Opinion: How fishing created civilization

By Brian Fagan

Of the three ancient ways of obtaining food—hunting, plant foraging, and fishing—only the last remained important after the development of agriculture and livestock raising in Southwest Asia some 12,000 years ago.

Yet ancient fisher folk and their communities have almost entirely escaped scholarly study. Why? Such communities held their knowledge close to their chests and seldom gave birth to powerful monarchs or divine rulers. And they conveyed knowledge from one generation to the next by word of mouth, not writing.

That knowledge remains highly relevant today. Fishers are people who draw their living from a hard, uncontrollable world that is perfectly indifferent to their fortunes or suffering. Many of them still fish with hooks, lines, nets, and spears that are virtually unchanged since the Ice Age.

The world's first pre-industrial communities emerged in the Eastern Mediterranean around 3100 B.C. Other states developed independently, somewhat later, in Asia and in the Americas. The entire superstructure of the pre-industrial state, whether Sumerian, Egyptian, Roman, Cambodian, or Inca, depended on powerful ideologies that propelled the efforts of thousands of anonymous laborers, who served on great estates, built temples, tombs, and public buildings, and produced the rations that fed not only the ruler but also his armies of officials. Some of the most important were the fishers, who, along with farmers, were the most vital of all food purveyors.

As city populations grew, fish became a commodity, harvested by the thousands. Fishers transported their catches to small

towns and then cities, bringing fish to markets and temples. For the first time, some communities became virtually full-time fishers, bartering or selling fish in town and village markets in exchange for other necessities. Their catches were recorded and taxed. In time, too, fish became rations of standard size, issued to noble and commoner alike. The ruler and the state required hundreds, even thousands, of skilled and unskilled laborers. Their work might be a form of taxation, but the king had to support them in kind, often with fish.

The Land of the Pharaohs depended heavily on its fisher folk. Nile River catfish were easy to harvest, especially during the spring spawn, before they were gutted and dried in the tropical sun on large racks. The authorities assigned teams of fishers to catch specific quotas within set periods, especially when the flood was receding. Large seine nets provided much of the catch, deployed and hauled in by teams of villagers.

The demand was enormous. Building the Pyramids of Giza alone required thousands of people. The workers' settlement lay close to the royal tombs. In 1991, the Egyptologist Mark Lehner excavated two bakeries, including the vats for mixing dough and a cache of the large bell-shaped pots used for baking bread. A huge mud brick building next to bakeries contained troughs, benches, and tens of thousands of tiny fish fragments in the fine ashy deposit covering the floor.

The fresh catches had to be dried and preserved immediately. Lehner believes that the fish were laid out on reed frames to dry on well-ventilated troughs and benches in a production line that provided protein for thousands of people. At its peak, the line must have employed hundreds of people and processed thousands of fish per day—precise estimates are impossible. The fishers were thus only the first stage of an infrastructure of hundreds of people needed to process and store the dried catch for later consumption. The demands of

this operation must have led to large, temporary fishing villages springing up at the same general locations every flood season.

The Ancient Egyptians were not alone. Mid-19th-century travelers, who crossed the Tonle Sap lake in Cambodia after the monsoon as the water was falling, reported catfish teeming so thickly under their canoes that one could almost walk across the water on their backs. The ancestors of these large fish fed thousands of Khmer laborers as they built the nearby stupendous temples of Angkor Wat and Angkor Thom in the 12th century.

On the other side of the world, along the arid North Coast of Peru, the inshore anchovy fisheries, nourished by natural upwelling from the sea bed, yielded enormous numbers of small fish that, when dried and turned into meal, made a valuable protein supplement for farmers in fertile river valleys inland, such as the great settlement at Caral, about 120 miles north of present-day Lima. Caravans of llamas carried bags of fish meal high into the Andes, where the fish became a major economic prop of the Inca empire. Tens of thousands of anchovies were netted, dried, and stored before being traded on a near-industrial scale.

Fish were major historical players in many places. Dried fish fed merchant seamen crossing the Indian Ocean from the Red Sea to India; dried cod from northern Norway was the beef jerky that sustained Norse crews as they sailed to Iceland, Greenland, and North America.

Those who caught the fish that fed pre-modern civilizations were anonymous folk, who appeared with their catches in city markets, then vanished quietly back to their small villages in the hinterland. Perhaps it was the smell of fish that clung to them, or the simple baskets, nets, and spears they used to harvest their catches that kept them isolated from the townsfolk. Perhaps they preferred to be taken for granted. But

their efforts helped create, feed, and link great civilizations for thousands of years.

Centuries ago, urban populations numbered in the thousands, but the demand for fish was insatiable. Today, the silent elephant in the fishing room is an exploding global population that considers ocean fish a staple. Deep-water trawls, diesel trawlers, electronic fish finders, and factory ships with deep freezes have turned the most ancient of our ways of obtaining food into an industrial behemoth. Even remote fisheries are being decimated.

Despite large-scale fish farming, humans face the specter of losing our most ancient practice of food-gathering—and thus leaving behind an ocean that is almost fishless.

Brian Fagan is emeritus professor of anthropology at UC Santa Barbara, and author of "Fishing: How the Sea Fed Civilization" (Yale University Press, 2017).

Opinion: Can Calif. adopt Korea's nuclear cool?

By Joe Mathews

Can Californians learn to be as cool as Koreans in the face of nuclear annihilation?

Visiting Seoul this month, I asked people how they stay sane while living within range of North Korea's weapons. Kim Jong Un's capital, Pyongyang, is 120 miles from Seoul—the same small distance protecting San Diego from Los Angeles.

Joe Mathews

Of course, South Koreans have been living productively under North Korea's threats for six decades. For Californians, being North Korean targets is disorientingly new—because of the regime's advances in nuclear warheads and intercontinental ballistic missiles.

North Korean propaganda has sown fears with specific threats against California and even animations of nuking San Francisco. The L.A.-area Joint Regional Intelligence Center last summer urged state and local officials to update nuclear attack response plans.

Talking to Seoul locals eased my nuclear jitters. "Keep calm and drink beer," I was advised, in an alcohol-friendly Korean twist on the World War II-era British advice to "Keep calm and carry on."

Indeed, the deepest worries I heard from South Koreans involved the reliability of President Trump, and whether he was truly committed to honoring the longstanding ironclad American commitment to protect South Korea even if it risked an attack on the United States. The North Korean escalation—through nuclear and missile tests—is often seen as posing a question to the United States: "Are you willing to trade Los Angeles for Seoul?"

But that question, while frighteningly linking the fates of California and Korea, is seen as mostly rhetorical in Seoul, a city so vital that its destruction is unthinkable.

Instead, South Koreans see the current conflict cynically—as a

contest between a dictator, Kim Jong Un, and a reality TV-authoritarian, President Trump, who both use threats to rile people up and preserve their power—which they, in turn, use to enhance their personal wealth. One Korean scholar, boasting that his country had impeached its own corrupt president, Park Geun-hye, in March, asked me if the United States might do the same.

Rather than give in to authoritarian madness, locals say, it's better to behave nonchalantly. That's what South Korea's new president Moon Jae-In did when he went on vacation after a North Korean missile test last summer. The news media reinforces such sanguinity; last week, stories about Korea's business world, rising housing prices, and the upcoming Winter Olympic Games here in February got more notice than the possibility of a nuclear exchange. During a daylong conference I attended on the future of Korean democracy, North Korea got mentioned exactly once.

Yes, South Koreans are making defensive preparations, and discussing the possibility of acquiring their own nuclear weapons. In August, the government conducted a large-scale civil defense drill. And I met a few Koreans who admitted to keeping bags packed with the same items—cash, identification, water, food, first-aid—that Californians assemble in their own earthquake kits.

One afternoon, I had coffee with Leif-Eric Easley, who grew up in Long Beach and lives with his family in Seoul, where he is a professor at Ewha University. An expert on international relations and Northeast Asia, Easley argues that North Korea's provocations are meant to divide its neighbors, so not rising to the bait is a good strategic response.

Easley says that Koreans stay cool in the face of threats because they understand the situation well, and knowledge reduces fear. But the risk of war is not zero, and he sees a certain desensitization to the war threat. After North Korea's

nuclear test in September, the parks were so full of Koreans enjoying good weather and beer that his family found it hard to find a place to picnic.

After our conversation, I walked by the U.S. Embassy, where I encountered competing protests—one a “No Trump Zone” that called

for the pursuit of peace with the North, and the removal from South Korea of an American missile defense system known as THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Area Defense).

The smaller counter-protest urged a pre-emptive American strike on the North: “You Bomb North Korea. We Support You.”

Both protests were tiny compared to two nearby events. Several hundred Koreans, mostly in their 20s, were attending a job fair, a familiar scene in a wealthy country struggling with high youth unemployment. And a short walk away, in Gwanghwamun Plaza, thousands of young people gathered to watch a rehearsal for an upcoming Olympic-themed concert by the K-pop group Twice.

The nine young women in the group were singing their huge hit, “Cheer Up.” It’s about dealing with an anxious boyfriend who keeps texting his love, escalating in desperation to something that might sound threatening.

But the chorus offers some good advice, to girlfriends and Californians alike: Stay cool and keep the relationship alive. “I’ll act calm,” Twice sings, “as if it’s nothing.”

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

Opinion: It’s not safe to hide from the world

By Brie Loskota

In the midst of the Second Intifada, in summer 2001, I was living in the dorms at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Normally bustling streets were nearly empty. Signs in store windows offered discounts for the “brave tourists” who ventured inside despite the growing violence and tension. Being constantly on alert exhausted me, a short-term visitor insulated from many of the complexities of what was unfolding.

So I was relieved when I left the escalating tensions in Israel in August for the relative tranquility of Spain. And a week later, on the TV in my hotel room in Madrid, I saw a Jerusalem neighborhood I knew well turned into a chaotic mess by a suicide bomber.

I felt like I had dodged a bullet.

A month later, I was back in the United States, living in Los Angeles, a place that feels safe to me, when terrorists crashed planes into the World Trade Center towers, the Pentagon, and a Pennsylvania field. Those attacks breached many Americans’ sense of national security in a way not known since Pearl Harbor. I had that same feeling I felt in Madrid a month earlier: A place I knew, New York, and buildings that I had been in, the Twin Towers, had been converted into a site of destruction and death.

Since 2001, I’ve felt this sense of dread and insecurity again and again. My work and research—understanding how religious communities are responding to the rapidly changing world—continue to take me across the globe, sometimes to violence-stricken locales.

I have traveled under armed guard with the Asia Foundation in Mindanao, Philippines, where a centuries-long conflict involving the Moro people in the Southern Philippines fighting against foreign governance later turned into a nearly 50-year-long separatist battle with different factions, bringing with it violence and terror attacks. On the first day of a trip to Nairobi in 2012, pregnant with my third child, I saw news of a shooting at a Sikh Gurdwara in Oak Creek, Wis. In 2014, my flight from Amman, Jordan, to Frankfurt, Germany, was loaded with refugees who had fled ISIS's grotesque violence in Iraq.

As often as I travel abroad, it seems as if there are more and more attacks closer to home. At a school in Connecticut, a nightclub in Orlando, a work party in San Bernardino, and last month a music festival in Las Vegas, individuals or small groups have murdered scores of innocent people. It seems as if this sort of exceptional violence is no longer exceptional, whether you're overseas or in relative safety at home.

My travels have taught me another thing: not to retreat. Yes, after a trauma like the massacre in Las Vegas, it's tempting to run away from other people and the places where they gather. But through experience, I've learned that living in fearful isolation is actually far scarier than moving through potentially hazardous places where I am challenged to confront the unfamiliar and my own assumptions about safety and security.

My family has constantly worried about my travels since I went to Jerusalem in 2001. But I've come to worry just as much about them. When I went to Uganda in 2015 with the U.S. Institute of Peace's Generation Change program, it was a few weeks before the fifth anniversary of the Al-Shabaab attack on a soccer stadium in Kampala where hundreds were killed and maimed. Several of the young Ugandans we were training as peace-builders had survived that attack.

But after a long day of training in Uganda, news jarred me

from back in the United States. A young white man had slaughtered nine souls in a black AME church in Charleston, S.C. And that church violence wasn't new. Three of my colleagues at the Center for Religion and Civic Culture at the University of Southern California are ordained AME pastors, including the Rev. Cecil L. "Chip" Murray, who was once so reviled by white supremacists that that they plotted to blow up Los Angeles' First AME Church, where he was senior pastor.

Thankfully, the FBI foiled their plan, and Murray remained undeterred in confronting the perpetual sources of violence that his community faces. But that connection, as I sat in my Uganda hotel room taking in tragic news, made the attack on the Charleston AME seem more worrisome than any potential violence I faced overseas.

Of course, my worries are part of the problem. The violence we experience through the media often feels immediate and visceral, making our own surroundings feel unsafe. Thanks to our access to news around the globe, we can empathize with the victims of the shooting in Las Vegas and the truck bombing in Mogadishu, Somalia. And that is a critically important thing for all of us to do. The focus on unimaginably terrible mass casualty news events also distorts our ability to assess our own risk. It makes every place feel unsafe at all times.

Violence is too much a part of human lives, particularly in places that lack economic and other resources, when people do not feel like they have access to power or where they are excluded and targeted because of their racial, ethnic, gender, political, or religious identities. It is this everyday violence that truly plagues us.

But it is obscured by exceptional violence—the type where individuals wreak carnage on a large group of bystanders—which truly is exceptional even if it feels as though it is ever-present.

It’s easy to forget the many hundreds of days before and after my visit to Uganda when there was no major terrorist attack in Uganda.

And even though it is exceptional, it is still far too frequent in the United States. There have been nine mass shootings in 2017 where a gunman indiscriminately killed four or more people in public. [BJL1]

Yet this exceptional violence can’t be allowed to control our actions. Threats and terror spread by white supremacists should not keep us from visiting black churches or standing with Muslim communities in the United States, just as fear of terrorist violence is no reason not to travel to Kampala, Jerusalem, Brussels, or Paris. And for people like me, whose work involves building peace and aiding people’s efforts to become architects of their own societies and to change the conditions that create violence, showing up is essential.

Human fears, of course, are no less real for being irrational. In my experience, I’ve found that preparing for the worst helps—getting trained for events, like how to respond to an active shooter, or learning vital skills like CPR or emergency first aid. I always know where my exits are. Preparedness goes hand in hand with the obligation to help, and a key way I navigate the world, not as an afterthought and not out of fear. I am more likely to use those skills to help someone having a heart attack or choking than to help a victim of exceptional violence.

When I returned home from my 2012 trip to Nairobi, during which a white supremacist killed six and wounded four others at a Sikh Gurdwara in Oak Creek, Wisconsin, I met with the leaders of a Sikh congregation in Los Angeles. We ate in the langar hall, where Sikhs prepare free meals daily as a service to those in need, a beautiful part of the Sikh tradition. I kept an eye on the door just about every second, trying not to be disrespectful to my hosts, who were eager to talk about how

Sikhs could contribute to L.A.’s disaster response because of their daily mass meal preparation tradition. My hosts were alert, too, not only because of the Oak Creek massacre but because Sikhs have been targeted in violent attacks in the United States for decades. They also are prepared because their faith obliges them to help.

For those who aren’t in immediate danger, the point is not to ignore your fear but to put it into context, develop a sense of agency over it, and use that agency to fight the sources and conditions which bring about violence. Above all, we cannot let fear stall our progress, collapse our communities, or keep us at home. This is not tough talk. It is a vital strategy for a safer, saner world.

Brie Loskota is the executive director of the USC Center for Religion and Civic Culture.

Opinion: Life after sexual assault

By Diana Nyad, New York Times

Here I was, a strong-willed young athlete. There he was, a charismatic pillar of the community. But I’m the one who, all these many years later, at the age of 68, no matter how happy and together I may be, continues to deal with the rage and the shame that comes with being silenced.

My particular case mirrors countless others. I was 14. A naïve 14, in 1964. I don’t think I could have given you a definition of intercourse.

My swimming coach was in many ways the father I had always yearned for. I met him when I was 10, and those first four years were marked by a strong mentor-student bond. He repeatedly told me I had all the talents to one day rock the world. I worshiped my coach. His word was The Word. I built a pedestal for him and gazed up at the center of my universe.

I was dead asleep in the master bedroom when it happened. Out of nowhere, he was on top of me.

Read the whole story

Letter: Kirkwood security helps at charity

To the community,

To volunteer to help others is a selfless act that is both humbling and uplifting. Thanks to Vail's generous EpicPromise grant, Kirkwood Mountain Resort employees had the opportunity to volunteer at Bread & Broth's Nov. 6 Monday meal through B&B's Adopt A Day of Nourishment program.

Kirkwood's department security officers Mark DeSacia, Rick Hofheins and Charlie Noury and David McCullers, security manager, all volunteered their time and effort to make a difference in the lives of those attending the meal served at Grace Hall.

Every Monday, B&B serves full-course, nutritious meals, provides seconds for those interested and packs containers of the dinner's leftovers to give to anyone who attends each dinner. In addition, funding from the AAD $250 donation is

used to purchase fruits, vegetables and dairy products which are packed into ‘giveaway’ bags also filled with canned goods and breads/pastries donated by local stores and businesses. No guest who ever attends a B&B dinner ever goes away hungry or without food to use for later in the week.

The four were a fun group to work with and they did an outstanding job representing their security department and Kirkwood Mountain Resort.

“Our team feels a great deal of love and support for our Tahoe community,’ commented McCullers. It is our pleasure to volunteer our time for a place we love so much.”

B&B would like to thank Kirkwood Mountain Resort and these four sponsor volunteers who so generously served the vulnerable members of our community.

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth

Opinion: Greatest story ever told about hyperbole

By Jennifer Mercieca

In 1835, Phineas Taylor Barnum was anxious to find an “amusement” to attract paying customers. One lucky day a stranger told Barnum that he possessed half-ownership of a “curiosity”: a woman named Joice Heth who was the 161-year-old slave who raised George Washington.

Barnum examined Heth and the stranger’s “proofs” about her age and provenance and, convinced of her seeming veracity, bought Heth from the stranger. Soon he was drawing crowds to see

Joice Heth recount George Washington's childhood. Barnum also paid off newspaper editors to write up the story of Joice Heth in the most dramatic way possible.

Barnum's advertising strategy depended "upon getting people to think, and talk, and become curious and excited over and about the 'rare spectacle'." His tool was hyperbole. While P.T. Barnum is often remembered as the founder of a circus – "The Greatest Show on Earth"–Barnum's story is more broadly about America's fascination with hyperbole and humbug.

Hyperbole is the rhetorical term for "excess" (Greek hyper "beyond" plus bole "to throw," to overthrow or throw beyond). Aristotle thought of hyperbole as a kind of metaphor, a comparison between a known thing and an unknown thing. In comparing something that is unknown to something that is already well understood, audiences would make sense of new information by using associational logic. Yet, Aristotle thought that because hyperbole relied on excessive exaggeration, its users abused the power of metaphor and demonstrated a "vehemence of character." In the 18th century, Joseph Priestley argued that hyperbole was unjustly used to appeal to "persons of little reading" who were particularly attracted to the "very extravagant" or the "marvelous and supernatural." Hyperbole drew attention to itself, for the sake of merely drawing attention.

Which is why Barnum relished it.

For a time, Barnum writes in his 1855 "Autobiography," ticket sales for the Heth show were great and business was good and he was happy. Then disaster stuck. "A Visitor" wrote to one local paper and claimed that Joice Heth was what the hip school kids of the 1750s called a "humbug." Specifically, "A Visitor" believed that Heth was "not a human being," but was "simply a curiously constructed automaton, made up of whalebone, India-rubber, and numberless springs, ingeniously put together, and made to move at the slightest touch,

according to the will of the operator."

The attack on Heth didn't hurt Barnum's show; it made it bigger. Barnum would recall that "hundreds who had not visited Joice Heth were now anxious to see the curious automaton; while many who had seen her were equally desirous of a second look, in order to determine whether or not they had been deceived."

Joice Heth passed away in early 1836, ending Barnum's show but not the nation's curiosity. Barnum took advantage of that interest: 1,500 audience members paid 50 cents each—double what audiences had paid to see her alive—to watch David L. Rogers conduct an autopsy. According to the Feb. 25, 1836, edition of the *New York Sun*, Rogers concluded that Heth was a real person but nearer to 80 than to 160.

But, Barnum had the last word. He planted a story with the *Sun*'s competitor, the *New York Herald* on Feb. 27, 1836, which claimed that the Heth humbug story was itself humbug. Heth was "not dead," but alive and well in Connecticut.

Why did Barnum's hyperbole and humbug excite American audiences in the 19th century? For the same reason that it excites Americans today: We love to be amused and we love excess, and so we reward showmen with our attention.

We're especially attracted to hyperbole during times of great transition, when things are confusing and reality can be more easily distorted. Barnum knew this too: His "A Visitor" exposé/humbug relied upon the nation's curiosity about the emerging technology of machinery, new commercial uses for India rubber, and new northern concerns over the abolition of slavery.

Today is another time of great transition and America's showmen-leaders knowing it. During an election interview with NBC in 2016, Donald Trump said he had enjoyed being compared to P.T. Barnum. "We need P.T. Barnum, a little bit, because we

have to build up the image of our country," he said.

Ask yourself: Was Barnum and Bailey's circus literally the "greatest show on Earth"? Of course not, that's nonsensical hyperbole: But in a supposedly classless society like America, such confident appeals to American greatness via hyperbole attract audiences.

And we shouldn't forget that "there's a sucker born every minute." Barnum has been credited with that phrase, but probably never said that. Of course, there's a humbug that says he did.

Jennifer Mercieca is the world's greatest associate professor in the department of communication at Texas A&M University. She is completing a book about Donald Trump's presidential campaign and demagoguery.

Opinion: Brave enough to be angry

By Lindy West, New York Times

Last month, an "Access Hollywood" correspondent asked the actress Uma Thurman to comment on abuse of power in Hollywood, presumably in light of the sexual assault allegations against the producer Harvey Weinstein.

Speaking slowly and deliberately, through gritted teeth, Thurman responded, "I don't have a tidy soundbite for you, because I've learned — I am not a child — and I have learned that when I've spoken in anger I usually regret the way I express myself. So I've been waiting to feel less angry. And

when I’m ready, I’ll say what I have to say.”

Thurman is seething, like we have all been seething, in our various states of breaking open or, as Thurman chooses, waiting. We are seething at how long we have been ignored, seething for the ones who were long ago punished for telling the truth, seething for being told all of our lives that we have no right to seethe. Thurman’s rage is palpable yet contained, conveying not just the tempestuous depths of #MeToo but a profound understanding of the ways that female anger is received and weaponized against women.

Read the whole story

Opinion: The cost of incompetence in EDC

By Larry Weitzman

In the case of Austin v. El Dorado Hills County Water District which is commonly known as EDH Fire, the El Dorado County Superior Court issued a tentative ruling on Nov. 3 as to their demurrer to the Austin complaint, trying to knock the case out on a significant technicality known as the statute of limitations (SOL), claiming in their demurrer that their (the Austin’s) complaint was not timely filed as it was filed beyond the SOL.

Larry Weitzman

EDH Fire said the law is that the lawsuit must be filed within in one year or at best within three years of the date that the Nexus study was required to be filed pursuant to the Mitigation Fee Act. It was basically the same demurrer the court ruled against the county and EDHCSD on Oct. 20, but being a separate defendant, EDH Fire gets its own shot at the apple.

However, in a much shorter ruling (11 pages), the court tentatively ruled again as it did before, that the one-year and the three-year SOL does not apply. It's clear, concise reasoning, besides distinguishing the one- and three-year SOL as to its specific applicability in the case here, said that on page 7 of its ruling "Section 66001(d)(2) mandates the governmental agency to refund all funds held in an account or impact mitigation fund where the local agency fails to meet its mandatory duty to make findings every five years. That duty to refund is not limited to money on deposit in the account or fund as of the date of default in making the required five-year findings. Therefore, it is reasonable to construe that statute as imposing a continuing requirement to refund all funds collected after that date until the required findings are made. Such a construction would provide the local agency with a continuing incentive to make the findings despite the passage of the date to make such findings and support the legislative intent to impose the five-year findings requirement to prevent a local agency from collecting and holding a development fee for an extended period without a clear and demonstrable plan to use the fee for the purpose it

was imposed. The appellate court in Walker, supra, touched on the issue in its discussion of the Legislature's intent relating to the refund requirement. "The five-year findings requirement establishes a mechanism … to guard against unjustified fee retention" by a local agency (Home Builders, supra, 185 Cal.App.4th at p. 565, 112 Cal.Rptr.3d 7; see Garrick, supra, 3 Cal.App.4th at p. 332, 4 Cal.Rptr.2d 897)."

In other words, this "Nexus" study reporting mandate required every five years was a safeguard to prevent retention of unneeded money by the government and that was the intent of the legislation and that's why the reporting requirement was inserted into the legislation, to prevent exactly what is happening here, the continued collection of money with impunity. That would fly in the face of the MFA legislation. If after one year of a failure to file a demonstration of the need to collect these fees, by the operation of the one-year SOL, the local agency would be relieved of this requirement? No local agency would ever file a "Nexus" because as after a year they would be relieved of that responsibility. Such illogic would be the antithesis of the heart and intent of the MFA.

It is basic contract law (and the MFA is a contract of sorts, mutual promises given for a local agency to collect money from property owners who wish to build) that every time a statement is sent of a debtor or every time a payment is made, it re-starts the SOL. Every time the local agency collects money under the MFA without meeting the five-year Nexus study requirement it has an immediate duty to refund that money collected. If it spends money after the five-year date without a Nexus study, it is in violation of the MFA and that money is required to be refunded pursuant to the MFA. A new SOL arises on each illegal act by the violating agency. That is what the court said.

Mike Ciccozzi keeps telling the Board of Supervisors that the county will win on appeal. He is advising the county to spend

hundreds of thousands and maybe millions of dollars to fight a losing battle as this case will have to be first tried on the facts, with county documents as evidence that admit the failure to file the five-year Nexus studies. Only then can the county appeal. The county now has a big problem. It appears to have no defense. In the Walker case as cited by the court, the city of San Clemente said in its pleadings that if they lose, it would be effectively a feeding frenzy for lawyers. That's a poor excuse for not following the law, and in fact using the law is a way to make sure government bureaucrats do their jobs.

If the county loses this case – and it doesn't look too good for them – Ciccozzi says they should appeal even though their chance on appeal is slim to none. What does he care? It's not his millions of dollars, it's yours and bureaucrats love to spend your money in wasteful ways. So, what's new? Delay just costs the county, meaning your money, but he doesn't want anything bad to happen before this Austin case gets to the point where the county (you) must pay the piper and he gets a four-year contract extension.

Any board member, especially Mike Ranalli and Sue Novasel who are up for re-election, that votes to rehire Ciccozzi, needs to be fired. I spoke before the BOS in February 2015 and told the board, including Novasel, that this was going to happen, and he did nothing. I wrote about it the next month. Still nothing. Novasel and the rest of the BOS are mimicking Capt. Edward Smith of the Titanic.

The board should first read the tentative ruling carefully (its written in very plain English; google El Dorado Superior Court Dept. 9 and look for the tentative rulings from Oct. 20 and Nov. 3) and understand why the county has almost no chance of success, zero, zip, nada. Get an independent outside opinion. Ciccozzi's opinion is worthless because of his huge and obvious self-interest. Then find a real lawyer for county Counsel, maybe a Lou Green clone, but anybody other than Robyn

Drivon and Michael Ciccozzi.

Larry Weitzman is a resident of Rescue.

Letter: Casino crew helps at Bread & Broth

To the community,

HEROs, the employee organization at Harrah's/Harveys casino resorts, hosted Bread & Broth's Monday meal on Oct. 30 through their sponsorship of an Adopt A Day of Nourishment.

B&B's Adopt A Day program provides individuals, businesses and organizations the opportunity to participate in hosting a hot and filling meal which provides nourishment and a welcoming and safe environment to any community member who attends a Monday meal at St. Theresa Grace Hall.

The HEROs are a familiar sponsor organization; hosting two Adopt A Days annually, and always sending a sponsor crew that is thoroughly professional, compassionate and a pleasure to work with.

At the Oct. 30meal, the HEROs were represented by returning volunteers Jackie Andrews, Jeff Colamecu and Darlene Winkelman. The newbie volunteer for the HEROs was Brad Budd and he jumped right in just like an experienced volunteer.

"It is far more rewarding to serve those in need directly," commented Budd. "In the past we have donated items or funds, however, working with the Bread & Broth team as well as helping our community is very impactful."

B&B would like to thank the Harrah’s/Harveys HEROs for their generous donation of $250 and partnering with us in volunteering their time and energy to bring food and fellowship to our community members in need.

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth

Letter: Time to find unifying leaders

To the community,

The next election is around the corner and civic life in America is as fragile as our generation has ever seen it.

Let’s decide now to rally around leaders who prioritize care for others above personal gain or party lines. Let’s rally around caring for our earth, for people, for communities.

Annie Davidson

This feels like a new idea because care challenges the perverse rationale of greed and the foolish habit of partisan divisions we are so used to. We must actively resist the messages of the market that say we need to stay hooked on getting more things to be happy. We must remember that it is through belonging and care that we are strong and happy.

Children know this!

We are right now lost in a forest of greed and loneliness. We must find our way back to the America we want: a place for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness – for all. We must remember how to be in community, how to listen across difference, how to care for strangers, how to welcome the weary immigrant and the lost child. We must remember we are a human nation first, made by and for our best human selves.

We are not just corporate America, not just political parties, not just gender or race identities, not just projections of ourselves on Facebook. If you are not welcome, I am not welcome.

Join me this year in actively supporting any brave leader running – or already in office – who fights for the value of care at the local level all the way to Washington. Kamala Harris. Bernie Sanders. John McCain. Brian Sandoval. Wendy David. Elizabeth Warren. Jerry Brown. So many others who are in office, who are throwing their names into races, and those who have yet to surface. Let's find those people to support.

Let's support and celebrate those leaders in office who are brave against coercion or temptation – regardless of party. Let's tell the parties to get out of the business of dividing us. To do this, we can each support brave, generous people across party lines, even if we don't agree with everything they stand for. Let's vote for the most important things. Let's show love will win this year. Let's go win elections with the ideas that bind us and free us.

Annie Davidson, South Lake Tahoe