

# Editorial: California budget could harm nonprofits

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Legislation on Gov. Jerry Brown's desk threatens an important source of funding for nonprofits in California. The governor should heed a coalition of nonprofit organizations that oppose it, and use his veto pen.

Under current law, judges distribute money from settlements in class action lawsuits that goes unclaimed to nonprofit organizations that do work that is relevant to the cases. The theory is that the money, while not going to victims of whatever wrong is addressed in the litigation, will help prevent some future harm.

But as part of this year's budget, legislators added a provision to a trailer bill that would take half of the unclaimed funds and earmark it for indigent legal services and collaborative courts such as those established for veterans or mentally ill people who run afoul of the law.

**Read the whole story**

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## Opinion: California first on the Fourth

**By Joe Mathews**

Dear America,

I suppose I should wish you happy birthday. But I'm just not feeling it.

You and I, the United States and California, used to be pretty darn close—"indivisible" was your word and "inseparable" was mine. Sure, we had our differences—I've always been a little out there. But



Joe Mathews

America wouldn't be America without California, and California was proudly part of America, which tolerated our excesses for our mutual glory.

But you and I have been drifting apart. Today, I look at you and feel like I'm an entirely different place, with different values, even different realities. And I find myself wondering: Do you and I have a future together?

Who is responsible for our problems? It's really not me. It's you. While I'm the almond-producing state, you're the one that has gone nuts.

Everyone is entitled to a mid-life crisis, even 18th-century republics. But you are having an especially nasty meltdown. I feel like you've turned against everything you used to love: immigrants, trade, international alliances, voting rights, women's rights, science, national parks, infrastructure, and treating people with respect.

These days, you're constantly freaking out. And the government you installed in Washington—a government my voters opposed by

historic margins—is trying to take away people’s health care, make it harder to vote, roll back environmental regulations, restart the failed drug war, and pick fights with my trading partners, perfectly friendly countries like Mexico, Canada, Germany, Sweden, and South Korea.

Your crazy nonsense is pretty bad. But here’s what’s even worse: You keep trying to justify your crack-up as just a natural reaction to what you say is my awfulness. In your narrative, I’m too coastal, too elite, too rich, too educated, too Hollywood, too tech, too globalist, too uninterested in the pain of the rest of the country, and thus too out of touch with you. And so you’ve had to go stone-cold crazy to get my attention, to wake me up.

That thesis is—how do I put this?—exactly what the cows drop in Tulare County pastures after a good feed.

I shouldn’t have to say this, but my people and I know the pain of poverty (we’re tops in the nation in it), economic dislocation (just look back at the carnage of our 1990s recession and our 2000s housing crisis), and drug abuse (the opioid crisis? it’s here, thank you). There is no American malady I don’t suffer.

So the fact that you keep projecting your outrageous behavior onto me tells me that you’ve taken leave of your senses.

I’m also worried that you’re going get me nuked by North Korea.

So, going forward, our relationship can’t be the same.

Now, I’m not going to march out the door and become my own country, like the crazy, Russia-compromised #Calexit movement proposed. You are still my country, and I’m not surrendering you.

But I do need to put some distance between you and me. I need

some boundaries (and I don't mean a wall). I must think about my own needs first.

A few weeks ago, a small group of Californians filed a ballot initiative that will give me some space. The initiative, called "California's Future: A Path to Independence," does have a separatist bent—it takes "inseparable" out of the California Constitution's line about California being part of the United States. But it's agnostic on the idea of California leaving the Union.

"America, whatever" is its attitude; "California first," is its policy. The initiative sets up a commission to expand California's autonomy while "buffering Californians" and their values (respect for diversity, science and democracy) "against chaos, dysfunction, and uncertainty at the federal level."

It's time for "California to take stock of the leverage it has over the United States, and to use this leverage to negotiate for ever greater autonomy," the measure says. For example, my people should seek changes to budgeting policy so that I'm not paying more in taxes than I'm getting back in services. And I'm not interested in subsidizing your irresponsible debt or your constant wars.

The initiative's proposed commission – which is modeled on one of California's most enduring governing entities, the reform body known as the Little Hoover Commission – would pursue federal and state policy changes and demand progress from elected leaders on ever-greater California autonomy.

Yes, I'm going my own way. But my people are just as American as yours, and so on July 4, I'll still host enough barbecues, parades and fireworks displays for 39.5 million of your citizens. Back east of the Sierra, I hope your celebrations are bigger than ever, and that your people will stand extra close to the fireworks.

Maybe all the explosions will wake you the hell up.

Independently yours,

California

*Joe Mathews writes the Connecting California column for Zocalo Public Square.*

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## **Opinion: Learning from fire**

**By Garry Bowen**

We have now commemorated the Angora Fire of June 24, 2007, rightly honoring those who both endured and suffered through the destruction and aftermath of the trauma.

Many have written about their thoughts, along with the anguish at determining whose fault it was, revealing what they thought was problematic with various municipal policies, as if that would mollify the pain gone through.



Garry Bowen

As a longtime Tahoe person, my take will offer another perspective, as you'll see, as it is the conditions of our forests that require the most deliberation, given the possibilities of their uncertain and dangerous fate.

Noted by others on that typical Tahoe summer day as to their

whereabouts, mine were with my son (with grandchildren in the backseat) on Pioneer Trail nearing the 7-Eleven on the way to Stateline, when going in the opposite direction was a small USFS pickup suddenly switching on the rooftop emergency lights. Something was up. As that happened, I turned my head as it passed by, catching the first glimpse of smoke from the southwest above the buildings. It gave me a chill, as it also inspired a lesson to my son, who did not know of my work with DRI on fire ecology, or even what that was.

It was the color of the smoke in those first moments that caught my attention: it was a smoky beige with orange streaks within; it was not water (evoking steam and white); it was not dark grey or black befitting an oil-based fire – it was the color of a wood fire, and the orange defined sparks within. I told my son within that minute that this would be a disaster in the making, as those sparks were in the wind that had developed very quickly.

Those comments were the first inklings of what we now know as the Angora Fire.

I have been working on reducing catastrophic fire for a long time, notably via a more preventive mode of converting biomass into energy, via work done with the Department of Energy's Renewable Energy Laboratory in Golden, Colo. The Energy Department is one that Tahoe does not ordinarily do much with, as the focus here is about natural resource agencies, which do not think of energy as necessarily part of their repertoire.

A few months before Angora, in January of that year, I was invited by the Washington, D.C., office of the Forest Service to a "ceremony" in Lake Arrowhead, with the National Fire Plan, along with nine out of 10 regional foresters (there are only 10 regions in the USFS). The 10th, considered the crown jewel of all 10 is Alaska, with its three temperate zones. The regional forester was not at Arrowhead, as he was fighting a 750,000-acre fire there: Denny Bschor, who I met at NREL on

the same issues mentioned above, made a strategic error in trying to mollify both sides of an ongoing issue: half-a-project for timber, the other half for environmentalists. Of course, neither side was satisfied; the conditions were then ripe for a large fire.

Also at Arrowhead was Dale Bosworth, the USFS chief at that time, with whom I met. The occasion was marked by the introduction of a 30kW gasification unit used to convert biomass into energy, thought to be a direction they were to take, having ordered a future 50 kW unit for the USFS visitor center there.

As someone else brought up the local meeting at South Tahoe Middle School, I was conflicted, as I could not diminish the pain of my city, as I had already seen incredible and extensive damage done by fire (750,000 acres, 3,500 homes lost), but it was obviously easy for me to empathize with all those open wounds.

My interest in reducing catastrophic fire increased, as they say, it was getting that much "closer to home." Several times here I have used the word "conditions" as it is a relatively obscure idea, among all the staff and people devoted to either forestry or to the fighting of fires that occur, meaning that, for simplicity, the conditions are in the domain of systemic, generally lost in our fascination for specialties.

A healthy forest is characterized by functioning across many scientific disciplines, and the only discipline that includes most is that of an ecologist, because sort of by definition involves an entire system.

The only outliers to this are: (1) agronomy (soil science), and (2) the climate, which is not under "ground control." Tahoe's "take care" program only begins to address the attention actually needed to become proper stewards to living in the forest, as we do in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

With Tahoe's cachet, of course both state governors convened a Blue Ribbon panel, itself a process interrupted by yet another six-figure acreage fire down south (about the same size as the one reviewed in Arrowhead).

Noting that the big tree forests are all in the 10 Western states (including B.C.), all 10 Western governors have a seriously vested interest in reducing catastrophic fire, regardless of party affiliation; it is thus the conditions that need to be addressed, on levels still inadequate to imminent threats.

At the time, the Angora Fire reminded me of the Hayman Fire in Colorado: they had the first of 13,000 acres circumscribing the shoreline of Denver's largest water reserve (for 800,000 people), followed by a second one just a few years later of 153,000 acres, the Hayman. This suggested (with regards to Tahoe's hallowed clarity efforts) that the Denver Water Co. was most likely a good source of water quality testing, so a reminder of that was made to the equally hallowed Blue Ribbon, as both California and Colorado are part of that 10 Western state coalition.

Whether Arrowhead, Angora, or anywhere in the west, the issues leading to Angora are still viable, and attempts to be politically-correct about whether we are in any anthropocentric (man-made) dilemma will fall short. The climate is only partially responsible for the current fuel aridity (dryness) state of affairs, we all, as either shepherds or stewards of our surroundings, need to pay rapt attention to what is going on in our misaligned world.

That will be our best salvation, and most comfortable way to live and love in a future – take care and pay more attention.

*Garry Bowen has more than a 50-year connection to the South Shore, with an immediate past devoted to global sustainability, on most of its current fronts: green building,*



*energy and water efficiencies, and public health.*

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## **Letter: Cruise company helps at B&B**

**To the community,**

Shane and Diondra Colquhoun, Tahoe Tastings' owners, brought their wine cruise adventure hosting skills to their Bread & Broth Adopt A Day dinner on June 19. This dynamic couple normally is providing afternoon and sunset cruises and wine tasting on the Golden Rose, but at their Monday dinner, they and their energetic sponsor crew members served up a tasty dinner and provided TLC to the evening's dinner guests.

Making up the rest of the sponsor crew team were friends Lauren Lindley and Lyndsay and Steve Bryant. This really enthusiastic crew did everything to help out at the evening dinner. They packed food giveaway bags, setup the dessert table, served drinks, manned the serving line and even helped with the dish drying and cleanup. For a first time sponsorship, they were an excellent crew.

"We really enjoyed the opportunity to serve the South Lake Tahoe community," said Diondra Colquhoun. "As business owners, we believe it's important to give back any time we can and we look forward to support Bread & Broth in the future."

B&B would like to thank and commend Tahoe Tastings' and their crew for their spirit of service and wonderful energy they brought to the evening meal.

**Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth**

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# Opinion: Switch to silent fireworks

By Lindsay Pollard-Post

There will be plenty of “oohs” and “aahs” during the July Fourth fireworks celebration in Costa Mesa this year. But there won’t be any bone-rattling booms and bangs. That’s because the city is putting on a silent fireworks display – and other cities should, too.

Noisy fireworks aren’t fun for everyone. For many dogs, cats, wildlife and veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, they are terrifying and can even be deadly.

Countless dogs and cats panic at the sound of explosions – their hearing is much more acute than that of humans, after all – and bolt from their homes, sometimes tearing through screens, digging under fences or even crashing through windows. Animal shelters across the country brace for an influx of lost and injured animals following every July Fourth.

[Read the whole story](#)

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**Opinion:                      Fix                      U.S.**

# infrastructure by starting with airports

By Erik Hansen, U.S. Travel Association

Does Washington know where to start on an infrastructure overhaul?

Fixing America's infrastructure is an oft-repeated goal of the Trump administration, and an element of his agenda with the potential to rally bipartisan cooperation. Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao has said an outline of the administration's infrastructure plan is coming "in the next several weeks." While we hope for a balanced approach that achieves many necessary fixes to our country's transportation framework, there's one place we believe the administration should start to achieve broader momentum: airports.

Over 900 million passengers passed through American airports in 2016, according to the Bureau of Transportation statistics. That number will soon swell to over one billion per year, which could be an economic boon nationwide, if our airports were able to accommodate that kind of increase.

**Read the whole story**

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## Letter: Diaper drive a success

To the community,

Choices for Children's Healthy Bottom Line Diaper Distribution

Program sponsored the third annual Mother's Day Diaper Drive throughout the month of May. We were pleased to receive donations of diapers in all sizes.

These diapers will go directly to our community's youngest and most vulnerable residents to help ensure that they can stay clean, dry, and healthy. Families receiving diapers through the Healthy Bottom Line program can get a small packet of diapers and wipes once per month.

Thank you to the following businesses and agencies for your support: El Dorado County Library, South Lake Tahoe branch; Boys & Girls Club of Lake Tahoe; Under the Magic Pine Tree; South Lake Tahoe Recreation Center/Pool Complex; Bright Beginnings Inc.; Tahoe Tot Spot; Lake Tahoe Preschool; South Lake Tahoe Senior Center; Pequeños Rascals Learning Center; South Tahoe Association of Realtors; LTCC Child Development Center; Jubilee Kids Academy; Appleseeds Academy; Lake Tahoe Child Development Center; Nicole Gordon, DDS; Tahoe Parents Nursery School; and Ross Dress for Less.

For more information on the Healthy Bottom Line program at Choices for Children, you can call 530.541.5848, ext. 104 or come to the Choices for Children office located at 1029 Takela Drive, Suite 1.

Thank you!

**Heather Della Ripa, Choices for Children**

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**Opinion: Can art save**

# California?

By Joe Mathews

Can the arts save California?

On every public policy challenge other than climate change regulations, the state seems stuck. We can't transform our education system to match our diverse population's needs, expand our universities fast enough to meet future economic demands, or build enough affordable housing. Silicon Valley, once billed as a savior, is more interested in grabbing our data and selling us ads than making society better. The vast majority of Californians don't bother to vote, much less engage in civic life.



Joe Mathews

The state's arts sector is wrestling with the same challenges: invasive technology, diversifying demography, fading engagement, stagnant education, scarce economic inequality. Over the last 18 months (after being assigned to edit a series on arts and society), I embarked on a crash course in how arts organizations seek to engage people. The experience left me uncharacteristically optimistic. While the arts can mirror the state's larger dysfunction, they also may be the part of California best positioned to lead us out of this dark time.

Today, the arts retain credibility that other human pursuits such as mass media, politics, and business have lost. In surveys, the biggest complaint that Californians voice about

the arts is that they don't have time to enjoy them.

So I'd like to propose that the arts could be the secret sauce of a revival in California's civic culture. While technology can leave us feeling isolated, the arts connect us, and provide a sense of meaning, accomplishment, and even happiness. Researchers have shown that people who participate in arts and culture are more likely to vote, belong to civic organizations, know their neighbors, and do charitable work. The arts, in short, encourage us to be sociable. And sociability is becoming a lost, and thus valuable, art.

What's the secret of the arts' success?

The answer starts with healthy self-criticism: Arts leaders express urgent concern that their organizations aren't meeting the many needs of today's communities. In response, many California organizations has been aggressively experimenting and taking risks. Take the Cornerstone Theater's six-year series of nine plays on food and equity, "The Hunger Cycle." Or witness the Oakland Museum of California's exhibit All Power to the People: Black Panthers at 50, which risked criticism of cultural appropriation and of celebrating a movement associated with violence. (The risk paid off, with the exhibition drawing large—and young—audiences.)

California is home to many powerful efforts to break down walls between the arts and people. The Riverside Art Museum sends staffers to block parties and neighborhood festivals, curating work it supports and conducting surveys on local arts needs. The Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History has prioritized the work of "social bridging" —intentionally bringing together people from different walks of life at exhibits and events. Museum Executive Director Nina Simon writes that this involves matching "unlikely partners—opera singers and ukulele players, welders and knitters, Guggenheim winners and backyard artists. Our goal in doing this work is to bring people together across differences and build a more

cohesive community.”

When is the last time you saw institutions outside the arts promote that kind of outreach?

These days, businesses, interest groups and politicians rarely try to make converts—they instead focus their resources on turning out their core customers and monetizing their contacts. But many of California’s top arts institutions make their events and exhibits free, especially for kids.

The arts could do even more for California.

So many organizations try to reach the young, but the arts actually do it; when it comes to making art, 18- to 24-year-olds are most likely to participate. And, amidst a stressful deluge of digital information, arts organizations are models of curation and filtering out distractions. (It helps that you have to silence your cellphone while attending a play.)

The arts also are a case study in the importance of giving people what they need, and the folly of giving them what they want. Scholars have shown how websites that give us what we want give us too much of the same thing, thus constraining creativity and artistry, and ultimately disappointing audiences. The arts stand as a direct rebuttal to Silicon Valley’s data obsession because great art’s value is undeniable but can’t be quantified by audience numbers or economic studies alone.

All this asks an awful lot of the arts, particularly when President Trump seeks to zero out the budget for the National Endowment for the Arts. But our arts organizations provide us with a rare template for pulling together broad networks of people and imagining very different realities in California. We need the arts more than ever.

*Joe Mathews, Connecting California columnist for Zócalo Public Square, wrote this for a Zocalo inquiry on arts engagement,*

*produced with support from the James Irvine Foundation.*

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# **Opinion: Climate change can't be stopped at the border**

**By David Horsey, Los Angeles Times**

At Squaw Valley last weekend, skiers were half naked. Guys were going shirtless. Girls were in bikini tops. Everybody was in shorts. Ski season in California has not ended and may not completely stop before the snow starts falling again in late autumn.

Skiing with skin bared is not unprecedented. Years ago at Heavenly Valley, I got the worst sunburn of my life when I shed my shirt for a day on the slopes. But that was a day in March, not a day at the end of June.

For the last several years, the snowpack in the Sierras was far below normal, severely stressing the water supply of a state locked in a five-year drought. But that drought ended abruptly this year as the precipitation poured down. The mountain snow got so deep that some ski areas experienced temporary shutdowns when chairlifts could not clear the top of the accumulated snow.

**Read the whole story**

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# Letter: Questioning NDOT's plans for Hwy. 50

To the community,

Warrior way, **pictured in your article** about proposed changes to Highway 50, is a typical T intersection. Every such intersection has crosswalks associated, even those without marked crosswalks. To corroborate this, see NRS 484A.065 "Crosswalk" defined and NRS 484A.240 "Sidewalk" defined.

The diagram proposed for the Warrior Way intersection shows parking on the right side, in complete conflict with NRS 484B.450 Stopping, standing or parking prohibited in specified places. Since there are inferred crosswalks for pedestrians, and since parking is not allowed within 20 feet of a crosswalk, the parking places shown are illegal. Furthermore, the parking places are truly dangerous. As diagrammed, pedestrians would legally emerge from between parked vehicles into the lawfully existing crosswalks creating a danger to both pedestrian and traffic, due to the lack of visibility between parked cars.

Some law enforcement officers do not understand this. I was told by an NHP officer "we can issue jaywalking tickets for people crossing here." Wrong. Yes, without a doubt they can issue jaywalking tickets, but they are not lawful nor justified.

I am not sure we can trust reconfiguration of our roadways to persons who can make such obvious errors.

Clearly, the person(s) preparing the diagram for Warrior Way also do not understand the law, nor do they understand the principles of traffic safety.

The solution to Highway 50 traffic accidents and deaths seems straightforward, simple, and inexpensive. Simply reduce the

speed limits by 10 mph, and enforce the current law of 25 mph when chains are required. If vigorously enforce, the Douglas County and Nevada coffers will be fattened and we will have a more peaceful community.

**Robert Dickerson, Zephyr Cove resident and longtime Corvette driver**