

# Letter: Questions regarding Meyers hockey academy

**Publisher's note:** *This letter was sent to the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and is reprinted with permission.*

Dear Ms. [Audrey] Jepson,

I received your notice of a public hearing for this project scheduled for June 22. I believe some clarification is required.

The notice contains the same language as before in the last paragraph, indicating that this item is again on the consent agenda, and may be approved without additional discussion.

Which is it? A public hearing or another attempt to pass the project without the discussions many of us have asked for earlier?

I would like to see the following addressed in discussion:

- What is the rationale to use earlier studies and permits issued 20 years ago on a "go forward without any further attention" basis when so much about the proposed project and the local area has changed?
- The hockey academy concept described on the website [www.tahoehockeyacademy.com](http://www.tahoehockeyacademy.com) earlier referenced in correspondence is not a "recreational facility" as originally permitted, it is now a high school with nearly a hundred possible students. A school which charges in the range of \$50,000 per year for tuition, room and board. Doesn't the school have a conflict with the plan area statements which are in place for this area?
- Did the El Dorado County approvals address the school aspect of the project as opposed to recreational

- facility proposed in the original project?
- The project maps on TRPA' website are not clear. The basketball courts shown are also shown as overflow parking. I was not able to clearly identify 40 plus other parking places defined on the drawings.
  - Has an analysis been done to indicate the impacts on the city ice rink (and the public that also uses it) of an additional nearly 100 possible daily hockey training sessions?
  - Have any traffic studies been done to identify emergency ingress/egress alternatives in either fire or avalanche conditions.
  - Caltrans is planning a roundabout at 50 and 89 in 2018. This major project will have an affect on the ability to get bus and other traffic onto 50 from the project location.
  - Is Tahoe Hockey Academy bus and other traffic planning to use South Upper Truckee Road to Portal to 89 and thence to Highway 50 to avoid the difficult intersection at Highway 50 and South Upper Truckee Road? This would negatively affect about half the residents of Christmas Valley.

Thank you for your attention.

**Ed Morrow, Christmas Valley**

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## **Letter: Thankful for outdoor education volunteers**

**To the community,**

The students of Lake Tahoe Unified School District and Zephyr

Cove Elementary were able to participate in the Outdoor Explore and Children's Forest events thanks to the help of many amazing partners during the past few weeks.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all who support these wonderful programs. The Lake Tahoe Education Foundation graciously funds our programs through a grant program and we would not be able to do this without their help.

Students are able to learn more about their environment and connect with nature in new and exciting ways, learn about the ways of the Washoe and founding families, and be introduced to various public lands around Lake Tahoe, thanks to the support of our many South Tahoe Environmental Education Coalition partners and volunteers.

For each of these events, students get to rotate through four different stations and enjoy eating lunch in beautiful locations – Nevada Beach and the Tallac Historic Site.

Our deeply felt thanks go to the U.S. Forest Service, Sugar Pine Foundation, TRPA, TRCD, League to Save Lake Tahoe, South Tahoe Humane Society, STPUD, TERC, TINS, Tahoe Heritage Foundation and several other amazing volunteers (Alicia, Bonnie, Daryl, Frank, Leslie, Marie and Rick). Thank you for all that you do for our students.

With deep gratitude,

**Beth Quandt, science outreach coordinator for Lake Tahoe Unified School District**

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# Opinion: How the buffalo became national mammal

By Gaynell Terrell, High Country News

*He was one of Nature's biggest gifts, and the country owes him thanks.* – Charles M. Russell, 1925

The bald eagle has been the national symbol since 1782, but the Western artist Charlie Russell was right: The buffalo was far more important to the story of the American West.

Congress agrees on very little these days, but this May, it successfully passed a bill that was quickly signed by President Obama. The National Bison Legacy Act designates the American bison, most often called the buffalo, as our first national mammal. What's more, the bill enjoyed the support of a wide array of ranchers, environmentalists, zoos, outdoorsmen and Native Americans. As the Wildlife Conservation Society put it, the animal "is an icon that represents the highest ideals of America."

The story of the buffalo, once roaming in immense herds, also touches on some of the lowest points in American history. As settlers and gold-seekers pushed toward California throughout the course of the 19th century, tragedy often followed in their wake, including the brutal repression and massacre of the American Indian, the wide-scale exploitation of wildlife resources, and the near-extinction of North America's largest land animal, the buffalo.

**Read the whole story**

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# Letter: Pay it Forward at Bread & Broth

**To the community,**

On May 30, Bread & Broth's Adopt A Day of Nourishment dinner was sponsored by a grant from John McDougall of the Pay it Forward Community Fund at the Parasol Tahoe Community Foundation. J

McDougall and his sister, Janet McDougall, were on hand at his Pay it Forward sponsorship dinner to help as needed to feed the 80 folks who attended the evening's meal.

"Each year I am so appreciative of all the local support for Bread & Broth," wrote John McDougall. "The volunteers that work each week are truly paying it forward."

Through his Pay it Forward Foundation, McDougall encourages others, especially the youth of our community, to do good deeds for others to show that they care. McDougall has made a commitment to spread joy and kindness and his annual B&B dinner sponsorships have made the day for many members of our community.

There are so many ways to pay it forward and B&B is very grateful that McDougall has chosen to annually support one of our Monday evening meals. McDougall's \$250 donation funded a baked chicken dinner served with oven-roasted potatoes, sautéed red cabbage and zucchini dishes and a green salad. This nutritious meal provided by McDougall's grant funds more than fit the bill in 'paying it forward to those in need in our community. Kudos to McDougall for this thoughtful and heartfelt grant program.

**Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth**

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# Opinion: The Art of the Golden State Warriors

By Peter Tokofsky

During an early round of the current NBA playoffs a couple weeks ago, my family's favorite team, the Golden State Warriors, had an idle evening. Missing the excitement of seeing our squad outplaying an opponent, I suggested to my daughters that we re-watch the game from the previous day. This suggestion provided them—and their mother—proof that I had indeed finally succumbed to senility.

Didn't I remember watching (and shouting about) the game the night before?

And: What, they wondered aloud, could possibly be the point of watching a game, the outcome of which was already known to all of us?

I responded in terms familiar in our household—museums and folklore. I reminded them that we all enjoy repeatedly seeing our favorite artworks at museums we visit. When they join me at the Getty, where I work, we frequently have a look at Franz Xaver Messerschmidt's "Vexed Man," whose expression doesn't change each time, but still pleases us as we seek to understand the cause of his vexation. And we inevitably walk the zigzag path through Robert Irwin's Central Garden, which is indeed "never twice the same," as the artist's inscription suggests.

And don't we all enjoy telling our favorite folktales,

watching our favorite movies, and reading our favorite stories again and again? So repeat viewing of the Warriors' artistry seems perfectly reasonable to me.

The game in question had been particularly masterful. In his first game back from an injury-induced, two-week hiatus, Warriors star Stephen Curry, the league's Most Valuable Player, scored 17 points in overtime to lead his team to victory. Those 17 points were more than any player in any NBA game ever has scored in a five-minute overtime period, and more than two entire teams (Toronto and Miami) had combined to score in their overtime earlier in the day.

This performance and subsequent ones have brought the Warriors to the verge of their second straight NBA championship—and have left commentators searching for the right terms to describe the Warriors' excellence. This is a team that won a record 73 games in the regular season (out of 82) and a host of awards. It also turned frequent, long-distance shooting—long dismissed as a poor strategy—into a new, exciting style of basketball. Was this not a work of art?

And a new form of art at that. Watch some basketball games on TV and you can notice that a typical sequence consists of one or two players dribbling the ball and then shooting. In contrast, watch the Warriors and you will see (if the cameras, which have been trained to focus on the ball, reveal it) a constant flow of movement and multiple passes before a shot is launched. Fitting this style, the Warriors have assembled numerous players who seem able to put the ball in the basket from anywhere on the court once their motion frees them for the shot. The Warriors led the league this season with over 20 assists per game. Their style is similar on the defensive side as well, with all five players rotating in perfect choreography as they move about, frustrating their opponents.

Now other teams are changing their styles—and searching for more versatile players like those on the Warriors, who can

handle the ball, shoot 3-point shots, and play multiple positions. The Warriors style has revived some of the old metaphors for describing basketball, such as the coordinated improvisation of a jazz quintet. But it has also spawned a search for new explanations for their extraordinary success. The *New York Times* magazine focused on majority owner Joe Lacob and his inclusive, team-oriented management style honed in Silicon Valley. An opinion piece in the *Los Angeles Times*, on the other hand, pointed out the Warriors' special team dynamics, in which Curry is the star but the versatile and sometimes volatile Draymond Green is the team leader.

The Warriors motto "Strength in Numbers" reflects their unselfish distribution of contributions. Yet such a successful and innovative approach to the game deserves more than a motto or a refurbished metaphor, so I return to my fields of art and folklore in search of the best way to describe my team.

Their name gave me a first idea: What great warriors of legend find embodiment in the Warriors of the hardwood? Roman hero Horatius Cocles, immortalized in Lord Macaulay's 1842 epic poem "Lays of Ancient Rome," is a candidate. Like the diminutive Curry, who was overlooked by recruiters for major college programs, Horatius unexpectedly rose from the ranks and inspired his fellow Romans. With two fellow warriors at his side, he stood at the Pons Sublicius, preventing the invading Etruscans from crossing into Rome. One can imagine the indomitable Curry flanked by Green and Klay Thompson (or is it Andre Iguodala and Andrew Bogut?), the bridge on their jerseys a reminder of their fending off an invasion from across the Bay.

But the Warriors are, in fact, misnamed. Their strength is not the rippling muscles and flaying sword of Horatius. Their greatness is their artistry and finesse, calling to mind the masters of the Renaissance, not the soldiers of antiquity. When Curry weaves around defenders, hoisting multiple long-range shots rendering broadcasters at a loss for words, he is



more like Michelangelo chiseling his David, leaving viewers agape for centuries. Yet the analogy of the Renaissance master fails to account for the collective effort of the team. Even the idea of the Renaissance workshop is inadequate since the Warriors teammates mean so much more than a group of skilled yet unrecognized supporters of a great artist.

The Warriors art is a modern one. From ownership to every coach and player on the bench, they see the game differently than others before them. They are Picasso, whose Cubist paintings enable us to see a subject from multiple sides simultaneously. The Warriors frustrate defenders who view the court from a traditional perspective; their motion offense envisions various options while the opposition sees only a static play. Like the five Demoiselle d'Avignon, the five Warriors on the court shock and inspire viewers to see the world anew.

But Picasso's modernism, while providing an apt means for appreciating the radically different style of Warriors basketball, still fails to capture the fluidity and motion that make their game such a pleasure to watch, and re-watch. To describe the continual slashing and weaving of the five players we need another icon of modern painting. The Warriors style has all the rhythm and movement of a Jackson Pollock drip painting. Their game plan consists not of the static cliché of X's and O's on a coach's clipboard; it is the free movement and colorful beauty of a big, bright Pollock canvas.

So if a friend tries to tell you you should go to a museum and get some culture, feel free to tell them you prefer the comfort of your couch, and turn on the game to watch those masters of modern artistry, the Golden State Warriors.

*Peter Tokofsky is a senior public programs specialist at the J. Paul Getty Museum and an adjunct faculty member at UCLA and Otis College of Art and Design.*

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# Letter: Caltrans plans to build Meyers roundabout

To the community,

Caltrans District 3 is developing a safety project that proposes to construct a roundabout at the intersection of highways 50 and 89 in Meyers beginning in 2018. The department has looked at several options at this location and has identified a roundabout as the preferred alternative to address safety concerns and improve traffic flow.

Caltrans staff members have been meeting regularly with El Dorado County and Tahoe Regional Planning Agency representatives to gather their feedback on the project and to ensure that it is in line with the draft Meyers Area Plan, which identifies a need for improvements at this intersection, and the Meyers Corridor Project.

Studies have shown that roundabouts:

- Are safer than signalized intersections
- Reduce frequency and severity of crashes
- Reduce traffic delays/increase traffic capacity
- Can slow excessive traffic speeds while still improving traffic flow
- Reduce long-term operational costs
- Are more environmentally friendly than traditional intersections due to less vehicle emissions, fuel use and noise
- Are more aesthetically pleasing than stop signs or traffic signals

Roundabouts in the Lake Tahoe area are currently in use on highways 89 and 267 in Truckee and Highway 28 in Kings Beach.

Three additional roundabouts are being built on Highway 89 in Tahoe City over the next two years.

Caltrans looks forward to presenting its Meyers project to the community and gathering feedback at an open house later this year as we continue through the project development process.

For more information on the benefits of roundabouts, go [online](#).

**Steve Nelson, Caltrans public information officer**

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# **Opinion: Graduation ceremonies offer optimism for future**

**By Michael M. Crow**

Around the country, graduation speakers are stepping up to podiums to deliver messages of inspiration and hope. But this is not your typical graduation season. This year speakers honored at commencement ceremonies must calibrate their words of wisdom to cut through the chatter of a political season whose discourse has turned coarse, bitter, and disheartening.

At Arizona State University's commencement a few weeks ago, Teach for America Founder Wendy Kopp advised the newly minted graduates to remember the importance of inclusion and diversity and the need to break down barriers that keep "millions of children from exercising their talents and achieving the quality of life they deserved." (Zócalo is affiliated with ASU.) She called this generation "smart, savvy, discerning, amazingly connected" and capable of making

a profound difference by seeing each other as members of the same team.

Kopp's vision of the world, and how young people should engage it, stands in stark contrast to the world described by many of the candidates out on the hustings this year. I don't recognize that picture portrayed by politicians eager to divide us; like Kopp, I have an abundance of confidence in the future precisely because the young men and women in their caps and gowns are already fighting to build the kind of world we all want—fair, just, creative, with the capability to fix even the most complex problems.

Politics and political rhetoric don't define the entirety of our civic engagement, and so these graduates are right to believe in the future and their power to shape it, without being deterred by dire partisan machinations. And these graduates' sense of empowerment to contribute to society doesn't stem from naiveté, but from the foundation for lifelong learning and adaptation they've acquired with their college education.

But what will it take for these graduates to pursue their goals and succeed in this deeply polarized America? The answer is a simple and powerful technology: Teamwork. And the good news is that the same hyper connectivity that at times poisons our political discourse with its unfiltered, raw immediacy can also be leveraged for collaboration and constructive teamwork.

Indeed, Wendy Kopp's concept for Teach for America is a model of how to leverage networks of well-intentioned and talented people wanting to make a positive difference in their communities. For more than 25 years, the organization has recruited recent graduates from top institutions to sign a two-year contract to teach in K-12 schools located in low-income areas throughout the country. Several studies have concluded that the program consistently provides effective, high-quality instruction to students who can benefit from it

most. I am proud that 40 graduating Sun Devils have been selected to teach in TFA classrooms this coming fall.

In a similar spirit, at ASU we are committed to expanding the benefits of a college diploma to a larger swath of people. And we seek creative forms of teamwork that can further this mission. One of our responses is an unlikely partnership with Starbucks to create a path to educate more of our nation's population, encourage upward mobility, and respond to the challenges of social and economic inequality.

Our resulting College Achievement Plan (CAP) provides a means for more people to complete their college education without being burdened by crushing student debt. A key aspect of this ongoing initiative is an evolving use of technology to enhance our digitally immersive course offerings. We are seeing the results with more than 5,200 Starbucks employees enrolled since 2014 and more than 100 graduates this spring.

The fruits of this effort can be seen in the achievements of people like store manager Michelle Brown, a Sacramento mother of two who had struggled financially and with demands on her time before dropping out after two years of college. Through the CAP program, she just completed her bachelor's degree in organizational leadership at ASU, and she will see her own daughter head to college this fall.

Brown's story is not unusual: There are thousands and thousands of smart, capable, and passionate people who for a variety of reasons had not completed their college degree on a traditional track. It is incumbent upon us as a society, and especially those of us privileged to work in higher education, to find innovative ways to connect with these people who have so much to contribute. The effort is not only about fulfilling their individual potential, but the nation's as well.

If we leave it up to our politicians to define the narrative around America's prospects, we may be convinced that failure

is at hand—and that teamwork is not a key to success. But that is neither a winning proposition nor true.

Michelle Brown and her fellow graduates are wise to take their cues and inspiration from the Wendy Kopps among us, and to fight together for the future they want. That is the future we all need.

*Michael M. Crow is the president of Arizona State University. Zócalo Public Square is affiliated with ASU.*

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## **Letter: Windjammers help at Bread & Broth**

**To the community,**

The Lake Tahoe Windjammers Yacht Club members enjoy sailing, being on the water and helping others. Whether teaching others to sail, being part of a sailing crew or helping Bread & Broth volunteers at their Monday Adopt A Day sponsorship dinner, the LTWYC members are ready and willing to help folks in need.

Thanks to the Windjammers' AAD sponsorship, the B&B dinner guests on May 23 enjoyed a tasty and nutritious meal.

The Windjammers volunteer AAD crew was staffed by Kurt Rasmussen, commodore; Laura Rasmussen, Brendan Lockamy and Jim Hoefor. These four eager volunteers showed up early and jumped right in to help with the dinner's setup and food giveaway bag packing. With smiles and warmth, they greeted and served the diners and ended the evening stacking chairs and cleaning tables. They were a great crew.

"The fresh food and upbeat atmosphere is a wonderful benefit

to community,” commented Laura Rasmussen. “The nutritious meal was enjoyed by the grateful dinner guests. LTWYC is happy to be able to lend a hand and be of service.”

B&B would like to thank the Windjammers for their continued support and providing both the funds and the great crew to ensure that 100 food insecure folks in our community had a hot and filling meal.

To partner with B&B as a donor or sponsor, contact me at 530.542.2876 or carolsgerard@aol.com.

**Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth**

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# **Opinion: No justification for Calif. transportation tax hike**

**By Jon Coupal**

A personal digression: My father was head of the Iowa Department of Transportation (then called the Iowa Highway Commission) in the late 1960s and early 1970s before he was appointed by President Gerald Ford to serve as deputy federal highway administrator. (Of course, he lost that job when Jimmy Carter became president, but he continued to work in the private sector for a transportation think tank). When I was in high school, I remember him coming home from an ASHTO conference. That organization, the Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, was a pretty well respected group and still is. He was complaining bitterly about what was going on in California. I don't recall his

exact words, but the gist of it was that the new head of California's transportation agency, called Caltrans, had been taken over by a certifiably crazy person (with no background in transportation policy) by the name of Adriana Gianturco. According to my father, in the 1950s and '60s, California had the best transportation agency in the entire world. But all that changed with the election of a new, anti-growth, small-is-beautiful governor by the name of Jerry Brown.

Now, fast forward 40 years. Gov. Brown, version 2.0, proposes a budget that assumes a big increase in transportation taxes and fees. The California Legislature shouldn't just say no, it should say hell no.

Where to start? First, let's take judicial notice of the fact that California is already a high tax state with the highest income tax rate and the highest state sales tax in America. But more relevant for the issue at hand, we also have the highest fuel costs in the nation. This is because of both the fourth highest excise tax on fuel and the fact that refineries are burdened with additional costs to comply with California's environmental regulations.

The high cost to drive in California might be understandable if we were getting value for our tax dollars. But we aren't. A big problem is that Caltrans is dysfunctional, plain and simple. It has never fully recovered from the days when the agency was effectively destroyed by Gianturco. A report by the California state auditor just a couple of months ago concluded that a primary responsibility of Caltrans – maintenance of our highways – is not being executed in a manner that is even close to being efficient or competent.

State Sen. John Moorlach, R-Costa Mesa, the only CPA currently serving in the California Legislature, reacted saying that, "This audit reinforces the fact that our bad roads are not a result of a lack of funding. They're a result of a lack of competence at Caltrans."



Moreover, a report by the legislative analyst concluded that Caltrans is overstaffed by 3,500 employees costing California taxpayers over a half billion dollars a year. All this compels the obvious question: Why, for goodness sake, do we want to give these people even more money?

Another unneeded and costly practice consists of project labor agreements for transportation construction projects. These pro-union policies shut out otherwise competent companies from bidding on projects resulting in California taxpayers shelling out as high as 25 percent more than they should for building highways and bridges.

Finally, California's environmental requirements are legendary for their inefficiency while also doing little for the environment. Exhibit A in this foolishness is Brown's incomprehensible pursuit of the ill-fated high speed rail project. Not only has the project failed to live up to any of the promises made to voters, it is currently being kept alive only by virtue of the state's diversion of "cap and trade" funds which are supposed to be expended on projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions. But in the Kafkaesque world of California transportation policies, the LAO has concluded that the construction of the HSR project actually produces a net increase in emissions, at least for the foreseeable future.

No one disputes the dire need for improvements in California's transportation infrastructure. But imposing draconian taxes and higher registration fees that serve only to punish the middle class while wasting billions on projects that don't help getting Californians get to work or school cannot and should not be tolerated. Legislators who present themselves to voters as fiscally responsible need to understand that a vote for higher transportation taxes will engender a very angry response from their constituents.

*Jon Coupal is president of the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers*

*Association, California's largest grass-roots taxpayer organization dedicated to the protection of Proposition 13 and the advancement of taxpayers' rights.*

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## **Letter: Meyers grateful for successful OMG run**

**To the community,**

On behalf of the Meyers Community Foundation, we would like to sincerely thank a number of people and organizations for their assistance in making this year's inaugural OMG Fun Run a huge success.

This event would not have been possible without the support of our main sponsor, Tahoe Center for Orthopedics/Barton Health. We'd also like to thank Alpen Sierra Coffee for their sponsorship and hot beverages, and Sierra-at-Tahoe Resort, Crossfit 9650, Jeff Chamberlain DDS, Affordable Construction Services, New Visions Construction, Got It! Real Estate & Development Corp, Century 21 Tahoe Paradise, Novasel & Schwarte Investments Inc., Safe Haven Chiropractic, Divided Sky, Bona Fide Books, Rise Design, Lira's Supermarket, El Dorado County Supervisor Sue Novasel, Getaway Café, The Studio at Lake Tahoe, Tahoe Trail Bar and Fast Prints.

Kudos also go to the California Conservation Corp, Lake Valley Fire District, Caltrans, the county Department of Transportation, Grant Stewart and Garrett Froelich.

Thanks too to all those who came out and conquered Old Meyers Grade. We look forward to seeing you next year.

**Rene Brejc, Meyers Community Foundation**