

Letter: Rotarians give back to Bread & Broth

To the community,

Bread & Broth is very fortunate to have the support of the Tahoe Douglas Rotary Club and have them working side-by-side with our B&B volunteers to help feed many of our neighbors who struggle with hunger. The Rotary Club has partnered with B&B to host five Adopt A Day of Nourishments with their third sponsorship occurring Dec. 4.

“Tahoe Douglas Rotary Club is happy to support Bread & Broth’s wonderful Adopt A Day program,” commented Rotarian Ellen Dauscher. “We truly enjoying working alongside B&B’s fantastic volunteers and are joyful to be able to feed so many members of our community.”

Joining Dauscher on the AAD sponsor crew were fellow Rotarians Allegra Boyd, Ryan Moore, Bob Senna and Watt Wiggins and community member Amanda Jones. Pitching right in, the sponsor crew manned the serving line and the food giveaway, dessert and drinks tables, smiling and warmly welcoming the dinner’s guests.

The club’s sponsorship of B&B’s Monday Meal falls right into line with the club’s mission of providing service to others. The Tahoe Douglas Rotary Club is a group of volunteer leaders drawn together by fellowship and a desire to help others and do humanitarian service. B&B would like to acknowledge and thank the Tahoe Douglas Rotary for their AAD sponsorships and for the positive impact they have in helping so many causes and organizations in the Lake Tahoe South Shore community.

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth

Opinion: STPUD overcoming multiple challenges

By Richard Solbrig

With the new year just around the corner, now is a great time to reflect on all that has happened at South Tahoe Public Utility District in 2017.

This year the district became the first water and wastewater provider in the Tahoe basin to produce its own hydroelectricity. Hydroelectricity uses the flow of water to generate power. The district is required by law to export all of our treated wastewater out of the basin. We are now capturing energy as water flows from the top of Luther Pass down 2,200 feet into Alpine County.

We currently have the capacity to produce 381,000 kilowatts of renewable energy each year, which will power about 55 homes. This also saves 100 tons of the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide from entering our atmosphere. The hydroelectric portion of the project was partially grant funded and will pay for itself within eight years. This is a win-win for our community and the environment.

The big winter of 2017 presented many challenges for our community. At the wastewater treatment plant we saw a 33 percent increase in water flow into the plant from storm water flowing into our aging manholes and sewer pipes. The plant almost reached maximum operating capacity during the intense rain on snow events.

Due to the exceptional work of our crews during flooding and power outages we were able to provide uninterrupted, safe and

reliable drinking water and wastewater treatment for our customers.

We had a busy summer repairing and improving our sewer system, but with an aging system like ours, we will be renewing our infrastructure for decades to come. We continue to assess our manholes, pipes and pumps to prioritize upgrades moving forward.

You may have seen us in your neighborhood as we installed fire hydrants and water meters. Living in the forest, fire protection is a top priority for our community. As such, we installed 46 new fire hydrants. We also installed 1,200 water meters to meet the state mandated deadline of a fully metered system by 2025. It will take three more years to install the remaining 4,000 meters.

Complying with state mandates and updating an aging infrastructure can come with a big price tag. Over the last three years, the district has successfully secured \$6.7 million in grant funding and over \$35 million in low interest loans to help offset costs to our customers while providing reliable service.

From all of us at the district, have a wonderful holiday and thanks for a great year.

Richard Solbrig is the general manager of South Lake Tahoe Public Utility District.

Opinion: Scientists working

to protect Lake Tahoe

By Geoff Schladow

Another year has come and gone at Lake Tahoe, and it was no ordinary year. We had one of the most extreme winters of snow on record. Lake levels came up 7 feet in a few months and thin ribbons of sand replaced the wide beaches of the last few years. Long forgotten seasonal springs re-emerged on hillsides and wildflowers seemed to last all summer.

Other things about the lake were different too. While the annual record is still being collected and analyzed, early indications are that we are experiencing conditions not seen before, be it high lake temperature or different floating algae. What is science doing to understand and control the changes in the lake and in the forests?



Geoff Schladow

Two new projects in 2018 are aimed precisely at addressing these changes. A pilot project in Emerald Bay is looking at restoring Lake Tahoe's native food web by locating and removing the invasive Mysis shrimp using new, sophisticated echo sounding equipment. Earlier research has shown that Mysis removal can lead to a return of native zooplankton, a restoration of clarity, and improved fish health in one year. But the changes at Tahoe are not just restricted to the lake. A new project to restore sugar pine trees in areas of the North Shore that have suffered high tree mortality due to prolonged drought and associated pine beetle activity is also

commencing in 2018.

These projects that go to the heart of restoring Lake Tahoe have been made possible through a combination of funding. This includes funds from the California Tahoe Conservancy, Nevada Division of Environmental Protection, Tahoe Fund, UC Davis, and individual community members. This broad base of support is essential, and makes it possible to attract the best scientists and students and to apply the newest technological approaches. Even though Tahoe has been studied for half a century, the challenges we are experiencing are evolving and the science needs to evolve even faster.

While we hope these two projects will achieve their goals, hope is not a strategy. To that end, we continue to work on the essential task of understanding, at a fundamental level, how the Lake Tahoe Basin is changing. From underwater robotic vehicles that silently track the motions of the water, to measurements on the exchanges of carbon that occur in the forests, to high school programs that train and spark the imagination of future scientists, we are embarking on the science that will be needed to save the lake.

To all who have contributed to our achievements this year, my heartfelt thanks. This includes our dedicated staff, our amazing volunteer docents, the students and interns that work at TERC, our partners in other research institutes and our colleagues in the various Tahoe agencies, those who visit our education centers, and those of you who have supported our research and education programs and partnered with us in unique ways.

My very best wishes for a safe and peaceful holiday season. I look forward to working together again in 2018.

Geoff Schladow is director of UC Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center. This column was first published in the TERC newsletter.

Opinion: Small towns can be unwelcoming

By Craig Childs, High Country News

The woman behind the counter asked where I lived. It turns out she grew up in the very same small town, population 300. She said she had to leave it to find a job, moving to the nearest place with a population nearer 10,000.

“So you must be the new trash that’s moving in,” she mused.

The woman looked 40 or so, with the dry complexion of winter wheat, as weathered as something wadded up and left in a corner for too long. She did not even attempt to smile.

Something pithy should have come out of my mouth about then. “Yeah, I am. You must be the old trash that moved out.”

Read the whole story

Opinion: A new approach to protecting rivers

By Brian Gray, Leon Szeptycki and Buzz Thompson, Sacramento Bee

California’s native freshwater fish – salmon, steelhead, sturgeon and others – continue to decline, and regulations to

reverse this trend have fanned controversy. A new approach to environmental stewardship is needed.

We should start by granting the environment a water right, as detailed in a new report we helped write for the Public Policy Institute of California.

The way California manages water for environmental purposes isn't working for anyone.

Read the whole story

Letter: Recognizing generosity of community

To the community,

For the fifth year, the Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority and South Tahoe Refuse & Recycling teamed up to benefit Christmas Cheer All Year with a "drive and drop" at the LTVA's California Visitors Center and curbside collection on regular pick-up days.

Once again we were overwhelmed by the generosity of our South Shore community.

Thank you to all the individuals and businesses who participated in making the holidays a little brighter for those in need.

With gratitude,

Anne Sutterfield, Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority

John Tillman, South Tahoe Refuse & Recycling

Opinion: Dear Santa, bring immigrants

Dear Santa,

I know most letters you get are from kids. So let me start by saying there is no toy that I need.

But there is something I want for Christmas—not for myself but for my state.

What does California really need? We're a relatively rich place with nearly 40 million residents, which you might think would be more than enough people. Except that it's not.



Joe Mathews

The statistics show that California faces shortages of the kinds of people its future requires: children, skilled workers, farmworkers, construction workers, doctors, teachers, entrepreneurs, engineers, and college graduates. (This is only a partial list. Still, check it twice.)

The fastest way to address these shortages is by attracting more immigrants. While more than one-quarter of Californians are foreign-born, we've had so little immigration over the last decade that we face a shortage of new immigrants, too.

And it's getting harder to attract more. Even though California is nice to immigrants, our federal government naughtily spreads anti-immigrant bigotry, makes it harder for immigrants to enter the country, and deports as many current immigrants as possible.

Which is why I turn to you, St. Nick. With your high-volume delivery system and your ability to slip unnoticed past U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Santa Claus is our last, best hope for getting the immigrants California needs.

Can you send a million? Or 2 million?

I know you read in the papers that politicians blame our country's economic problems on an excess of immigrants. But that's fake news.

We actually need many more immigrants. Nationally, the number of job openings is at an all-time record. In California, some employers are so desperate for workers that they are considering moving out of state.

This is the nasty paradox of California's success: Growth has made it hard for people to stay. The high cost of living has created a consistent out-migration of residents, with 50,000-plus more people leaving California each year than arriving from other states. This domestic out-migration is pronounced among the younger working-class people who should be the backbone of the state's future.

The result: lack of workers. With immigration's decline, most California construction firms report shortages of workers, which—in a vicious cycle—causes costly delays that make housing more expensive. The lack of immigrants has decimated the agricultural workforce, which consists primarily of foreign-born workers. And with so much of California's entrepreneurial culture deriving from immigration (40 percent of L.A. business owners are foreign-born), it's unsurprising that the state's rate of business formation has slowed in the

last decade.

Long term, the shortage of workers is most worrisome in healthcare; currently, there aren't enough people to take care of California's two fastest-growing demographics, the disabled and the old. All California regions except the Bay Area and Sacramento face doctor shortages, particularly in primary care. What looks like a medical shortage is really an immigrant shortage, since more than one-third of our doctors are foreign-born. The same dynamic holds in California's science and engineering sectors, in which 42 percent of workers are immigrants.

The Public Policy Institute of California has estimated that by 2030 the state will have 1.1 million fewer college graduates than its economic needs will require. The current immigration levels aren't high enough to make up the difference. "Much larger increases in international migration will be necessary for the supply of highly educated workers to meet the demand," PPIC concluded.

If not for the immigrants we already have, these shortages would be much worse.

California's most reliable method for producing more people—having more babies—isn't working well. The birth rate in the state is now below the replacement rate, and major coastal counties have seen steep declines in their number of children. Attracting more immigrants would help reverse that.

Now, I know that Santa tries not to get involved in politics and policy. And yes, Californians need to invest more in our current residents. But that takes time and money, and the problems I'm talking about are in the here and now. And I'm sure you've seen these shortages firsthand. Everywhere I go in California this time of year, you're there, talking to average people.

And I don't have to remind you that you're an immigrant

yourself. (St. Nicholas started out as a 4th-century Greek saint in what is now southern Turkey).

Kris, I realize that your pack of gifts is already heavy, and that you don't want to overtax your renewable fuel source, those eight tiny reindeer. But remember the story of Christmas. If you can find the magic to get the people our state needs on your sleigh, we should be able to make sure that there's room for them at the Hotel California.

Feliz Navidad,

Joe Mathews

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

Opinion: EDC supervisors suspend First Amendment

By Larry Weitzman

An inconspicuous item on the Dec. 5 El Dorado County Board of Supervisors agenda removed the most important amendment of our precious Bill of Rights from public board meetings. The item number was 35 and the BOS voted 5-0 to approve the item.

While some may argue that the Second Amendment, the right to keep and bear arms, is more important as it provides the protection of all other amendments, the First Amendment (note it was the First Amendment for a reason) provides for freedom of speech, expression and the press. In reality, the founders and framers were not talking about pornography, but political speech. And speech at BOS meetings is exactly that, political

speech and all of it needs protection.



Larry Weitzman

But the BOS decided with item 35 that they would limit speech at meetings from the public. Kind of like modern-day liberals, progressives, socialists and other left wingers who talk of the protection of speech as long as they agree with the speech. As has been demonstrated in recent events, it is the left that tries to prevent speech from people they don't agree with. Both true conservatives and true liberals believe in Patrick Henry ("Give me liberty or give me death") and the words of Elizabeth Beatrice Hall who wrote in her work titled "Friends of Voltaire": "I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death of your right to say it." Our board appears not to believe in those immortal words.

Item 35 says the BOS will limit all public comments during public forum and as to individual agenda items to three minutes or less which is not much of a change from before, except organizations will no longer get five minutes and be limited to three minutes. That is of little concern. What is the concern being that all public comment whether it be during public forum or an individual agenda item will be limited to a total of 20 minutes. While it provides the BOS the discretion of extending the time to speak, it's the BOS which gets to decide which speech they want to hear, which is not free speech, but controlled speech.

In addition, 20 minutes means six and two-thirds speakers. Who decides who gets to speak? The BOS? Who lines up first? Think

of the injuries to speakers in their race to the public podium. What that means is that some individuals will have their free speech rights curtailed or suspended. That is not America and certainly not the First Amendment. This new measure borders on totalitarianism. And this is part of the good governance manual and the result of the four extremely expensive "public" meetings?

During the hearing, Supervisor Brian Veerkamp said, "The purpose (of time limits) is to provide better government, but is it perfect? No." Well if it is not perfect, then fix it. Duh! Veerkamp needs a history, reading and comprehension lesson, perhaps a re-education camp. "Under both Acts (Brown and Bagley-Keene) a body must provide an opportunity for members of the public to directly address each agenda item under consideration by the body either before or during the body's discussion. Cal. Gov't Code §§ 11125.7(a)."

Veerkamp went on to say, "Board meetings are to be held in public, but are not public meetings" meaning while the public can watch and listen, they are not entitled to speak. Veerkamp clearly doesn't understand the California Code, the Brown Act and its various amendments. The public has an absolute right to participate at public meetings. That is why they are called public meetings and the operative word in the quote above is "must." The board has very little discretion except as to reasonable individual time limits to prevent personal filibusters.

Not one board member stood up to correct Veerkamp, including the two board members who are up for reelection, Sue Novasel and Mike Ranalli. In fact, Novasel said almost nothing during the entire discussion. Didn't she claim to have studied good governance? Maybe she can sleep with her eyes open and appear to be alert while in a meditative trance.

But Ranalli in a stroke of brilliance not to be outdone by the stupidity of Veerkamp said, "This document (and public comment

limitation) clarify how we conduct business and we do have the flexibility to allow the public to speak.” Thank you so much King Ranalli. When was Ranalli appointed king and the authority to determine who he will allow to comment on public business, what business they can comment on and what they can say about it? The law even says, “Under the Brown Act, the right to comment includes the right to comment on matters to be considered by the body in closed session.”

Ranalli didn't stop shooting his mouth off (he must love to hear himself talk) as he went on by saying it's OK “to set limits on those days when we have other public business to discuss and the limiting depends on what the topic is.”

Earth to Ranalli, when you took this job and begged us for our votes, you didn't mention time limits on the conduct of government business. Good government is not like football, with four 15-minute quarters and even the NFL eventually put in overtime rules. It's more like baseball, it's over when it's over, no matter how many innings are required. When it comes to government, we are a government of the people, by the people and for the people. Ranalli wants government by Ranalli.

If Ranalli wants the power to govern, he must accept the responsibility of the public's participation. If he listened more carefully, he might learn something. He certainly learns nothing while listening to himself, but the public sure learns about Ranalli.

What makes matters worse is our county counsel, Mike Ciccozzi, said this limiting of public participation is legal and appeared to be all for it. It helps Ciccozzi keep the board under his influence while lobbying for a new \$250,000 a year four-year contract. Without Ciccozzi, maybe some potholes could get filled.

Larry Weitzman is a resident of Rescue.

Editorial: 2018 could be worse for California

Publisher's note: *This editorial is from the Dec. 2, 2017, Sacramento Bee.*

Living atop ever-shifting tectonic plates, we know the Earth can shift with deadly force at any time, though we don't dwell on it. But as 2017 nears its end, let's reflect on the disasters we endured, and what they portend for next year and years ahead.

In the last rainy season, more rain and snow fell on our valleys and mountains than in any year recorded, this after five years of drought. Eroded by the force of millions of gallons water cascading out of Lake Oroville, the concrete spillway at the massive Oroville Dam crumbled in February, and the Butte County sheriff wisely erred on the side of safety by ordering 188,000 people to evacuate.

You can be forgiven if the Oroville Dam scare seems to have happened in the distant past, although in this time of climate change, such anomalous events could well be part of our future. That became evident on the terrible night of Oct. 8 and early morning of Oct. 9.

Read the whole story

Editorial: Federal concealed weapon law a bad idea

Publisher's note: *This editorial is from the Dec. 11, 2017, Las Vegas Sun.*

Here's a quick quiz that relates to gun safety in Nevada, as will be explained later.

Q. In Missouri, a gun owner must meet which of the following requirements to legally carry a concealed weapon?

- A. Complete a safety course conducted by a licensed instructor
- B. Score at least 90 percent on a written exam on firearm safety
- C. Be at least 21 years old
- D. Register with the state
- E. None of the above

The answer is E. Under a state law that went into effect this year, anyone 18 or older who can legally obtain a handgun in Missouri can carry it concealed. Buy it, hide it, no questions asked.

Sound safe? Of course not. But if a House bill that was passed last week clears the Senate and becomes law, Nevada will have to recognize the Missouri law and allow residents of that state to carry concealed handguns while in Nevada.

Read the whole story