

Opinion: Be prepared for the worst

By Bob Harmon

The weather is starting to warm up and the wilderness calls.

Members of Washoe County's search and rescue team know first-hand that it doesn't matter how much experience you have, if you recreate in the wilderness, you run the risk of getting hopelessly and helplessly turned around at some point, suddenly and unexpectedly finding yourself in a life-threatening situation.

"The most important thing is to accept that it can happen to you and be prepared," said Brian Jacobsen, president of the all-volunteer Washoe County Search and Rescue Inc.

"Even if you are only planning a short outing, the right equipment and a good plan can make the difference between life and death when minutes count."

When you do discover that you are lost, stay put and don't hesitate to ask for help.

"Every step you take, and every moment you wait, increases the search area exponentially," Jacobsen said. "People hesitate for many reasons. Often it's because they blame themselves for getting lost, feel guilty about having to mobilize search teams for their sake, or fear the rescue will be too costly."

"Wrong on all counts! The reason Search and Rescue volunteers do what they do is because they want to successfully aid people in trouble. The sooner you call us, the sooner we can get to you," Jacobsen added.

Additional tips include:

- Tell a trusted person where you are going and when you'll be back. Make sure that person knows not to hesitate to call for help if they haven't heard from you by the pre-arranged time. Shorter days and colder nights do not allow time for second-guessing. Bring proper clothing. Even if you think you won't need it, if there is a sudden change in the weather or unexpected change in plans, you'll need to keep as dry and warm as possible until help arrives.
- Bring a whistle and a light. Items like these make it much easier to find you in the wilderness.
- Pack extra food and water.
- Make sure your cell phone is fully charged. Cell phones can be a great tool, but realistically there are many areas of wilderness where reception is impossible. An affordable, satellite-based locator device is more reliable and accurate.
- Hike with a buddy, never hike alone.
- This is a transitional season. Stay up to date on weather forecasts and keep in mind that conditions may change dramatically based on location, elevation and time of day.

Washoe County Search and Rescue is a self-funded, volunteer organization. There is never a charge for their rescue services. Volunteers train for at least two hours every week and are prepared to respond at any time of the night or day.

Bob Harmon works for the Washoe County Sheriff's Office.

Editorial: Our responsibility

on Memorial Day

Publisher's note: *This editorial is from the May 2, 2016, Stamford Advocate.*

If children are confused about the meaning of Memorial Day, that's on us.

Collectively, we have not been the best stewards of the most somber of our national holidays. As time sweeps further from its origins in the wake of the Civil War – and its declaration as a federal holiday on May's last Monday during the Vietnam War – it has been reduced to a synonym for the dawn of summer. Even that characterization is wildly wrong, as the season won't begin until June 20.

Even the history of the holiday is muddy. More towns claim to be the birthplace of Memorial Day than the birthplace of baseball. Much of this is apocryphal.

Read the whole story

Letter: Vote yes on measures E and G

To the community,

Why have so many organizations aligned with Parker Development in wanting to stop the Yes Campaign for Measures E and G?

In 2004 El Dorado County adopted a General Plan which was challenged with a referendum giving the voters in the county the opportunity decide whether or not to adopt the plan.

Promises were made that this plan would protect our agricultural, recreational, natural, historic and cultural resources that make up our county's rural character. The Measure passed by a mere 50.9 percent.

Since that time our Board of Supervisors, under heavy developer influence, has amended, weakened, eliminated and refused to implement many of those protective policies.

Save Our County (SOC) realized that the only way to stop the Board of Supervisors from opening the flood gates for massive growth and debt, was to bind the Board to implement those protective policies by law. Other organizations joined SOC as they watched the Board of Supervisors abuse their discretionary powers.

Measure E relates to Measure Y, which has been in place since 1998 and expires in 2018. In 2008 it was rewritten which weakened the requirement for Developers to fully fund their own road infrastructure and gave the Board of Supervisors the four-fifth vote to allow a development to cause gridlock. Measure E restores those policies and adds that the board cannot allow a change in land use which would create gridlock. That's where the discretionary wording comes in. *No land use change (discretionary) unless the road is there that prevents gridlock from happening.* It does not stop any other projects or actions that the opposition is claiming.

Measure G restores and implements the protective policies promised in the 2004 General Plan. Having these policies in place would have prevented the massive billboards from being placed in Shingle Springs, retained the Camino Mill from being demolished and stopped the Dollar General Store from being placed on Georgetown's Historic Main Street. These policies have been partly implemented, but stopped by board direction. To incentivize our board, no discretionary actions (actions requiring permission by a jurisdiction) can take place until they finally adopt the policies. These policies should not

take that much time or money to implement but will go a long way in protecting the rural character of El Dorado County. The character that has sustained El Dorado County's economy for generations.

It's very discerning how many people have allowed their good names to be used in order to promote lies by Parker Development's marketing agent. Why? Only those that have signed the propaganda can answer that, but they do know they are promoting the lies. A no vote on these measures will give our Board of Supervisors the excuse to sell out what's left of our resources to mega development.

A "yes" vote will hold their feet to the fire and legally bind them to protecting the rural character of El Dorado County.

Here is the **link** to the verbiage for the Measures and background information.

If you have any questions regarding these measures, feel free to call me.

Sue Taylor, Camino

Opinion: Canada's wildfire highlights trouble with fighting fire with fire

By Stephen Pyne

"And where two raging fires meet together, they do consume the thing that feeds their fury." – William Shakespeare

The images are gripping. Horizons glow with satanic reds squishing through black and bluish clouds, as though the sky itself were bruised and bleeding. Foregrounds bristle with scorched neighborhoods still drifting with smoke and streams of frightened refugees, a scene more commonly associated with war zones.

But we've seen this before. Big fires are big fires, and one pyrocumulus can look pretty much like another. Communities with homes burned to concrete slabs, molten hulks of what once were cars alongside roads, surrounding forests mottled with black and green— these are becoming commonplaces.

What strikes me most about those Fort McMurray images making their way down from western Canada is the mashup of foreground and background, the collision of free-burning flames with a fossil-fuel powered society. The first form of burning dates back to the early Devonian, when life first colonized the continents. The second tracks the Anthropocene, when humanity changed its combustion habits and wrenched the Earth into a new order. At places like Fort McMurray the deep past and the recent present of fire on Earth rush together with almost Shakespearean urgency.

The plot is old, the stage setting and cast of players updated.

Monster fires are no stranger in the boreal forest. It's a fire-ravenous biota that burns in stand-replacing patches. This is not a landscape where misguided fire suppression has upset the rhythms of surface burning and catapulted flames into the canopy. They've always been in the canopy and everything has adapted accordingly. White and black spruce and jack pine and aspen experience exactly the kind of fire they require.

How big those patches get depends on how dry the fuel is, how brisk the winds, and how extensive the forest. In northern

Alberta there is not much to break a full-throated wildfire. The Chinchaga Fire started on June 1, 1950, and burned across northeastern British Columbia and most of Alberta until Oct. 31, a total of 3 million acres.

Nor is a burning city a novelty. In North America the wave of settlement in the 18th and 19th centuries paralleled a wave of fire. The surrounding lands were disturbed, and frequently alight with both controlled and uncontrolled fires. The towns were built of wood—basically, reconstituted forests. The same conditions that propelled fires through the landscape pushed them through towns.

Only a century ago did those urban conflagrations finally quell as urbanites turned to less combustible materials; fire codes and zoning regulations organized buildings in ways that discouraged spreading flames; fire services acquired the mechanical muscle to halt blazes early; and the wave of settlement flattened. Over the past century it's taken earthquakes or wars to overcome these reforms in modern cityscapes, and unleash widespread conflagrations.

Meanwhile, a broadly rural scene morphed and polarized into an urban frontier of wildlands and cities that faced one another without intervening buffers. The middle, working landscapes, like the middle, working classes, shriveled at the expense of the favored extremes. In 1986 the term wildland urban interface appeared. It was a clumsy, dumb phrase, but it referred to a dumb problem. Watching houses, and then communities burn was like watching polio or plague return. This was a problem we had solved, then forgot to—or chose not to—continue the vaccinations and hygiene that had halted their terrors.

Initially, the problem appeared a California pathology. But it soon broke out of quarantine and has spread across western North America. The prevailing narrative held that the problem was stupid Westerners building houses where there were fires.

Most of the vulnerable communities, however, are in the Southeastern U.S., and if climate change modelers are correct, we will see the fires moving to where the houses are. That will make it a national narrative. In truth, the problem is international, each country with its own quirky combination of fire-quickenning factors. Mediterranean France, Portugal, Greece, South Africa, and Australia are experiencing similar outbreaks. North America has no monopoly over catastrophic conflagrations.

It's tempting to appeal to climate change as the common cause. Yet the burning bush and scorched town are joined not just by global climate change, but by a global economy, and a global commitment to fossil fuel firepower. That makes the issue both more pervasive and, paradoxically, more amenable to treatment. It means that, while there is one grand prime mover, there are many levers and gears. Fire is a reaction that takes its character from its context. It's a driverless car barreling down the road, synthesizing everything around it.

The enduring images of the Fort Mac Fire may, in fact, be its cars. Car-propelled flight, cars stranded for lack of gas, cars melted in garages, evacuation convoys halted due to 60 meter flames, relief convoys laden with gasoline. It isn't only what comes out of the tailpipe that matters, but how those vehicles have organized human life in the boreal. The engagement (or not) with the surrounding bush. The kind of land use that cars encourage. The kind of industry that must develop to support those cars. The kind of city that such an industry needs to sustain it. The oil sand industry that has shaped the contours of modern Fort McMurray is in turn shaped by the internal-combusting society it feeds.

So there are really two fires burning around and into Fort McMurray. One burns living landscapes. The other burns lithic landscapes, which is to say, biomass buried and turned to stone in the geologic past. The two fires compete: one or the other triumphs. At any place the transition may take years,

even decades, but where the industrial world persists its closed combustion will substitute for or suppress the open flames of ecosystems. The wholesale transition from the realm of living fire to that of lithic fire may stand as a working definition of the Anthropocene. Once parted they rarely meet.

At Fort McMurray they have collided with unblinking brutality. Wild fire burned away controlled fire. The old fires have forced the power plants behind the new ones to shut down and their labor force to flee. It's like watching an open pit mine consume the town that excavates it. It's tempting to regard the incident as a one-off, a freak of a remote landscape and a historical moment. But those collisions are becoming more frequent.

That's not the deep worry, however. The deep horror is that the two fires may be moving from competition into collusion. They are creating positive feedback of a sort that makes more fire. Those images of fire on fire are the raw footage of a planetary phase change, what might end up as a geologic era we could call the Pyrocene. They will continue until, as Shakespeare put it, they "consume the thing that feeds their fury."

Disaster is not always tragedy, and Fort McMurray and the industrial complex behind it may well escape lethal consequences. So if Shakespeare seems too elevated, consider Edna St Vincent Millay.

*My candle burns at both ends
It will not last the night;
But ah, my foes, and oh, my friends—
It gives a lovely light.*

We have in truth been burning both ends of our combustion candle, and if its light seems more lurid than lovely, there are yet texts to be read in the awful splendor of its illumination.

Stephen Pyne is a professor in the School of Life Sciences, Arizona State University, and author most recently of "Between Two Fires: A Fire History of Contemporary America".

This article was written for Future Tense, a Zócalo partner. Future Tense is a project of Arizona State University, New America and Slate. A version also appeared on Slate.com.

Letters: Realtors take issue with SLT VHR rules

To the community,

The South Tahoe Association of Realtors (STAR) is opposed to the moratorium on multi-family units being allowed to operate as vacation home rentals (VHRs), recently adopted by the South Lake Tahoe City Council.

STAR, a not-for-profit trade organization that represents more than 300 Realtor members, wants to make it clear, to the City Council and the public, that we support affordable and workforce housing in South Lake Tahoe and recognize that there is a housing crisis; especially the lack of available long-term rentals. STAR is a member of, and supports the St. Joseph's Community Land Trust, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to make home ownership and rentals affordable today and for future generations. SJCLT acquires or develops properties and programs to help address the lack of affordable housing. STAR collaborated with SJCLT to help them build their first demonstration home, including procuring grant funds from the California Association of Realtors Housing Affordability Fund. STAR members have also volunteered and served on various

Affordable and Workforce Housing Task Force committees in the past, including with Tahoe Tomorrow, the chamber of commerce and other organizations, in conjunction with the TRPA.

These Realtor volunteers and community leaders collaborated to find and advocate for practical solutions.

These efforts halted when the Great Recession hit, and housing prices dropped dramatically. The focus shifted elsewhere.

STAR's mission is to educate its members and the public; advocate for private property rights and home ownership; contribute to the community's wellbeing; uphold professional standards; thereby providing resources enabling our members to serve the public and work together cooperatively.

While we support affordable and workforce housing development and retention, STAR is opposed to the ordinance recently adopted by the city, which is essentially a moratorium on allowing multi-family properties to operate as a VHR. We agree that these properties are good candidates for longterm rentals, but we take issue with the fact that the city is taking away an owner's option to choose.

The city has already impinged on property rights to such an extent that there is little tolerance for further limitations.

It should be left up to each property owner to make the decision to long term rent or not. VHRs of this size typically are not revenue producers, and are not the source of nuisance issues such as excessive noise, trash or parking, due to lower occupancy.

Only 55 of 1,800 VHRs are multi-family units. Many owners, given the choice of leaving the property vacant or longterm renting, will opt to leave it vacant so that they will still have a place to stay when they visit Tahoe.

This ordinance will not achieve the results desired by the city. We cannot regulate our way out of this incredibly complicated problem that is faced by all popular resort destinations. We implore that the city appoint a special task force and allow Realtors to work with them, and all stakeholders, toward finding alternate solutions to South Lake Tahoe's housing availability problem. A viable solution will have incentives, rather than further limitations on private property rights, with more regulations for property owners to navigate.

Thank you for your time, attention and consideration.

Ellen Camacho, 2016 STAR president

Editorial: Calif. drought isn't history just yet

Publisher's note: *This editorial is from the May 21, 2016, Sacramento Bee.*

Remember that "historic" drought? The one that erased snow from the Sierra and was turning the Central Valley into a dusty bowl?

Remember how it was supposed to be permanent? How all Californians need to forever change the wasteful ways we use water because most of the state is, in fact, a desert?

We remember. We're not sure about the State Water Resources Control Board and some local water agencies, though.

Dazzled by winter precipitation that, while wetter than before, failed to measure up to even normal snowpack, the

board voted to lift a statewide conservation mandate that had been in effect since last summer.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Time to stop Martis Valley West

By Ellie Waller

The community continues to deliver the message that they are unwilling to accept the Martis Valley West Parcel Specific Plan project as currently proposed.

But will the Placer County Planning Commission approve the project on June 9 anyway? Probably, unless we all stand up.

This is not the first time the community has resisted the plan. For more than three years, the community has consistently opposed efforts from East West Partners (now Mountainside Partners) to disturb 11 million square feet of soil on the ridge line.

Now, the 550-unit Brockway Campground is being proposed in the Lake Tahoe Basin as a separate project, although located immediately adjacent to Martis Valley West, and the impacts from both will be cumulative. Traffic and fire evacuation impacts, especially during peak hours, are some of the biggest concerns.

At the May 12 North Tahoe Regional Advisory Council meeting, NTRAC members were asked to make a recommendation to the

Placer County Planning Commission for an upcoming June 9 hearing. Staff summarized the impacts and alternatives. Notably; when Alternative 1 (no project) was mentioned, the audience applauded wildly.

NTRAC questions/comments included:

- There are many Significant & Unavoidable impacts.
- Nine days is NOT enough time to review the Final EIR – therefore it is too soon to make a recommendation.
- Last time, NTRAC specifically requested visual simulations be brought to the next meeting; however, the applicant had not done so.
- Emergency evacuation – what are the nuts and bolts of how SR267 will handle traffic in emergency situations? (The applicant's response was basically it's Caltrans' problem, not theirs.)
- Concerns about night lighting impacts to Tahoe basin.
- Affordable/workforce housing solution simply sets aside land for someone else to (maybe) propose workforce housing in the future: This does not guarantee workforce housing getting built.

Numerous motions were made by NTRAC. Finally, they approved “a motion to recommend the Planning Commission postpone their action on this item for 30 days to allow for ample time to review the final EIR. Further, that the Planning Commission be aware there are significant concerns with the project whether development is on the east or west side of Highway 267, as noted in tonight's NTRAC meeting.”

Sierra Watch and Mountain Area Preservation representatives have said that with Brockway Campground included, the proposed project went far beyond what they agreed to in the Martis Valley Opportunity Agreement (MVOA) and pointed out it would be irresponsible to make decisions at such a fast pace on projects that will span generations. They noted that these decisions will “outlive us all”, and we shouldn't rush this.

Modifying new Alternative 5 (418 units on 200 acres on the east side of Highway 267) by adding a conservation easement on the balance of the 6,100 acres would without a doubt eliminate any potential for Tahoe night sky light impacts and scenic violation impacts because it will not be located on a shared Tahoe basin ridge line, and there would be no recreational conflict to the Tahoe Rim Trail users.

The alternative would eliminate the sprawl of the current preferred alternative (418 units on 660 acres on the west side of Highway 267) and reduce traffic impacts by reducing the number of units by 45 percent.

Lastly, a majority of the public, agency and organization comments on the draft EIR requested changes in the FEIR to sufficiently examine the project's impacts and possible ways to mitigate them. In most cases, these comments were ignored or insufficiently and unsatisfactorily addressed.

If this sounds familiar, it might be because a very similar situation is occurring with another large area development in Squaw Valley. Two things can be gleaned from these recent meetings:

1. We can still make a difference when we all speak up.
2. The developer will have a hard time selling any claims that the public supports these projects.

In closing, save the date, June 9, location and time to follow, for the tentatively proposed hearing before the Placer County Planning Commission on the Martis Valley West project – be there for Lake Tahoe.

Shame on Placer County for scheduling the Planning Commission meeting on high school graduation day. Many people have family coming to town, others will need to leave town to be with families.

I asked to have the meeting postponed to no avail.

Ellie Waller is a Tahoe Vista resident.

Letter: Appreciation for EMS workers

To the community,

South Lake Tahoe is currently in the midst of change, moving from an ambulance service provided by the fire department to a non-safety program, prompted by a lack of county funding and also anticipated changes in the pre-hospital industry. During this transition, an amazing group of qualified medics have been providing ALS services to South Lake Tahoe under the control of South Lake Tahoe Fire Rescue.

National EMS Week is an opportunity to recognize hard-working EMS providers. These individuals see patients in their most dire moments and make every effort to provide the best-quality care while stabilizing and transporting, appropriately utilizing a variety of standard-of-care methods. This is exceptionally difficult due to having to be prepared for absolutely anything. The training, knowledge and skill required is incredibly vast. And, the memories of tragic injuries or deaths can haunt forever. The rewarding feelings of making a difference or possibly saving a life are eternal as well.

I would like to thank each of these 12 South Lake Tahoe Fire-EMS personnel for committing themselves to providing quality ALS response to the city of South Lake Tahoe and also for adopting the SLTFR mission statement, "Providing our community

with professionalism, compassion and honor.” Each of these individuals has taken on this role wholeheartedly and has proven to be exceptional ALS care providers. Many in the group are lifelong Tahoe locals.

To each of you, a heartfelt thanks. You are amazing.

Kim George, South Lake Tahoe fire EMS officer

Letter: Brooks deserves to be re-elected

To the community,

Please join me in voting to retain Judge Nelson Brooks.

I have lived in El Dorado County since 1963, first serving as a deputy in the District Attorney’s Office. I was later elected District Attorney of El Dorado County, and in January 1977 the Governor appointed me Judge of the Superior Court. After retiring in 1997, I sat on the El Dorado County Superior Court on assignment and for several years worked as a private mediator.

Judge Brooks has many years of experience, both as a judge and as an attorney, and attended the University of California’s Hastings College of the Law, a top tier nationally recognized law school. Judge Brooks went through the rigorous vetting process before being appointed to the Superior Court by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.

There are 58 counties in California and except for El Dorado it is unheard of for an incumbent judge’s challenger to be supported by a fellow colleague.

It is obvious that the sitting judges supporting Judge Brooks' challenger are doing so for their own political agenda and not for the El Dorado County courts that serve our citizens.

Judge Brooks has not asked me to endorse him or write this letter, but I care deeply about the court and believe the right thing to do is retain Judge Brooks.

Terry Finney, El Dorado County Superior Court judge (ret.)

Letter: Recognizing older Americans

To the community,

An Older Americans Day celebration took place at the South Lake Tahoe Senior Center on May 19.

Those in attendance were able to enjoy the music of bass player Al Botello, Tony the guitarist and singer/guitarist Jo Cain-Stiles. A wonderful roast beef dinner was served.

This year's celebration included a Blaze a Trail contest, where seniors submitted stories on how they have reinvented themselves through new work and new passions, engaging their communities, and blazing a trail of positive impact on the lives of people in their communities.

Carol Olivas was recognized for her work during the Food Bank distribution and the American Legion Auxiliary. Arline Gordon was recognized for her efforts in producing and chairing several variety shows for the community.

Each were awarded a certificate and prize from local vendors,

including Freshies Restaurant, Blue Dog Pizza and Magic Carpet Golf. Door prizes were also given thanks to Blue Dog Pizza.

Gerri Grego, commissioner El Dorado County Commission on Aging