90 dwelling units and eight businesses, forcing the affected families and businesses to relocate. The government will give reimbursals, which are often weighted in the government’s favor, and may lead to property owners getting less than the true value of their properties.

Businesses along Highway 50 not being removed will be affected negatively by the rerouting of traffic around the tourist area. Businesses along busy roadways tend to see 50 percent more sales than those on quieter roads. This decreased exposure will lead to businesses closing, some of which play a large role in the city’s economy. The likely failure of

businesses makes the road seem more and more like it will only negatively affect the community.

Alternatives to the loop road that could accomplish the goals of the loop road in a cost effective way exist and need to be considered before the construction of the road.

Charles Filce, South Lake Tahoe

Opinion: Homelessness becomes a political issue

By Joe Mathews

How did homelessness suddenly become such a hot issue across California? There are many reasons, few of which have anything to do with homeless people.

Those reasons—economic anxiety, budget surpluses, tax schemes, housing prices, prison reform, urban development and politics—have combined to create today's "homeless moment."

Joe Mathews

For decades, homelessness has been a civic obsession in the Bay Area, with its progressive politics and generous homeless services. Now that homelessness hubbub is spreading statewide.

To the surprise of many at the state Capitol, a $2 billion bond to pay for housing for the mentally ill homeless became a central focus of this month's budget negotiations. Around the state, law enforcement officials have stirred the pot by claiming that measures to reduce the California prison population exacerbate homelessness.

In Los Angeles, which has the nation's second largest homeless population, a homeless emergency has been declared, and the biggest political fights in town are over city and county plans to ramp up spending on homeless services. In San Diego, with America's fourth largest homeless population, a leading city councilman called for ending all homelessness by next year, a promise overshadowed by the city's installation of jagged rocks under a freeway to dislodge homeless encampments before July's baseball all-star game.

In Fresno, Mayor Ashley Swearengin just announced a plan to end homelessness in three years. In Sacramento, homelessness was a leading issue in this month's mayoral election. Orange County may appoint a "homeless czar."

Given this drama, you might expect homeless populations to be rapidly rising. But homeless counts (the accuracy of which is always debated) suggest homeless populations are flat, or in decline, in many California cities. So why the sudden urgency? The homeless are now more visible to the rich people who drive civic conversation. New restaurants and housing have brought wealthy folks into central-city neighborhoods and old industrial areas that once were havens for the homeless.

At the same time, anxiety about housing has never run deeper. The housing crisis of the previous decade cost many Californians their homes. California's total failure to build sufficient housing of all types has led to sky-high prices in this decade. For many, sleeping on the street no longer seems such a distant prospect.

Polls reflect this fear, and politicians have seized on it. In an extraordinary public letter late last year, then-Santa Cruz Mayor Don Lane (now a councilman) urged bold experiments with the problem—and criticized his own previous inaction. “I am as responsible as anyone in this community for our failure to address our lack of shelter and our over-reliance on law enforcement and the criminal justice system to manage homelessness,” he wrote. “I have been a direct participant in many of my city’s decisions on homelessness. I have failed to adequately answer many of the questions I am posing.”

Such self-criticism is easier when money is on the way. The federal government has stepped up funding for homeless veterans. The state has approved a plan to borrow $2 billion from a state fund for mental health services (funded by a tax on millionaires) to pay for housing for the mentally ill homeless.

This homeless moment has also created opportunities for clever political money grabs. Some LA County supervisors have asked the state to permit them to impose their own millionaire’s tax to pay for more homeless programs. That money would free up other funds for other purposes—which is all the more reason to decree a homelessness crisis.

To be fair, much of this money will be spent on a strategy that has shown some success—providing permanent supportive housing for the homeless. But such housing is no panacea for a problem this complex. And today’s windfall for homeless services is unlikely, in California’s volatile budget system, to last. Even if it did, the disparate nature of the funding—incentives, borrowing matching grants—isn’t efficient or sufficient to create the capacity to cover California’s homeless populations.

In his acclaimed new book “Evicted”, Harvard Professor Matthew Desmond argues that ending homelessness requires a much bolder stroke: establishing “universal housing” as a right, like the

well-established right to public education.

Under Desmond's proposal, the government would issue housing vouchers to families below a certain income threshold so that they pay no more than 30 percent of their income on housing. Such rental assistance has a strong track record in some European countries, which don't suffer from American-style homelessness. In the U.S., universal housing via vouchers would cost $60 billion, Desmond estimates—a fraction of the hundreds of billions spent subsidizing the housing of wealthier people via programs like the mortgage-interest tax deduction.

Universal housing is just the sort of idea that California should try—if our homeless moment is really about ending homelessness.

Joe Mathews writes the Connecting California column for Zocalo Public Square.

Letter: Homeless coalition thankful

To the community,

Tahoe Coalition for the Homeless would like to thank the many volunteers who participated in our litter pick up day around the 981 Silver Dollar neighborhood this month. We also appreciate Clean Tahoe for contributing supplies and League to Save Lake Tahoe for providing lunch to our volunteers.

Participants included Ivan Aguilar, Lea Albright, Lyric Albright, Winzer Albright, Sara Anderson, Miles Anderson, Joan

Cox, Erin Kambenja, Shaylie Rippet, Marshall Triggs, Catherine Womack, and Dismus Womack. We appreciate their help in being good neighbors and keeping the area free of trash. TCH will be hosting another clean-up at 981 Silver Dollar on July 9 from 10am to noon. Email Bruce Cox at bruce.cox58@yahoo.com if you would like to participate or if you have any questions.

Tahoe Coalition for the Homeless is seeking space for the 2016-17 winter season. Minimum requirements include 2,000 square feet of space, restrooms, parking, and storage areas. We are also looking for businesses to run supply drives in the fall and for volunteers for the 2016-17 winter season. We can be contacted at tahoewarmroom@gmail.com or 775.573.0822.

Donations are welcome. Checks can be made payable to Live Violence Free (our fiscal sponsor), note “Warm Room” in the memo line and mail to PO Box 13514, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96151.

Sincerely,

Marissa Muscat, executive director

Letter: Placer County needs to slow down

Publisher’s note: ***This letter was sent to Placer County and is reprinted with permission.***

To Placer County:

The citizens of North Lake Tahoe, along with environmental groups in Tahoe and surrounding region and local government agencies, are asking for your support for a fair public

process.

We have been besieged with thousands of pages of environmental documentation and have responded in kind. We have asked that Placer slow down the approval process to no avail and give each project its due respect. Final and draft environmental reports on three major projects that will affect the next 20 years in the Tahoe region have been released within a span of 70 days.

The Placer County public process for responding to environmental documents is being abused by releasing several documents of several thousands of pages (EIR document, reference materials, studies, etc. add up to thousands of pages) each for local government agencies, environmental groups, the public-at-large, etc., to respond with comprehensive comments to inform the local elected officials.

I do not require a lot of sleep and can pass up a few meals, but it’s been hard to get a breath of fresh air trying to read all the documents. There are only 24 hours in a day.

Yes, the county is adhering to minimum requirements for response time but not taking into consideration the volume of information we are required to consume to provide comments.

What’s the hurry? To get these projects approved (the three majors projects listed below) have been in the queue with one environmental consultant. The consultant completes their efforts and we get slammed.

The process is not allowing for a sufficient amount of time between each project. They are being overlapped with several meetings each month that we must attend or send in written comments to build an accurate record.

Furthermore, there are many other smaller, but just as important, projects in the pipeline for public comment and meeting attendance (Placer and Nevada County):

1). The Railyard Mixed-Use Development Master Plan in Truckee.
2). The Crown Motel (Laulima) redevelopment of 4.5 acres on lake and mountain sides of Highway 28 includes 117 lodging rooms, 34 residential units, and 5,500 square feet of commercial space in Kings Beach.
3). The Alpine-Squaw Gondola project: a new 8-person gondola (a design capacity of approximately 1,400 persons per hour in both directions) connecting the Alpine Meadows and Squaw Valley ski resorts.
4). And on-hold but will be released: The Brockway Campground – a 550-unit luxury camping experience with swimming pool, commercial, etc. atop a Tahoe ridgeline at Brockway Summit abutting the Martis Valley West parcel Specific Plan, just to name a few.

Info on the three major projects can be found below. It's not too late to participate before the projects are approved, but beware it's a time consuming process just to address one project, let alone all three.

Meetings we know of:
July 7: Placer Planning Commission, subject TBD (Squaw or Martis Valley West).
July 13: TRPA Advisory Planning Commission will hear Tahoe Basin Area Plan.
July 26: Placer Board of Supervisors Martis Valley West, tentative.
July 27: TRPA Governing Board and Regional Plan Implementation Committee (two presentations same day) on the Tahoe Basin Area Plan.
July 28: Placer County Planning Commission, Tahoe Basin Area Plan.
Aug. 9: Placer County Planning Commission, Squaw, tentative.
Aug. 11: North Tahoe Regional Advisory Council, Tahoe Basin Area Plan
Stay Tuned: Squaw and Martis Valley West will have meetings actually scheduled.

Below are shortened URLs to the environmental reports and more information on the three major aforementioned projects:

- Tahoe Basin Area Plan (20+ year up date of community plans and a 120 unit hotel in Tahoe City) released June 15, 2016, Draft Environmental Impact Report: bit.ly/28NfL9T
- Martis Valley West Parcel Specific Plan Final Environmental Impact Report, released May 3, 2016: bit.ly/28R5QPl
- Village at Squaw Valley Specific Plan Final Environmental Impact Report, released April 7, 2016: bit.ly/28LywvL

Ellie Waller, Tahoe Vista

Opinion: Can campuses truly prepare for shootings?

By David N. Myers

A good part of what was so distressing about this month's shooting at UCLA was the familiarity of it all.

The death of William Klug, a brilliant and affable young professor, at the hands of a mad former graduate student, was the chief tragedy. But as our campus was taken over June 1 by a veritable army of armed law enforcement personnel in helicopters, police cars and trucks, I couldn't help but think: Here we go again.

The sight of high school and college campuses in lockdown, with one or more shooters terrorizing hundreds or thousands of students, has become normal. Since 2013, there have been 186

school shooting incidents, according to the Everytown for Gun Safety, a group that began compiling school shooting statistics after the Sandy Hook, Conn., massacre in 2012. Last year saw more than 50 school shooting incidents, 23 of which were on college campuses.

In a society facing an epidemic of gun violence, universities are, at their best, havens of freedom—sites of the free exchange of ideas, free and open interchange between diverse groups, and free movement across the sovereign campus island. But our freedom is being eroded as we hunker down in preparation for the next burst of deadly fire. Indeed, the vigilance with which we act on our campuses today takes a toll on that exhilarating sense of liberation—from ignorance, bias, and convention—that the university once offered.

I remember well the sad realization I had after Sandy Hook, that it now made sense to introduce active shooter preparation training for the UCLA History Department, of which I served as chair from 2010 to 2015. In 2013, we had our first preparedness session with an officer from the UC Police Department. The announcement to our faculty, staff, and students noted that:

An active shooter is defined as a situation where one or more suspects participate in a random or systematic shooting spree, demonstrating intent to continuously harm others.

It’s an unfortunate sign of the times that we need to think this way, but it is very important that we be as prepared as possible for such an event. In that kind of situation, there are specific things we can do to protect ourselves and those around us.

In point of fact, the randomness of these acts constrains our ability to protect ourselves. If we are in the wrong place at the wrong time or are the intended target, there is little to be done. Nonetheless, the active shooter trainer tried to

prepare those in attendance for what to do: run from open spaces, closet yourself in your classroom or office, lock the door, turn off the lights, and keep silent.

These are all sensible suggestions. But I was struck, after a second preparedness session, by the indeterminacy of what to do in a situation in which you find yourself in the same room as shooters. The options, as the UCLA Emergency Management webpage tells us, are threefold: “Stay still and hope they don’t shoot you, run for an exit while zigzagging, or attack the shooter.”

Fortunately, most of us never have and never will have to face that rather harrowing set of choices. In the meantime, we on college campuses usually put this prospect out of our minds. The more vigilant among us may pay increased attention to our immediate environs, locate exits in rooms, or even run through versions of game theory as we contemplate escape scenarios in our minds.

My own sense of vigilance was heightened during the time I served as department chair, especially when I would meet with irate and sometimes disturbed students. I would ask staff colleagues adjacent to me to pay special attention to any abrupt noises. I would also sit relatively close to the students and follow their hand movements in order to be able to act quickly if they took out a weapon.

I chided myself for engaging in this kind of suspicion-ridden activity, for it seemed to violate the basic trust that underlies the teacher-student relationship. And yet, I couldn’t stop myself from going through a mental checklist of preventative measures.

This is our reality now. Of course, we should follow the Australians and set in place tighter regulation of gun ownership. And of course, we should develop far better strategies and devote far more resources to help those with

mental illness. These are absolute no-brainers. What more needs to happen to demonstrate their necessity?

Shooter preparedness sessions are highly imperfect. They reveal that emergency management is an art, not a science. But these sessions are the best we have at present. And it is all the more important to undergo such training in the absence of far-reaching policy changes necessary to reduce the number of shootings.

In the meantime, even as we know that there will be more episodes, we must fight against the understandable impulse to constrain ourselves even further by censoring our words or altogether altering the ways we interact with colleagues and students out of fear. Difficult as it may be, we must endeavor to preserve that essential freedom of mind and movement that propels the university to do its important work for students and society alike.

David N. Myers is the Sady and Ludwig Kahn professor of Jewish history at UCLA.

Opinion: TERC's importance 10 years later

By Geoff Schladow

I have spent the last week observing the impacts of poor land management, uncontrolled invasive species, and degrading aquatic resources in one of the most unique and idyllic places on earth. I also saw really big crocodiles, so I wasn't at Lake Tahoe. Rather, I was in the Northern Territory in Australia, a region that is starkly different than Tahoe, but

sharing many of the same challenges.


Geoff Schladow

In the last 50 years this region has been opened up to the world, in the same way that Tahoe was opened up after the Squaw Valley Olympics.

Where Lake Tahoe has outdone the Northern Territory is that it has built on a continuous science presence for over 55 years, with the greatest advances in the last decade. It is hard to believe that it was 10 years ago that the finishing touches were being installed on TERC's new labs and offices at Incline Village. That was an exciting time. After years of getting by in makeshift houses and buildings, we finally had the home we needed: a facility where research, public engagement and the science to guide restoration had a base in the Tahoe basin.

Looking back at all that has been accomplished it becomes clear how monumental an achievement this really was. Over
100,000 people of all ages have walked through the doors to learn about solving Tahoe's challenges. Scores of research grants have launched the careers of young scientists and helped unravel the lake's secrets. International conferences have brought hundreds of visiting scientists from every continent to help us understand Lake Tahoe and have launched new collaborations on lakes around the world.

Most importantly, it has created a permanent home for research and science here in the Tahoe basin. The nature and the

complexity of Lake Tahoe and its ecosystem will never stop changing and we need institutional memory, experienced researchers who know what was learned 40 years ago and where the knowledge gaps lie, and new cohorts of students, to keep abreast of these changes and to take on future conditions.

This home for research and dcience was built through philanthropy. To the many people and foundations in the greater
Tahoe community who had the foresight and vision to invest in science when UC Davis launched its campaign for TERC in the 1990s, we once again thank you for your generosity. We hope that on our 10-year anniversary you will again step forward and renew your commitment to Lake Tahoe and to science, and help provide the resources we need to sustain independent science.

Geoff Schladow is director of Tahoe Environmental Research Center.

Opinion: Florida – the 'Gunshine State'

By David Cole

Ever since the brutal mass shooting at a gay nightclub in Orlando in the early morning hours on June 12, Florida has become the focus of nationwide concerns about easy access to guns, and the mayhem such access can produce.

That focus on the Sunshine State is even more appropriate than the American public understands. The state of Florida has long played a leading role in the establishment and expansion of the right to bear arms.

As constitutional rights go, the right to bear arms is of relatively recent vintage. In 1991, then-retired Chief Justice Warren Burger characterized the notion that the Second Amendment protects such a right as one of the greatest frauds perpetrated on the American public in his lifetime. In the uniform view of the federal courts for more than 100 years, the Second Amendment protected only the states' prerogative to have militias. It afforded individuals no personal rights to own or carry firearms.

But In 2008, the Supreme Court ruled in District of Columbia v. Heller that the Second Amendment did in fact protect such an individual right to bear arms. What happened?

The answer lays in Florida – and the offices of Marion Hammer, a 4-foot-11-inch grandmother, now in her 70s, who never went to law school but happens to be the most powerful lobbyist in Florida.

Hammer was the first female president of the National Rifle Association. The NRA was primarily a marksmanship, hunting, and sport shooting organization for most of its history. It did not even establish a political arm until 1975; about the same time Hammer became involved in the political fight for gun rights. Both developments were a response to the first major piece of federal gun legislation, the Gun Control Act, passed in 1968 after the assassinations of John and Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr. Hammer and the NRA saw the Gun Control Act as a threat to their liberty, but understood that the federal courts would not be receptive to a constitutional challenge, given their longstanding rejection of an individual right. Instead, the NRA found more sympathetic forums in the states, where gun control advocates

were not organized, and where politicians responsive to rural constituents were especially receptive to the need for individuals to own guns for self-defense.

In no small part because of Hammer's early and effective advocacy, Florida became the NRA's go-to state, so much so that it is sometimes called the Gunshine State.

Under Hammer's direction, the NRA's state-by-state strategy started in its most hospitable state, and exported victories won there to other states. In Florida and then other states, NRA lobbyists fought for amendments to state constitutions to recognize an individual right to bear arms. They pressed for laws requiring state and local governments to issue individual licenses for concealed weapons. They successfully protected gun manufacturers from liability for injuries caused by illegal use of their weapons. These legislative victories created a new environment. By 2008, when the Supreme Court took up the question of a federal right to bear arms, the vast majority of states already protected individual gun ownership rights, thereby easing the way to recognition of a federal right.

In this way, recognition of an individual right to bear arms was not imposed from the top down by five justices, but developed from the bottom up, through decades of advocacy (in the legal academy, the executive branch and Congress) sponsored by the NRA. And even after receiving the Supreme Court's imprimatur, Marion Hammer and her NRA colleagues, through their political influence in Washington and the state, remain the most significant guardians of the right to bear arms, notwithstanding the right's formal recognition in our constitutional law.

This story is not unique to the NRA and the Second Amendment. Often, the key actors in constitutional law are not the justices on the Supreme Court, but "we the people," acting in associations of like-minded citizens, and engaged in advocacy

far beyond the federal courts. As Learned Hand, a legendary federal judge, once said, “Liberty lies in the hearts of men and women. When it dies there, no constitution, no law, no court can save it…while it lies there it needs no constitution, no law, no court to save it.” Civil society organizations—on the left and the right, whether they are the ACLU or the NRA—help to ensure that liberty lies in our hearts, and is reflected in our constitutional law.

David Cole is the Hon. George J. Mitchell Professor in Law and Public Policy at Georgetown Law, and author of “Engines of Liberty: The Power of Citizen Activists to Make Constitutional Law”.

Opinion: Community colleges an overlooked option

By Patrice Apodaca, Los Angeles Times

Congratulations to the high school graduating class of 2016. You deserve praise for your achievement and are no doubt excited about the future that lies before you.

I’d like to offer a special congrats to those among you who have made what could turn out to be a very wise choice. A certain percentage of your graduating class will soon be attending a local community college, and while that might not elicit the hoops and hollers of a brand-name, nationally ranked university, if handled responsibly it might just be one of the best decisions these students ever make.

The case for community colleges these days is pretty darn compelling.

First, there’s the price tag.

Read the whole story