

Opinion: Los Angeles for president

By Joe Mathews

Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti is flirting with a presidential bid. Here is the announcement speech he should give.

America, I am running to restore a sense of decency, kindness, propriety, community, morality, and—of course—a fear of God.



Joe Mathews

I can lead this righteous crusade for one reason:

I come from Los Angeles.

I hear you laughing. I know you think my candidacy is a joke. I'm a mayor, not a governor (though my city has more people than 22 states). And I know people love to hate L.A.—a modern Sodom, fake, superficial, cynical.

Now, L.A. can be all of those things. (On the cynicism charge, we plead guilty to greenlighting 10 “The Fast and the Furious” films.)

But L.A. also represents something that America needs most desperately right now. All of today's American crises—around Trump, democracy, climate, economy, immigration—are really one

larger crisis of faith.

And Los Angeles is the American capital of faith.

You are dubious and ask: Aren't we just a bunch of godless liberals? Liberal, sure. But godless? Hell, no.

For a century, Southern California has been our country's Jerusalem, a cradle of religions. We birthed Pentecostalism during the Azusa Street Revival, and established the Bible Institute of Los Angeles. The 1940 Works Progress Administration's guide to L.A. reported: "The multiplicity and diversity of faiths that flourish in the aptly named City of Angels probably cannot be duplicated in any other city on earth."

After World War II, Southern California was the site of Billy Graham's first great evangelistic crusade, and pioneered the American megachurch, with the Crystal Cathedral and Calvary Chapel, and more recently Rick Warren's Saddleback Church. Today, we're home to innovative big churches like Oasis and Mosaic, and major houses of worships of every significant world religion.

Why all this fervor? Because, even though Angelenos might look like life's winners, with our pretty faces and whitened teeth, our region is actually the world's biggest collection of losers. We are people, or descendants of people, who lost at politics, commerce, love, family, or religion someplace else. My own diverse ancestry—I'm Jewish, Italian, and Mexican—is really just different flavors of loss.

We would never have made it through terrible times without faith. Heck, the traffic is so bad that we can't make it to work without murmuring "Hail Marys" or "Allāhu akbar!"

There are three strong L.A. faiths—a welcoming spirit, a can-do spirit, and a fear of God—that have grown weak in the U.S. Here's a religious text for each.

"The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt." Leviticus 19:33

Through riots, serial killers, and Proposition 13, L.A. has retained its first faith—a welcoming spirit. We love to see people come here from elsewhere. And we have learned to appreciate immigrants, because they make our neighborhoods safer, buy our homes when we retire or die, invent new things, and join our families. When I see shrinking Midwestern towns, my first instinct as an Angeleno is to say, "You folks could sure use more immigration."

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.
Philippians 4:13

I don't often quote St. Paul, but that's one famous expression of the can-do spirit. And our city does. We have constructed a new transit system, reduced crime, revived South L.A., rebuilt schools, transformed downtown, and won the Olympics. If L.A. can do all this, there's no earthly or divine reason that the U.S. can't tackle its big problems.

"His judgment cometh, and that right soon."

OK, that's from "The Shawshank Redemption," not the Torah. But it's true: We Angelenos fear God's destructive power.

We know that we are one great fire, one mudslide, one earthquake away from the end. And we take apocalyptic threats seriously. So should our country. Stop denying climate change—and start fighting it.

I know we elect people, not spirits, as presidents. I have as many faults as the ground beneath L.A. Angelenos will tell you that I'm way too cautious, and afraid of conflict. They may have a point. But when you look at President Trump, caution and risk aversion don't sound so bad, do they?

Still, I'm not cautious about expressing my city's faith in the future. As Aimee Semple McPherson once preached in Echo Park: "With God, I can do all things! But with God and you, and the people who you can interest, by the grace of God, we're gonna cover the world!"

My fellow Americans, let's get back to that spirit! Let's get this country back to God! And let's get this country back to Los Angeles!

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

Opinion: Preventing more Parklands

By Tom McClintock

For years the left has attacked the Second Amendment as the progenitor of gun violence, and demonized the millions of Americans who support their right of self-defense as abettors of child murder.

Yet it is the policies of the left that have produced this tragically familiar story: a deranged individual, known to police to be violent and dangerous, is ignored until he brings a gun into a gun-free zone and massacres defenseless victims at will.



Tom McClintock

The bromide of the left is that enough “gun control” will keep guns out of the hands of such criminals and madmen. After all, our drug laws have been so successful at keeping drugs out of the hands of addicts.

In 50 years of experience with gun laws, we have found them extremely effective at disarming law-abiding citizens. We have found them extremely ineffective at disarming criminals, madmen and terrorists. They invariably create a society where the law-abiding are unarmed, and murderers are as well-armed as ever. Our schools are a microcosm of such a society, where the gunman is king.

Parkland did have one armed officer on campus, but according to his attorney, he was under standing orders from Broward County’s politically correct sheriff “to seek cover and assess the situation in order to communicate what one observes to other law enforcement.” That didn’t work.

Fortunately, we know what does. Executing murderers works. Locking up other gun predators until they are old and feeble works. Confining the dangerously mentally ill so they can be treated works. Responsible armed citizens who can return fire works. These laws protected us well for many decades.

But beginning in the 1960s, under relentless attack by leftist politicians, our governments abandoned them. Today, we are reaping the whirlwind. Indeed, just days after the Parkland massacre, Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf tipped off criminal illegal immigrants of an impending raid by law enforcement –

including many charged with gun crimes, criminal gang affiliations, weapons violations and police battery. The left applauded her irresponsible act and then seamlessly returned to its advocacy of disarming the communities these gun predators escaped into.

Depending on criminals and madmen to obey gun laws is delusional. Authorities turned a blind eye to repeated complaints that the Parkland shooter illegally brandished firearms and threatened lives. In many cases, criminal background checks are rendered ineffective because information that would lead to disqualification is never entered into the system. And many more just obtain weapons from family, theft or the ubiquitous black market.

No one gives a second thought to an armed guard at a bank to protect our money. But any suggestion that armed guards should protect our children at school is met with hoots of derision. Hardening security at schools must invariably be backed by armed force, yet leftists won't have it.

Why shouldn't school employees, trained and entrusted by their local sheriffs with concealed weapons permits, be allowed to use those permits in our schools to stop the next massacre? That doesn't mean requiring every teacher to be armed – it means having the common sense to allow the same safety measures in our schools that we provide in our communities.

Chief Edward M. Davis, the legendary chief of the Los Angeles Police Department during the late 1960s and '70s, introduced such innovations as "neighborhood watch" and community-based policing that engaged private citizens. It worked. During his tenure, violent crime declined in Los Angeles while it skyrocketed nationally. He fiercely opposed gun control laws because he viewed responsible, law-abiding citizens as an integral part of policing and the first line of defense against crime.

Wise and effective laws take the world as it is, not as we wish it would be. As long as guns exist – and there are nearly a billion of them on this planet – criminals and madmen will have them despite all our laws. We once did everything possible within the rule of law to keep dangerous people off our streets and protect the right of peaceful citizens to defend themselves. Abandoning these laws has produced the bloody legacy we now endure and returning to them is the only sure path to preventing more Parklands.

Tom McClintock represents the California side of the Lake Tahoe Basin in Congress.

Letter: Volunteers make difference at B&B

To the community,

The week of April 22 was Pay it Forward week. To honor this concept of making a difference in another person's life, Bread & Broth's Adopt A Day of Nourishment meal on April 23 was sponsored by John McDougall's Pay it Forward grant and members of Unity at the Lake Church.

The Pay it Forward concept is all about people giving to someone else and making a positive difference.

The funding grant came from the Pay it Forward Lake Tahoe Community Fund held at the Parasol Tahoe Community Foundation and it has been funding an annual Adopt A Day for the past three years. Hosting a Monday meal dinner is a truly wonderful way to remind ourselves of the power of giving and being there to experience how a hot, nutritious meal can brighten the day

for folks in need.

In addition to John McDougall, Unity at the Lake Church members Michael and Ileene Lipkin, Al Miller and Darya Vost joined the B&B volunteer welcoming, serving and seeing to the needs of the dinner guest who arrived at St. Theresa Grace Hall.

“We are so happy to assist the wonderful people at Bread & Broth,” said McDougall. “The service provided to our community is so important to so many.”

B&B would like to thank McDougall and Unity at the Lake church members for their giving spirit and their commitment to helping others.

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth

Opinion: SLT's transparency remains elusive

By Kathryn Reed

“If they don't trust you, they'll keep asking for public records. There is nothing you can do but produce those records.”

Those are the words of attorney Leah Castella of Burke, Williams and Sorensen, the outside law firm the city of South Lake Tahoe uses. Castella was at the special City Council meeting on April 30 to give the electeds and senior staff an update on ethics training, the Brown Act and state Public Records Act. The training is mandatory every two years.



A message delivered to the South Lake Tahoe City Council on April 30 by counsel. Photo/LTN

This training is even more relevant in this era when **Councilwoman Brooke Laine** has made accusations of Brown Act violations occurring and when *Lake Tahoe News* has not been able to obtain public records.

This is an email sent April 13 to *Lake Tahoe News* by City Clerk Suzie Alessi, "This email is in response to your public records request (below) dated April 4, 2018. Please be advised that due to the voluminous nature of your request and the process of obtaining and reviewing relevant records, the records which are subject to disclosure will be provided to you within two weeks. We will endeavor to provide the records sooner if possible. (Gov. Code § 6253(c).)"

Normally the requests are due 10 days after being submitted.

Those two weeks, which were in addition to the initial two weeks, have come and gone without another email from Alessi.

Alessi was sitting in on the ethics/public records training when Castella said public records are a constitutional right – as in it's the right of the seeker to be provided them. Castella also said the institution not providing them would be liable for the attorney fees incurred by the person or entity

seeking the records.

Lake Tahoe News was seeking text messages of certain electeds and staff, with Alessi being one of the people whose texts are being requested.

This request came after *LTN* earlier this year sought phone records. That request was denied, though the denial came months after the request. These are the **phone records** that Alessi provided. Essentially it a blank piece of paper.

Transparency it is not.

Interim City Attorney Nira Doherty emailed *LTN* citing the following information as authority for not disclosing the phone records: "Rogers v. Superior Court, 19 Cal.App.4th 469 (1993) Court of Appeal denied reporter's petition for writ of mandate on the grounds that the telephone numbers of calls placed by city councilmembers were covered by the deliberative process privilege and not subject to disclosure under CPRA request."

What is interesting about the public records regarding the texts being delayed is that another request, a lengthier one, was submitted after *Lake Tahoe News'* by some "friends" group.

However, it was not until April 16 that council members were sent an email to bring their city issued phones to the next day's meeting. This comes after the deadline to respond to *LTN's* request and after Alessi sent the email to *LTN* saying the text messages would be delayed.

An additional interesting piece to all of this is that Councilman Austin Sass claimed that on April 6 his cell phone, tablet and backpack were stolen from his vehicle that was parked outside St. Theresa Church where his wife works. As of April 30 they had not been recovered.

It seems peculiar the devices go missing after data from them

had been sought by *Lake Tahoe News*.

The electronic devices are city owned. While Sass might not want certain communications revealed and thought he could prevent that from happening if he were to no longer be in possession of them, those devices can be automatically backed up. The city's IT department can retrieve the information without the device and without the user knowing.

Another thing the attorney told the group is that using a personal device for public work is not a great idea because that information can also be subject to public review.

Opinion: Cities reluctant to host big events

By Mark Wilson, The Conversation

Getting ready to welcome millions of visitors – as Russia is now doing in Moscow, Sochi and other cities in advance of the 2018 World Cup soccer tournament – takes years of planning and lots of construction. It's also expensive: Building 12 stadiums in 11 cities cost Russia an estimated \$11 billion.

When these big events are under way, they always seem worth the money and the trouble. Having worked at three World Expos, attended the Olympics twice and gone to a Tour de France and an Australian Open, I have personally experienced the palpable excitement they offer. But I have also done enough research to see that international extravaganzas don't always benefit the locals in the long run.

I'm on a team at Michigan State University's mega-event

planning research group that identifies what works and what may prove disastrous.

Here's what we've learned.

Local priorities

An overarching challenge we always see is that the organizations running big events and the public have different priorities. One side mainly cares about boosting its brand through the one-time spectacle's success. The other wants to raise its profile and acquire new buildings, roads and other infrastructure that will improve the local quality of life in the long run – without breaking the bank.

In my view, both FIFA, the global governing body for soccer, and the International Olympic Committee, which organizes the Winter and Summer Games, need to reconsider their business models and start doing more to meet the needs of host cities. Metropolitan areas that successfully host these big events make them a means to an end: becoming better places to live.

Sometimes building what it takes to host a World Cup or other big events dovetails with a city's ambitions. More often, the extensive preparations distort local priorities. Since the World Cup soccer tournament requires world-class stadiums that some host countries lack when they win the honor of hosting it, a construction frenzy ensues when a metropolitan area has the honor of hosting one.

That was certainly the case with Brazil's 2014 and South Africa's 2010 World Cups, when the host countries built several stadiums that soon proved unnecessary.

Likewise, the 2016 Summer Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro looked great on TV, but left behind many venues that quickly became a shambles following a process riddled with corruption that displaced thousands of people.

Pushback

Despite promises by event organizers and local bid committees, and expectations by the public that the event will solve some of their daily urban problems, host cities often end up with unwanted or unused facilities and saddled with debts that will take decades to repay.

The Olympics, which tend to be concentrated in a single metropolitan area, also often require oddball venues like baseball and beach volleyball stadiums in Athens or Rio's Whitewater Stadium for canoeing and kayaking that may never be used again because the facilities are not maintained or no one plays that sport in the area.

There is growing public ambivalence to mega events because of debacles like the Athens, Sochi and Rio Olympics, and the South Africa and Brazil World Cups. Of the six finalists for the 2022 Winter Games, four withdrew: Stockholm, Sweden; Krakow, Poland; Lviv, Ukraine; and Oslo, Norway due to public backlash and cost concerns. That only left Almaty, Kazakhstan, and the eventual winner, Beijing.

Boston and the German city of Hamburg withdrew their 2024 Olympic bids because of the public's objections. Similarly, Vancouver backed out of the running to host the 2026 World Cup. When local leaders simply express an interest in holding one of these big events these days, a rapid and vocal questioning of the benefits of a bid usually ensues.

Four years before Qatar gets to host the 2022 World Cup, it already promises to serve as another example of what not to do. Hundreds of workers have died from doing dangerous construction related to the event, according to Human Rights Watch, in a process reportedly marked by corruption.

Better options

But to be sure, there are some success stories.

When countries largely have had all the venues they needed, such as the World Cups held in France in 1998 and Germany in 2006, the investments required are more reasonable and practical, since the new venues are sure to be used.

And Los Angeles led the way in 1984 toward finding more efficient ways to host the Olympics by using existing venues and donations for facilities. As that same city plans for the 2028 Olympics, it may once again get a chance to illustrate how cities can up their Olympic game by insisting on construction and other public works that will benefit their communities in the long run.

Mark Wilson is professor and program director of urban and regional planning at the school of planning, design and construction at Michigan State University.

Opinion: Land use control key to Calif. housing crunch

By Dan Walters, CALmatters

The death of far-reaching – even revolutionary – legislation to facilitate housing development crystallized a conflict that’s been simmering in California for decades: Who controls land use?

Based on “police powers” in the state Constitution, cities and counties have, for many decades, regulated how land may be used. They do this most obviously by zoning it for specific purposes, such as residential, commercial, industrial or agricultural, with countless subcategories, but also by controlling specific projects within those zones.



Dan Walters

In theory, such regulation avoids incompatible uses. But there are enormous social and economic consequences as well, and it's a purely political process with a veneer of civic benefit but often with corrupt undertones.

Zoning and other land use tools also affect the "character" of a community, as opponents of specific projects often contend. But they also may reinforce its tendencies toward racial and economic segregation by ensuring that only those with higher incomes can afford to live there.

Local governments also have financial stakes in land-use decrees – by, for instance, maximizing land available for retail developments that generate sales taxes.

Historically, state government has taken a more or less hands-off attitude toward land use, even though its activities, such as building highways and water systems, have obviously affected how land is developed, or not. Indeed, one could argue with ample authority that the perennial wrangling over water has been a proxy war over land use.

Over the last several decades, however, the state has become more directly involved by requiring localities to have general plans to guide their development, by setting housing quotas (although not really enforcing them until this year), by requiring more housing near transit lines to reduce greenhouse gases and by the creating powerful regional regulators such as the Coastal Commission and the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

Today, however, the state's ongoing, and ever-worsening,

housing crisis has placed the land-use question on the front burner of political consciousness.

California, state officials say, needs to be building 180,000 new units of housing a year to keep up with population growth, replace housing that's lost to fire and old age and make a dent in the backlog. However, the state is scarcely meeting 60 percent of that goal and is particularly deficient in low- and moderate-income housing.

The biggest impediment to building more housing is resistance within local governments that control land use. City councils and other elected bodies reflect their voters' disdain for having more neighbors that would bring more traffic and other consequences of population growth, a syndrome especially virulent when it comes to high-density "affordable" projects.

It has a name: "not in my backyard," or NIMBY.

State Sen. Scott Wiener, a San Francisco Democrat, proposed to override local land use control with legislation to allow construction of up to five-story apartment buildings near major public transit stops, including areas zoned for single-family homes.

Local governments, labor unions and even some housing advocates lined up against Senate Bill 827, some contending it went too far and others saying it didn't go far enough. Ultimately, it received just four votes in its first committee hearing, far short of what it needed to advance.

SB827 may be dead, at least for the time being, but the underlying land-use question is very much alive.

It's highly unlikely that California can deal with its housing crisis unless it somehow overrides local authority over land use to blunt NIMBYism. But could it be done without also shifting the high-stakes, often smarmy political gaming over specific projects to Sacramento as well?

If not, the cure could be just as bad as the disease.

Dan Walters is a columnist at CALmatters.

Letter: El Dorado County needs to vote smart

To the community,

One of the great oxymorons for El Dorado County is that the political registrations are highly favorable to Republicans, so why do we have so many Democrats elected to our county offices? I get it that Democrats have certain policies that they favor, such as Sanctuary State, Planned Parenthood, hate Trump, gun confiscation, speech restrictions, and protection of illegal aliens and restriction of representation.



Stephen Ferry

Republicans, on the other hand support, the elimination of Sanctuary policy for the state, they are “pro life,” support President Trump, want to retain their guns and ammunition, support freedom of speech and religion and think that the public should be protected by our police/sheriff not the criminal. They also support requiring proper representation in our state Senate.

These are very clear differences and it would seem that the choice of who to vote for would be easy, but it's not, and it is not for one reason. The Democrats found that land use is a very powerful trigger in EDC and they have narrowed the debate to just this issue. A small contingent of folks have ruled the narrative on this subject in spite of losing in court on Measure E, which would have taken away the public's rights (that is you) on land use. This contingent of folks have complained that the Zoning Ordinance Update (ZOU) was badly done even though it is a requirement of state law to update the General Plan on a regular basis. This group even tried to recall the Board of Supervisors because the BOS obeyed state law.

Check **this quote** from the El Dorado County Alliance for Responsible Planning: "Most development activity and nearly all new housing built since 2004 involves projects approved before 1999. Through 2015, fewer than 200 new residential lots have been approved and finalized." Yes, folks, that means EDC has only created about 10 new units per year for 20 years outside the projects that were approved long before adoption of our 2004 General Plan.

When you go to the BOS to ask them to join the lawsuit against the Sanctuary State law and they don't do it, maybe its because of their basic belief system (see above). When the time comes to confiscate your guns, who will be on the board that serves your beliefs? When they decide to open a new Planned Parenthood facility or Stem Express to sell baby body parts again who will be making that decision? Your government will ruin your way of life a lot quicker than any developer.

The public should know the belief system of the candidates running for public office because even if they don't make the final vote they will still influence the folks who do make the vote. Three of these positions in this next election: 1. District 4 supervisor, Michael Ranalli, Republican and Lori Parlin, Democrat; 2. Tax collector, Anne Billingsley,

Republican and Karen Coleman, Democrat; 3. District Attorney, Vern Pierson, Republican and Patricia Kelliher, Democrat. Vote their conscience or yours.

Stephen Ferry, El Dorado Hills

Publisher's note: *The offices noted above are all non-partisan.*

Opinion: California save the queen

By Joe Mathews

MEMO

To: Queen Elizabeth II

From: Joe Mathews

Re: Mutual respect

Your majesty, I don't mean to rush someone who just turned 92. But it's high time that you showed California proper appreciation—by making our entire state an honorary member of the British royal family.



Joe Mathews

Perhaps that seems a bit much, but ask yourself, ma'am: Does your family have a more devoted servant than the Golden State?

None of your public relations vassals has been as effective at telling your family's story over the last century as the folks in Hollywood.

In more recent years, British royalty and Hollywood have converged, with an avalanche of productions about your clan. "The King's Speech," about the stuttering struggle of your father, won the best picture Oscar. (Investigative reports suggest you may be the only woman that its producer, Harvey Weinstein, ever treated with respect.) The Academy gave Helen Mirren the best actress award for playing you in "The Queen." Even Silicon Valley has been in your (streaming) service, with Netflix casting the charismatic Claire Foy as a young you in another award-winning series, "The Crown."

These and numerous other productions would be enough to humanize most families. But you require more. So now California is giving you our own flesh-and-blood, a glorious child of Los Angeles: actress Meghan Markle. She is to marry Prince Harry on May 19.

Markle brings your clan a new level of diversity (she's biracial), education (an international relations degree from Northwestern), and beauty (those teeth!). She is marrying your less accomplished younger grandson, best known for having dressed up like a Nazi for a party.

And as matter of foreign policy, this classy California girl has impeccable diplomatic timing. She provides a crucial boost to the faltering special relationship between our two countries, while also giving your nation a gorgeous distraction from the self-inflicted consequences of Brexit. Not since FDR has an American performed so great a rescue of the U.K.

If there is something already regal about her, that's no

accident. As the child of a cinematographer and as a student at a snooty private girls' school, she grew up around wealth and celebrity in Southern California, about as royal a milieu as you can find outside of Buckingham Palace.

Indeed, California has taken the lead from you in advancing monarchical ideals for the 21st century. Our wealthy folks live like royal—behind gates and high on hills. Many of our wealthiest are Anglophiles—keeping apartments in London, playing polo in Santa Barbara, or even hunting in the countryside with hounds, through clubs like the Santa Fe Hunt in Riverside and San Diego counties. Like any good aristocracy, they make sure job opportunities stay in the family. Drew Barrymore and Emilio Estevez have had film careers, so they don't call it Hollywood royalty for nothing.

And in the Bay Area, our tech lords are catching up to royal standards. Did you catch Zuckerberg's congressional testimony? His upper lip was even stiffer than yours.

One dirty secret about California is that, for all our populist culture and direct democracy, we're soft on monarchs. We've granted the Queen Mary, the ocean liner named after your grandma, a permanent berth in Long Beach. We Californians also have a demonstrable weakness for elderly leaders who refuse to abdicate—like your generational cohorts Jerry Brown and Dianne Feinstein.

Now, even as I hereby request gratitude from a queen, I also must thank you. These days, California could use a good wedding that celebrates our state's diversity and glamor. These strengths of California are now mocked by a president who wishes to divide the country and stir resentment. It feels good to have at least one country that welcomes us, even if that country is not our own.

Forgive me, but I must lobby you on one thing. Can you do better for our Meghan than the titles currently being talked

about in the British press? We read that you might make her just another duchess. Or she could lose her name to her husband and become, weirdly, Princess Henry of Wales.

This may break protocol, but it would be delightful if you could make her Princess Meg of Windsor Hills. That's the predominantly African-American, upper-middle-class South L.A. neighborhood, where her mother lives. Such a title would beautifully bind together a California community and your family name.

It'd also be cool if the organist could play Tupac's "California Love" during the ceremony. But that's not a priority. It's far more important for you to acknowledge what this wedding really is: the official consummation of a longstanding partnership.

Most Californians can't make the wedding, so please pass on our best wishes to your entire family. Mazel tov, Meg and Harry! And God save the Queen!

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

Letter: Casino workers help at Bread & Broth

To the community,

The HEROs from Harrah's and Harveys lived up to their name and mission by hosting a Bread & Broth dinner on April 16. HEROs, a Caesar Entertainment employee organization, is committed to having members volunteer at charitable causes and give back to

their community.

Through their generosity, they are heroes to those who benefit from their support and concern.

Representing the casinos and their fellow HEROs members at the their Adopt A Day dinner were Jacalyn Andrews, Jeff Colameco, Pat Frega, Veronica Vilaseca and Darlene Winkelman. These five were a vibrant and helpful group. From packing the giveaway food bags to cleaning up after the dinner, the HERO volunteers were there for the benefit of the evening's guests.

"This is such a heart-warming experience," said Winkelman. "It was truly my pleasure to serve those less fortunate than myself. This experience has warmed and filled my heart with joy!"

The HEROs have been long time supporters of the B&B dinner program and generally sponsor two Adopt A Day of Nourishment dinners annually. B&B truly appreciates the HEROs commitment to our program and their help in continuing B&B's role of providing nutritious and well-balanced meals to those in on Lake Tahoe's south shore who struggle with filling the basic needs I their lives.

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth

Letter: Rethink restrictions on straws

To the community,

Today I feel compelled to respond negatively to the proposed ban against plastic straws. The people that propose this ban

have obviously not thought this through. If ever there was a threat of unintended consequences, this is one. If plastic straws were banned in South Lake Tahoe, there would be a negative effect on the cheap restaurants that sell soft drinks in a cup. Those soft drinks are sold with a straw so that the kids can drink in the car while mom or dad drives.

There are other reasons that would make drinking those soft drinks from those restaurants unacceptable. These restaurants would actually lose business. Imagine going through a drive through knowing that you will not be provided a plastic straw with a plastic lid over that drink. You probably wouldn't order the drink.

And another thing, I use plastic straws regularly while I drive. The straw keeps the driving safer. With the straw I never take my eyes off the road in front of me when taking a sip through that straw. And in the summertime, I usually do have a soft drink near me while driving. This keeps me well hydrated during half hour drives to Carson City.

I also like the McDonald's straws. Those are the best. When I have a drink from a McDonald's I keep that straw and run water through it when I get home. This allows me to use those straws several times. Just try to find a straw like that in a store. I know that you cannot even find stores that sell those straws; they sell cheap little straws.

This idea to ban plastic straws is beyond foolish. If they want to have a positive effect on the environment they should promote the rinsing of straws for reuse. I do it because I don't like those puny little straws in the stores. Don't take away my plastic straws or I will have to move out of town. (Just kidding.)

Daniel Harvey, South Lake Tahoe