

Opinion: Fire prevention critical in Tahoe basin

By Richard Solbrig

The National Interagency Fire Center described the 2015 wildfire season as one of the most severe in decades, with more than 10 million acres burned. The Valley (76,000 acres), Butte (70,000 acres), and Rough (150,000 acres) wildfires highlighted the impact of the severe drought upon our critical watersheds.

According to a study by the Carnegie Institution for Science, they found that up to 58 million large trees in California have been heavily impacted by the drought and another 888 million trees, or approximately 41,000 square miles of forest, are drought-stressed.

As evidenced by the Angora, Martis and Gondola fires, the Lake Tahoe Basin is no stranger to the threat of wildfire to the health of our environment and our communities. Recognizing this threat, Tahoe's public water agencies, together with the U.S. Forest Service, embarked on an aggressive program to accelerate installation of critical water infrastructure to enhance our regional response to the threat of catastrophic wildfires. This bi-state effort is being accomplished through the Lake Tahoe Community Fire Protection Partnership.

Over eight limited construction seasons (May-October) the partnership has installed more than 16 miles of improved water line with 180 new fire hydrants every 500 lineal feet, 10 new water storage tanks with a 4.7-million-gallon storage capacity, five new booster pump stations to increase water flow, and strategically placed emergency generators to provide continued water supply during catastrophic events.

This regional collaboration is fortunate to have the support

of the region's congressional delegation, which recognizes the importance of a comprehensive approach to reduce the potential for catastrophic wildfire that includes enhancing the fire response capability of municipal water systems.

The Lake Tahoe Restoration Act, co-sponsored by Sens. Dean Heller, Dianne Feinstein, Harry Reid and Barbara Boxer, includes important provisions to reduce the threat of wildfire, improve water clarity, fight invasive species and support vital water infrastructure improvements, a comprehensive strategy to restore and protect the environment in the Lake Tahoe Basin. This measured approach calls for active management of our federal lands together with actions to protect the environment and our communities from wildfire. The water partnership joins Tahoe's environmental and business leaders in ardently calling for the passage of Senate Bill 1724, Lake Tahoe Restoration Act.

In the House, Rep. Tom McClintock has introduced a scaled down version (H.R. 3382) of the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act, which focuses on fire risk and invasive species management. We agree that the provisions are of vital importance to the economic and environmental health of the region and look forward to both Senate and House approaches moving forward to conference.

As we enter the 2016 wildfire season, the local partnership will embark on an aggressive effort to install critical water infrastructure for fire response and work with firefighting community to protect the Tahoe basin.

Richard Solbrig is executive director of South Tahoe Public Utility District.

Opinion: Loop road is essential to South Shore

By Carl Hasty

The South Shore of Lake Tahoe is divided by lines. These state, county, and city lines work well on a map, but they do not define the day-to-day reality of the people who live and work in this community. In the last decade we have seen definitive projects reshape South Shore – Heavenly Village, Lakeview Commons, Harrison Avenue streetscape. We have seen new bike trails and the opening of a bi-state park.

Tahoe Transportation District's Highway 50 South Shore Community Revitalization Project is the next step. It goes well beyond transportation to building the community we want to live and work in, and like the projects before it, it won't be easy, but things that matter rarely are. The future potential gains are worth it for our residents, businesses, and visitors.



Carl Hasty

We only need look to the North Shore and the success of Kings Beach, the Incline Gateway, and the construction that will start this summer on both Highway 89/Fanny Bridge Community Revitalization and the Highway 28 National Scenic Byway to see the future. By realigning Highway 50 from Pioneer Trail in California to Lake Parkway in Nevada behind the casinos on the mountain side, we open the possibility for a “complete street”

transformation to include everyone, not only motorists, but pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transit users.

We open the potential for economic development and business revitalization. We add an avenue to respond to the resident's housing needs with improved, attractive, affordable, mixed use housing projects to replace the combination of retired housing and business units: 53-97 depending on the chosen alternative.

Highway 50 South Shore Community Revitalization Project has suffered at times from the long shadow of failed projects of the past. Many have asked if this project is doomed to repeat the mistakes of its predecessors. The answer is no.

We have learned and listened. Since January 2012, public comment has been garnered through a series of 140 community open houses and workshops, service club presentations, business and community review committees, and eight City Council presentations.

South Shore community members know what they want:

- A more attractive community to complement the surrounding mountains and lake;
- Less traffic congestion and environmental impacts – a previous study indicated that 70 percent of the pollutants impacting Lake Tahoe's clarity come from transportation systems and developed area run-off;
- Economic improvement and health with opportunities for businesses large and small to flourish;
- Safer streets and more walking and biking paths;
- Better and affordable housing for our workforce.

The community also has concerns:

- The construction will take away businesses and homes

that will not be replaced for years;

- It will cost the city taxpayer revenue and it will disrupt businesses and the community like past project holes;
- Other areas of the city need attention.

All of these are legitimate concerns, but there are solutions. This project can be done in phases. Rights-of-ways can be acquired without tearing down structures. Replacement housing could be completed before the current infrastructure is demolished, thus ensuring no lax in property tax revenues for the city and minimal disruption to the community as possible. Do other areas need attention? Yes. This project is just one in a string of projects working to improve South Shore.

From where will the funding for this bold, new South Shore be derived? Federal and state funding will make up the bulk with private sector and some local government funds from Douglas County. We are not looking to the city of South Lake Tahoe to finance this project.

Will everyone support this project? No. In fact, some people would rather put this to a vote. They would abandon the public project process that has directly shaped this plan to date. Others think since the current infrastructure works for them, why do anything at all? Yet, there is a cost to doing nothing. The community can't afford to paralyze the positive momentum that's been moving South Lake Tahoe forward these past few years as a more desirable community to live and visit.

The "Nevada versus California," "big versus small" contention is a non-starter and a red herring. It's long gone, overplayed, overdone and divisive. This community depends on each other. This project is about the entire South Shore and what locals want in their future. It's a catalyst and one in a series of transportation enhancements to create a connection system not only for South Lake Tahoe but the Tahoe Basin.

The five alternatives for Highway 50 are currently undergoing an environmental impact report on the environment, costs, benefits, and concerns. Public comment will be accepted for 60 days after the draft is released. We are going to take the next couple of months to continue to work with the community and business owners to address these concerns.

We welcome the public's opinions – as we have the past four years. These proactive opinions and suggestions have guided and impacted this project in a positive way.

Examples of the benefits of “complete street” projects like this one can be found across the United States, and in cities and towns comparable to South Lake Tahoe. This is not speculative. This is fact.

Is this going to be hard? Yes. Is this going to be smooth? No. Will it be worth it? Absolutely, and with community involvement we can accomplish it.

Be a part of the continued renaissance of South Shore and get involved. Your time will help shape our collective future.

For more information, go **online**.

Carl Hasty is district manager of Tahoe Transportation District.

Letter: Ski patrol helps out at B&B kitchen

To the community,

Bread & Broth, a nonprofit, all volunteer organization whose

mission is to ease hunger in the South Tahoe community, would like to recognize the Heavenly ski patrol for hosting their second Adopt A Day of Nourishment this year. Heavenly's ski patrol provided the funding for the 138 meals served at B&B's Monday evening dinner on Feb. 29. This Adopt A Day was a follow up to their sponsorship on Jan. 18.

Heavenly ski patrol members have raised funds to support local charities and for the past several years. B&B is very fortunate to be the recipient of their cash donations and having ski patrol members join the B&B volunteers at their sponsorship dinners. On Feb. 29, the sponsor crew consisted of Heavenly ski patrol volunteers Tom Taylor and Leilani Connolly; and Heavenly ski patrol team members Jeff Miller, Brandon Commanda and Marissa Streck. They were a fun and hardworking sponsor crew and they were a big help to the B&B volunteers.

"Heavenly Ski Patrol is all about helping people that need help," said Tom Taylor. "Teaming up with Bread & Broth seemed like a perfect fit for us, helping those in need."

B&B diners are seniors living on a fixed income, individuals between jobs, families struggling through difficult times, minimum wage workers and those who have no place to stay. If you ask any of these food insecure people, the meal sponsored by the Heavenly ski patrol was definitely a much needed gift.

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth

Opinion: Government won't

stop disease-carrying mosquitoes

By Kenn K. Fujioka

On Sept. 2, 2011, two employees of mosquito and vector control district where I work told me they had found a mosquito – *Aedes albopictus* – that had supposedly been eradicated from Los Angeles for 10 years.

Aedes albopictus (“albos” for short) is a mosquito that keeps vector control officers up at night, especially with the attention that mosquito-borne Zika virus is garnering as it moves through Brazil, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Mosquitoes of the genus *Aedes*, including “albos,” are the ones in the U.S. capable of transmitting chikungunya, dengue, and Zika virus, all of which cause serious human diseases.

Worse, these black-striped mosquitoes are not shy about their love for humans: They prefer feeding on us and bite relentlessly during the day, enhancing the risk that they will spread viruses from the infected to the uninfected.

In 2001, *Aedes albopictus*, the “Asian tiger mosquito” arrived in California as a stowaway in shipments of popular plants marketed as “lucky bamboo.” Getting rid of that infestation took a massive effort by multiple agencies. Regulations were enacted to ensure “lucky bamboo” was no longer shipped in standing water. For the next three years, no one found *Aedes albopictus*. We surmised that Southern California’s climate was too inhospitable for *Aedes albopictus* to easily gain a foothold, and the pressure we exerted on them caused their demise.

We were very wrong.

The genetics of the mosquitoes we collected in 2011 most

closely resembled those from south China, where the 2001 infestation originated. Somehow, *Aedes albopictus* had lived under the radar here for a decade. Surveillance to detect small populations of these mosquitoes is difficult, so by the time we found them in 2011, they had infested a large area.

Because of our relative success in 2001, we started fighting 2011's infestation brimming with confidence we could wipe them out by spring 2012. Famous last words. When spring came, "albos" emerged with a vengeance. Although we tried everything, *Aedes albopictus* doubled its range every year after that. We expect to find them in each of the 24 cities in our jurisdiction by the end of 2016. The drought that plagues Southern California will have little effect on *Aedes albopictus*; they hardly need any water to develop. Even without water, their eggs will remain poised for months, waiting for the next rain to fall.

Toward the end of 2014, the fight against *Aedes albopictus* took an ominous turn when *Aedes aegypti* was discovered in Commerce. Now, two of the world's most infamous vectors were present in L.A. County. *Aedes aegypti*'s common name, the "yellow fever mosquito" says it all. Its biology is similar to *Aedes albopictus*, but *Aedes aegypti* is considered the most versatile vector of all when it comes to transmitting human diseases.

2015 was a banner year for both species of *Aedes*. By its end, *Aedes aegypti* or *albopictus* could be found in 12 counties and 76 cities in California. And *Aedes* mosquitoes have made themselves quite at home in the southeastern U.S., with a range as far north as Connecticut and the Midwest, and through much of Texas.

The good news: it's not likely that a widespread epidemic like Zika in Central and South America will occur in the U.S. The viruses are not transmitted when *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus* stop biting during winter, and the viruses cannot

live in hosts other than humans. This means chikungunya, dengue, and Zika viruses must be introduced to mosquitoes each year by infected humans.

Even though the Zika virus is getting the attention, the mosquito-borne virus that we should really worry about is the deadly West Nile virus. Unlike Zika, West Nile virus lives primarily in birds and is continuously present, ready to infect humans. Last year there were 299 cases in Los Angeles County and 22 deaths. These numbers are high—especially for a disease that doesn't get much press anymore—but there may have been as many as 7,000 cases of West Nile in Los Angeles alone last year, based on statistics from 2015 and the CDC's estimates of symptomatic illness.

Our biggest challenge will be getting people to change their behavior. No agency's budget is sufficiently large to hire enough workers to get into everyone's backyard. We must motivate residents to remove all the sources of water on their property that may produce mosquitoes.

This time, we might get lucky. Californians are not used to mosquitoes, and the ferocious daytime bites of *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus* will interrupt our famous outdoor lifestyle—making people uncomfortable enough to take action.

Kenn K. Fujioka is the district manager of the San Gabriel Valley Vector Control District and the current president of the Mosquito and Vector Control Association of California. He is a graduate of UCLA.

Letter: American Legion refutes Conner's comments

Publisher's note: The following letter was sent to South Lake Tahoe City Councilmen Hal Cole and Tom Davis on March 6, 2016. It is republished with permission.

Dear Hal and Tom,

I watched **your meeting of March 1** of this year and heard comments about me stopping a member of the City Council from being in the Fourth of July parade. First and foremost, the American Legion does not get involved with politics whatsoever, second I have not and will not try to stop anyone from being in the parade, as I do not have anything to do with the parade so how could I stop someone from being in it? I think JoAnn [Conner] misspoke when she said I and Curt Emrie did not want a member of the City Council in the parade. The only issue we would have with the council is the elimination of the craft fairs that we the American Legion received proceeds from for letting them use our parking lot.

I would like to invite the City Council to the American Legion Post 795 on St. Patrick's day of the 17th of this month and be free to talk to the veterans, have dinner and enjoy the evening. I would like to answer any questions you might have about the American Legion, I would also like to say that we have been getting different stories about the City Council and what has actually taken place, so you are not the only ones that are confused! I would like to mend the differences that we have and let us all get along together. If this is something you would like to do also, then please call me and I will arrange to meet with you.

Thank you,

Matt Panks, commander Post 795 American Legion, South Lake

Opinion: Change of seasons brings out wildlife

By Toogee Sielsch

As we've seen over the last couple of weeks the weather in the High Sierra has been all across the board with early summer temps in mid-February giving way to a major winter storm in early March. And as we all know living here in the basin and how it pertains to weather it can be unpredictable at best this time of year. But what is predictable this time of year is the emerging activity of our local wildlife.

In the last month there has been multiple bobcat sightings and even talk of a mountain lion being seen around the South Shore. Coyotes are on the go seven days a week, 12 months a year. I've even been hearing of multiple bear sightings throughout the winter as well. Is any of this unusual? Absolutely not. Bobcats, mountain lions, and coyotes don't hibernate, and not all black bears may hibernate in mid winter when food sources like trash are readily available and close at hand.

But as we actually segue into spring, one thing is for sure, and that is we will see almost daily an ever increasing number of wild animals making their presence known as they become more and more openly active. Over the last eight or so weeks black bear sows have been busy giving birth to their cubs of the year and will soon be allowing those cubs to experience a new world beyond the den. And sows that have yearlings that have spent the winter denning with her will very soon be

dispersing them to find a place for themselves in this big world.

Also just around the corner is when many species of birds making their migration North for the summer via the Pacific Flyway will be passing overhead and resting on many area lakes and reservoirs along their journey.

And each and every year at this time I anticipate hearing my first "Cheeeeeeeese-Burger" whistle from a mountain chickadee.

So what does all of this mean to we human residents of and visitors to the Tahoe basin? Aside from meaning we will once again be blessed with the chance to see wildlife up close and personal. It also means that we humans have not only the capability, but the responsibility to do all we can to mitigate any negative impacts that we may have on wildlife, and to prevent any unwanted wildlife/human interactions. The best part is that it's a relatively easy goal to achieve by following a few easy steps:

- Never leave any food or drinks in your vehicle. Black bears have the strength and smarts to get into your vehicle, so please don't tempt them.
- Always keep your trash stored where wildlife cannot access it, and if you don't have a bear box trash bin please don't put it outside until the morning of collection.
- Do your best to deny access to your home or out buildings by wildlife. Keeping doors and floor level windows closed and locked is a good idea. Also keep your garage door closed and try to make sure wildlife has no access to walls or crawl spaces by securely covering any openings into those areas large or small.
- If you put out bird feeders please bring them in at night, because they often attract more than just birds.

It is my personal goal, and the main part of the missions of

the three wildlife rescue/advocacy groups that I belong to, to find coexistence between we humans and the wildlife we share this planet with. If you have any issues, questions, or need suggestions on how to bear/wildlife proof your home please call us at the BEAR League at 530.525.7297. If you know of or have encountered an injured or sick wild animal you can call us at Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care at 530.577.2273. I hope to put on a South Shore BEAR League training along with Ann Bryant sometime in May and would love to hear from anyone interested in attending. I can be reached at toognian@gmail.com.

I view having the chance to see wildlife in it's natural environment as a gift. I hope that all of you, like me, relish each and every encounter you have with the wildlife we live among and will do all you can to insure that future generations are able to derive that same pleasure. Let's do our best to make it a great year for ourselves and our forest friends.

Toogee Sielsch is a resident of South Lake Tahoe.

Letter: Heavenly gives back at Bread & Broth

To the community,

Volunteering at Heavenly Mountain Resort's Feb. 22 Adopt A Day of Nourishment dinner, Kyle Hayes was very excited about his time spent helping the B&B volunteers and serving the evening's dinner guests.

"Having the opportunity to serve the community alongside the Bread & Broth volunteers was an amazing experience for all of

us,” he said. “To feed citizens in need; to share a conversation and positive experience is something that always leaves a lasting impression.”

Hayes, a member of Heavenly’s grooming team, was able to be a part of the B&B dinner experience due to the generosity of Heavenly Mountain Resort and the Vail EpicPromise Grant. The grant provides funds to host six Heavenly Mountain AAD dinners annually and give their employees the opportunity to participate in serving the nourishing meals and food giveaways and interfacing with the dinner guests who gratefully enjoy the meals they are provided.

In addition to Hayes, Tyler Lehman, grooming manager; Dave Hager, snowmaking manger; Gary Terrazas, snowmaker; and Frank Papandrea, environmental manager, took the opportunity to donate their time to be a part of Heavenly’s sponsorship dinner. B&B would like to extend a big thank you to Heavenly for their on-going participation in B&B’s dinner sponsorship program. Kudos to the great job that Heavenly’s grooming and snowmaking crew members do on the slopes and for their commitment to helping others.

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth

Opinion: Calif. bond vote measure takes a beating

By Dan Walters, Sacramento Bee

Democratic legislators and officials, business and labor representatives, and water suppliers took turns Wednesday flailing a November ballot measure that would require voter

approval of major state revenue bond issues.



Dan Walters

If the measure is passed, critics said, using bond financing for critical public works projects, including emergency work after a natural disaster, would become more difficult.

The forum was a legislative hearing on a pending ballot measure under a new state law that also allows initiative sponsors to withdraw their proposals even after they have qualified for the ballot. The Legislature cannot, however, change a measure on its own.

[Read the whole story](#)

Opinion: Arthur Ashe's life a story about the long game

By Patricia A. Turner

We tend to recognize heroes like Arthur Ashe in a kind of short-hand—first African-American to win a singles tennis titles at Wimbledon, the U.S. Open, and the Australian Open; first African-American to be selected to represent the U.S. at the Davis Cup; and, at the university where I teach—UCLA—one of the most famous alums, period.

But these accolades aren't the main reason I teach a seminar focusing on Ashe's life. The trajectory of this tennis player's life—from his birth in the Jim Crow South of the 1940s to his untimely death from AIDS in 1993—brings much of the American century to life for my students, with all the complexity that gets lost when we think of these people solely as the achiever of milestones. And, perhaps because recent history is often the most neglected history, it is also the vital missing link in explaining to my students where we're coming from as a society, and providing them with exemplars as they face similar challenges in their lives.

Even though Ashe's name is mentioned by every campus tour guide and promotional video of any length about UCLA, and even though students go to a wellness center named in his honor when they are sick, students were quick to admit on their first day in my class that their understanding of Ashe's legacy was confined to a hazy notion that he was the black man who clicked off a bunch of firsts in the world of tennis. Some knew that he had died of AIDS; some knew that he was a social activist.

In my class, we start Ashe's life journey in the 1940s, with the family home in Richmond, Va., where his industrious and devoted father accepted a job as caretaker for Brook Field, Richmond's only park for Negroes, in the vernacular of the day. The job, which came with a house and proximity to tennis courts, embodied the era's "separate but equal" doctrine.

In Richmond, blacks could not say that they were denied the amenities afforded whites. Their park had a tennis court, too, although the trappings of tennis were largely unattainable to most of Richmond's African-American community. But sports became the special lubricant—and motivator—in Ashe's life. Young Arthur thrived by having tennis courts in his backyard and the attention of one of the only black coaches of the era, but he beat his local opponents too easily. Since the segregated school system precluded him from playing whites,

his father agreed with a coach's recommendation that his son should spend his senior year in St. Louis, where race would not restrict his range of tennis opponents.

Today, most parents are loath to move for fear of incurring the wrath of teenagers separated from their friends and the rituals of graduation. But Arthur Ashe Sr.—Arthur's mother had died when he was 6—split up his close family of three in order to expand Arthur's opportunities. And it worked. A stellar senior year in St. Louis positioned him for offers of tennis scholarships. Inspired by the example of Jackie Robinson and wooed by legendary tennis coach J.D. Morgan, Arthur Ashe entered UCLA in 1962.

In Ashe's undergraduate days, the word service did not evoke SAT tutoring programs or planting community gardens. Service meant the armed forces, and male college students lived with the knowledge that they could be dispatched overseas quite readily. In addition to perfecting his tennis game and focusing on his studies, Ashe enlisted in the ROTC. This commitment required a post-graduate obligation that Ashe fulfilled at the next stop on his life journey: West Point. His superiors allowed him to advance his tennis game.

His younger brother Johnnie, on the other hand, was in Vietnam, like so many other young men of his generation. In fact, fearful that Arthur might have to do a tour of duty, Johnnie re-enlisted, making the case to his superiors that if one Ashe brother was getting his mail in Vietnam, the other should be allowed to stay stateside. Safe from enemy fire, the older brother Arthur was a second lieutenant who worked as a data analyst and tennis coach at West Point.

While Ashe was playing tennis and pursuing his military obligations, other African-American young people were engaged in direct political action and at times he faced withering criticism for not joining in the struggle. Indeed he was booed at a speaking engagement at Howard University because the

students were incensed that he had played tennis in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Ashe's complex relationship with South Africa would come to exemplify some of the schisms in how Americans of the civil rights era thought about racial progress. During that era, any ambitious tennis player was expected to prove his or her mettle in the prominent South African matches. Even though he was a college graduate, a prize-winning tennis player, and member of the American military, Ashe could not get a visa to play there until the 1970s. His decision to play there after he finally succeeded in obtaining a visa riled members of South Africa's white apartheid establishment as well as anti-apartheid activists here at home. Ashe shared their disdain for what he called "the abyss that is South African apartheid." During the years when he transitioned from being a tennis player to being a tennis coach, he worked behind the scenes advocating that the United States exert its influence toward dismantling apartheid. When he took more public stances, such as getting arrested outside the South African Embassy in Washington in 1985, the bad publicity likely contributed to his being fired as captain of the Davis Cup team.

Unbeknownst to him, tennis fan Nelson Mandela was following his career and reading Ashe's books in his cell on Robben Island. Upon his release, he identified Arthur Ashe as the American he most wanted to meet.

He encountered controversy again in 1992 when he announced that he had contracted HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. Ashe had become infected years earlier from blood transfusions necessitated by heart attacks at a relatively young age. But this was an era when the stigma against HIV and AIDS was severe—because it was assumed that only gay men or IV drug users got the disease. Ashe's ability to deal with his diagnosis in private was shattered when *USA Today* shared with him its plans to "out" his HIV status, forcing him to announce

his illness in a hastily arranged press conference. A colleague down the hall from me stopped buying that newspaper the day she heard about its role in Ashe's life, and she still holds a grudge more than two decades later. But Ashe didn't shy away from his association with the disease once the news became public: He was an activist to the end. Ashe dedicated himself to AIDS awareness and used his visibility to draw attention to the plight of black South Africans and Haitian refugees.

When I contemplate the character traits I want this generation of college students to embody, Ashe provides a good checklist. Not only was he a tennis star of the first order, he also wanted to help the next generation, establishing junior tennis leagues and coaching the U.S. Davis Cup team. Ashe took being a student-athlete, and not just an athlete, quite seriously throughout his life, and wanted to influence how the public looked at African-Americans. He crafted the first major study—three volumes in length—of African-American sports history. He also penned numerous op-ed essays and several other books, including his best-selling autobiography, "Days of Grace". He was a shrewd businessman who knew how to take the comparatively modest tennis purses of his day and invest them prudently. He married once and well, to Jeanne Moutoussamy-Ashe. Once engaged in an issue, he persevered.

To be sure, much has changed since Ashe's time: My students don't have to worry about a military draft, and if they are so unfortunate as to be diagnosed with HIV, there are medications to extend their lives. But their times are turbulent as well; issues of race, class, war, and disease continue to shape 21st century life. If they can learn from Ashe's life how to sustain personal and professional integrity, how to handle setbacks with grace, and how to play the long game, they will lead lives of distinction and purpose.

Patricia A. Turner is a faculty member at UCLA and serves as dean and vice provost of Undergraduate Education. She is the

author of four books, including “Crafted Lives: Stories and Studies of African American Quilters”.

Opinion: Homeless services don't end homelessness

By Tully MacKay-Tisbert

Homelessness is often described as a problem we must solve—and Los Angeles city and county now have expensive plans to do so.

As someone who has spent eight years working in nonprofit homeless services and studying homelessness, I've learned homelessness is also an industry designed to manage costs rather than challenge the mechanisms that create and maintain homelessness.

As George Mason Professor Craig Willse shows in his book, “The Value of Homelessness: Managing Surplus Life in the United States”, homeless services don't end homelessness; they manage it. While the industry is dominated by nonprofits, there is money to be made, and we have accepted the reality that homeless services are professionalized, and offer career opportunities and—sadly—a certain security.

Homelessness is not routine—it's a deeply personal experience of suffering, and its causes are largely systemic. Many of the folks that I've met through my work became homeless because of the way their life and choices were constrained by forces outside their control.

Of course, many people I serve have high psychiatric needs and chronic health conditions, but I don't buy into the

notion—common in popular, policy, and academic interpretations of homelessness—that these conditions are the primary cause of homelessness.

I fear we have constructed an imaginary chronically homeless person—mentally ill, with substance abuse and other issues. That hides the structures behind their troubles—a criminal justice system that swallows up poor people, health care systems that underserve the poor and mentally ill, housing markets that don't provide enough safe and affordable options. Framing homelessness as a pathology reinforces the legitimacy of the industry and places the blame for housing deprivation on the individual.

As a graduate student in applied anthropology at CSU Long Beach, I did life history interviews with people at Lamp Community, a nonprofit homeless services organization in Los Angeles. I found that life-long courses of trauma and poverty caused housing insecurity that led people to become homeless. I also found that housing insecurity remains even once a person makes it from the streets to supportive housing. Of course, the committed work of staff in providing services and intervention can sometimes help them keep their housing. But all such efforts are temporary, since supportive housing, like the rest of the homeless industry, fails to confront the inequality, poverty, health care, and other systems through which homelessness exists.

When the city of Los Angeles declared a state of emergency in October 2015 and committed \$100 million to address homelessness, I couldn't help but see it through this more skeptical lens. Of course there will be folks who benefit from the infusion of millions of dollars into the homeless services industry. But expanding the industry doesn't bring us closer to ending homelessness. So the state of emergency and funds appear more aimed at masking the visible reminders of our disparate economic and social systems.

As downtown Los Angeles gentrifies and a palpable tension between the newer tenants and those living on the streets grows, the pressure to better manage the homeless population mounts.

Many advocates have argued that housing should be considered a human right, but in our society it is first and foremost a commodity. Still many advocates adopt the argument that housing the homeless is cheaper than leaving them on the street, as a way of getting new policies and more funding. This demonstrates how effectively economics dominates the discourse of homelessness. Take the logic to the extreme, and you understand the horror of such thinking: If homelessness and costs shift so that abandoning homeless to the streets is cheaper, should we stop trying to find them housing?

Of course I want to make a difference. That's what drew me to the field of homeless services in the first place. But the poverty and trauma I've seen have convinced me that we are failing. The nonprofit industry and all our emergencies will not end homeless.

What will? Real advocacy that isn't compromised by the funding of an industry. Advocacy that produces deep changes in how our economic system creates and responds to poverty, how we create housing, how people get the health care they need.

While I can focus on the day-to-day work—the great team I collaborate with, the amazing people I've met during my time in the field, and the ways we exercise compassion and attempt to lessen the harshness of our broader system—I'd rather simultaneously confront the hypocrite that I've become. I can't help but encourage others caught in the web—advocates, case managers, clinicians, administrators, academics, politicians—to do the same.

Tully MacKay-Tisbert studied applied anthropology at CSU Long Beach and currently works for an organization in Los Angeles

that provides support to homeless and vulnerable individuals.