

Letter: Yacht club serves dinner at B&B

To the community,

It takes team work to crew a sailboat and the Lake Tahoe Windjammer Yacht Club members brought their team skills to help the Bread & Broth volunteers serve the June 5 Monday meal dinner at St. Theresa Grace Hall. Representing the LT Windjammers at their Adopt A Day of Nourishment dinner were Kurt and Laura Rasmussen, Michelle Langlois, Mary Parker and Steve Katzman.

“The sailing community of South Lake Tahoe believes in sharing with the less fortunate of our city,” commented Kurt Rasmussen, LT Windjammers Yacht Club commodore. “It is a social responsibility I wish everyone held.”

For the past five years, the LT Windjammers have been hosting a sponsorship dinner and sending a great sponsor crew to assist at the nourishing dinner that their \$250 AAD donation provides to the evening’s dinner guests. B&B appreciates the Windjammer’s dedication to helping others.

Thanks not only to the tremendous generosity of our AAD sponsors but of our many generous donors, B&B provides two hot meals weekly, Monday Meal at Grace Hall and Friday’s soup and simple entrée meals at LT Community Presbyterian Church, and provides weekend food to the local children in the community throughout the school year. In addition, B&B provides kid-friendly food to children up to the age of 18 every Wednesday during the school summer break thanks to the very generous donation of Vail Resorts CEO Rob Katz and his wife, Elana Amsterdam.

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth

Opinion: El Dorado County's senior legal ruse

By Larry Weitzman

In my last column, I wrote that Item 35 on the Board of Supervisors agenda set to be heard at 2pm on June 20 is set terminate senior legal. In reading the agenda item there will be no county funding of senior legal. It will remain intact from current unspent donations of \$160,000, \$53,000 from a federal Older Americans Act grant and anticipated \$46,000 in continuing donations which should support the current program as stated in the agenda item itself "in order to fund and maintain the existing senior legal service program for approximately seven to eight months."

The point of the agenda item is to terminate county support for the senior legal program, no ifs, ands or buts.



Larry Weitzman

Paragraph 6 says, "Authorize the Human Resources Department to proceed with filling positions identified in the budget effective July 1, 2017." Sounds like new hiring to me. Maybe the spin doctor is being overworked and EDC needs to put out more propaganda to make the board and high-ranking EDC officials look good as they continue to do a poor job and make

bad decisions.

Let me be blunt. The county's intent is to dismantle senior legal and provide no county funding. When private donations run out so does senior legal. It is a ruse to placate the masses and to eliminate a service that provided valuable advice, information and protection to 2,000 seniors last year alone. Senior legal will be dead and many of our county seniors will be closer to death. It will potentially increase senior dependency on other county services and other governmental agencies.

This item is not a reprieve of senior legal. It's a slow death by torture. And without county support and the likelihood that senior legal will fold up, so will future donations.

As to the direction to create a delivery model, that too is a crock. We already know the director of HHSA is not the most competent person. The public will have little say and there still be no county support. One idea that has been floated is the underwater thought that the new attorney that was hired on May 1, 2017, (you know, the attorney that was actually fired before she was hired after quitting her law firm position and making a career change) be contracted with to provide services to seniors. It will take years to develop as government studies and commissions move at the speed of lava at room temperature and there is no guarantee that it will emulate our current and very successful program.

Former 25-year director for Human Services of EDC, John Litwinovich, and the creator of the senior legal program said, "My thinking is that the revised CAO recommendation is hardly a compromise at all. Rather, it is an effort to quickly end the county's commitment to fully support and provide senior legal services before most seniors have even had a chance to learn what is happening... Symbolically and painfully, the recommendation would mark a clear and significant first step in dismantling the county's Senior Continuum of Care ... The

immediate termination of current and future General Fund support excludes today's senior legal program from even being an alternative to be considered.. A better recommendation would be for the board to maintain its current support level for the senior legal program and instruct the CAO to explore and report back on ways to save General Fund resources by reducing the very high overhead charged to Senior Programs since the Health and Human Services Agency was established."

I wrote my supervisor, Mike Ranalli, as to what he thought of terminating county funding for senior legal. No answer.

Friends of Seniors in El Dorado County president, Kathi Lishman, and who is the person responsible for much of the donations, told *Lake Tahoe News* on June 18, "El Dorado County has a successful program with a proven track record. It is run extremely well at a very minimal cost. It is a model for other counties to follow, instead of them being a model for us. We are blessed with the senior services we have and are so proud of. We need to be celebrating the good things El Dorado County has created for seniors, instead of watching them be dismantled."

You don't fix what isn't broken and in a vendetta against a certain individual within the county is going to cost thousands of seniors' anguish, pain and possibly sleepless nights. Old age is hard enough and it isn't for sissies, but our hardy and rapidly growing population of seniors still need plenty of help and the current senior legal program was to be the model for all other counties. No more.

Larry Weitzman is a resident of Rescue.

Letter: Important to say yes to SLT roads

To the community,

South Lake Tahoe City Council will be placing a road improvement measure on the upcoming Nov. 7 ballot. If passed, this one-half cent sales tax measure would provide approximately \$2.5 million annually that could only be used to fund the repairs that our aging roads in South Lake Tahoe desperately need.

Passage of the road improvement measure would mean fixing potholes and cracks, and also paving, maintaining, repairing and rebuilding local streets and roads. This measure will improve roadway safety for drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists by making essential road repairs and adding bike lanes and sidewalks, where possible. We need this measure in order to provide safe routes to schools for local school children. Repaired roads will ensure ambulances, fire trucks, police cars and other emergency vehicles can respond to emergencies quickly and safely. Additionally, improved roads will reduce the fine sediment that enters Lake Tahoe, and improves lake clarity and water quality.

Accountability protections will include a citizens' oversight committee and independent audits that will ensure funds are spent as required by the law. No funds could be taken by the City Council or the state or used for any other purpose by the City Council now or in the future.

The city is strictly prohibited from paying for the campaign to pass this important measure. Because a 66.7 percent yes vote is required to win, a flawless campaign is essential. A recent survey of voters shows that the measure can pass. Everyone wants our roads fixed once and for all.

An aggressive campaign with a robust budget for direct mail, lawn signs and a strong grassroots effort to reach voters in our community is needed. With your donation, we can succeed in passing this Measure to fix our roads and improve roadway safety for automobilists, pedestrians, children and limit the cost of car repairs due to potholes and cracks.

Residents for Better Roads is a grassroots organization of local volunteers and community leaders that have come together to spearhead this effort. The committee's goal is to raise \$50,000 to run this campaign.

Leon Malhed and Jerry Bindel, campaign co-chairs for Residents for Better Roads

Opinion: The coverup and the excuses in EDC

By Larry Weitzman

The current conspiracy to eliminate senior legal has become a tag team wrestling match. First in the ring was Don Ashton who said, "I needed to find another \$250,000 to cut to make the \$280 million General Fund budget work."

Ashton was cutting another one-tenth of 1 percent (a one-one thousandth) of the budget by doing that. That would be like buying a TV and saying I can't pay \$1,000 for it, but if you reduce the price to \$999, we can make a deal. This issue isn't about saving an extra dollar on that thousand-dollar TV, it's about politics and it's going to severely hurt our senior population. It is effectively a war on El Dorado County seniors.



Larry Weitzman

The new Goliath jumping in the ring against seniors is the director of Health and Human Services Agency, Patricia Charles-Heathers (PCH) who has filed a propaganda memo, sort of an imitation of the new county \$150,000 spin doctor, Carla Hass. Dated June 8 and addressed to the board members is an attempt to reinforce the CAO's proposed budget of terminating senior legal. By using the principle of Lord Kelvin who once said, "That when you can measure what you are speaking about, and express it in numbers, you know something about it; but when you cannot measure it, when you cannot express it in numbers, your knowledge is of a meagre and unsatisfactory kind." You can see the obvious smoke screen.

PCH's knowledge is meager on this subject she attempts to enlighten us on because she fails to use numbers and provide us with the data necessary to make a more educated judgement. One can only conclude that this was done to mislead or at best not to fully inform the appropriate parties (the board) who have the power to make such a decision.

Here's the deal. PCH says in support of her position that we have "only" the third highest percentage of seniors over 60 years old, but have the lowest percentage of seniors of individuals over 60 classified as "low Income." Don't you love the word percentage and low income. What does that tell you? Absolutely nothing.

What is the definition of low income and by whose definition? My understanding it is about \$12,000 for one person and \$16,000 for two which are defined as the federal poverty

level. But what we don't know is the average income, the median income or the spread of senior income across the income spectrum. Not many people can live of \$12,000 a year. But not many can live on \$18,000, \$20,000 or \$25,000 and we don't know that even more important information. It is critical information that is not before the board. Anyone who thinks you can afford a lawyer making \$20,000 a year is sadly mistaken (unless it is on a contingency) and it looks like PCH is one of those sadly mistaken people using her position to destroy seniors. For PCH, talk is cheap, but it is obvious she has never talked to a lawyer.

Other information left out is the growth rate of our senior population. According to the Commission on Aging, on a per county basis is one of the fastest growing in California (faster than the two counties, Nevada and Amador, that are one and two above as to the percentage of seniors) and will continue to do so with our county's limited growth of new housing. See Mark Twain adage: "Figures don't lie, but liars figure."

PCH also makes the claim that HHS cannot supervise lawyers with non-attorneys. What a crock. She cites what appears to be a bankruptcy ruling saying: "The court made it very clear that the attorneys in the case were taking direction from a non-lawyer, and indicated that a third person cannot control the attorney's professional judgement." PCH demonstrates why she is not a lawyer. The court didn't say you can't supervise non-lawyers; sure you can. You can set their hours and limit their cases. What the court said is you can't intercede with their legal judgment. As to attorney-client there is an absolute privilege of secrecy. PCH isn't the client, the senior is. What? PCH wants to know the contents of a will or trust? It's not her business to judge the professional work of senior legal and she has no ability to do so as she admits she is not a lawyer.

This supervision red herring has nothing to do with senior

legal any more than the supervision of county counsel, the DA and the PD by other staff or members of the board as claimed in her letter. By her thinking, no government agency can employ a lawyer because they can't be supervised. Corporations run by non-lawyer CEOs employ on a salaried basis staffs of in house lawyers supervised by non-lawyers. As to telling lawyers what to think legally, that would be like having a fool of a client. Lawyers are independent professionals. Of course, any lay person can supervise lawyers, keep your office clean, you have to be here 8am to 5pm, dress appropriately and so on. You can't tell them, what legal advice to give. HHSA can supervise senior legal in matters other than how they should advise a client. Otherwise hire lay people to advise senior legal clients. Even better, let's see what the State Bar would think of PCH telling lawyers what legal advice to give.

As to the "case" cited by PCH, I am sure it related to a non-lawyer who was probably disbarred who hired licensed attorneys and told them how to run their cases. It has nothing to do with the situation with senior legal. PCH citing such a case is known as a "red herring" a term used by lawyers as to issues that do not exist just as that bankruptcy ruling has nothing to do with senior legal.

Now to the real issue. The county pays out in salary and benefits to about 1,861 employees \$170 million and to the top 100 earning employees over \$20 million. A 1 percent cut in salary of the top 100 would pay for senior legal. Better yet, eliminate one low performing administrator. I am sure there is more than one.

There are no other layoffs being made in the entire county other than senior legal, not one. Even the propaganda specialist, Carla Hass gets to keep her \$150,000 job. The county may tell you that there are three people who are losing their jobs. Not true. Two of those three are retiring and the other person has been promised a similar job elsewhere in the county.

I am learning that this whole mess has a nexus with the PACE program which is conning and ripping off seniors into buying overpriced and unnecessary solar systems. PACE was a poorly instituted program by former CAO Larry Combs, who only cared about his paycheck and power. One senior I know of was sold a bill of goods and may lose her home because of PACE as she cannot afford the substantially higher property taxes while saving next to nothing from the solar. I believe this is retaliation against a senior legal attorney whose attorney relative filed a lawsuit to protect the aforementioned senior.

Stop the presses, news flash, last week the budget agenda was posted and modified on item 35 in an attempt to placate seniors. It says that senior legal will remain for seven to eight more months, funded by \$160,000 in remaining donations, a federal grant of about \$53,000 and anticipated future donations of \$46,000. This is a ruse. The fact is senior legal will still be removed from the budget and once the funds are gone it's over. To add it later to the budget will take a four-fifths vote, which is highly unlikely. I have a better idea, fund senior legal for \$250,000 and if a better program is created, then it can be removed from the General Fund budget.

Something else. Why weren't we told the county was holding \$160,000 in collected donations for senior legal? The pressure must be maintained. Without the budgeted \$250,000 program, senior legal will become a memory, but the suffering of seniors will become ever more apparent. This must be stopped. If they need to cut effectively \$1 out of a thousand, look at county administration and the huge salaries paid and the failure to get rid of deadwood because of bad management and leadership.

Larry Weitzman is a resident of Rescue.

Letter: Making a case for senior legal services

Publisher's note: *This letter was sent to the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors on June 15, 2017.*

Dear Board of Supervisors,

As the chair of Friends of Seniors, a local nonprofit under the El Dorado Community Foundation, I have become familiar with the excellent senior services we have in El Dorado County, and the incredibly dedicated staff who run the programs. There is a wide variety of services, housed together, aimed at protecting the health and well-being of seniors.

The coordination of these services has created a safety net for the elderly that has resulted in fast responses to meet the needs of seniors, both on a daily basis and in a crisis. Even seniors who have never needed the services should feel comfort, knowing they are available.

Yes, we may be the only county in California that has our own senior legal program, but that is something we should be proud of. The coordination of that service, with other senior services the county provides, serves the needs of our ever-growing senior population.

In comparing El Dorado County with other counties, we must realize they, in turn, have programs and services we don't have.

In 2016 El Dorado County ranked 29 out of 58 California counties in terms of population. With 28 percent of our population being seniors, we ranked 16 out of 58 counties in

terms of percent of seniors aged 60+. The California State Plan on Aging predicts that by 2030 El Dorado County will see an 83 percent increase in the number of seniors aged 60+. UC San Francisco's Institute for Health and Aging and the Alzheimer's Association released a report in 2009 predicting that El Dorado County will see a 142 percent increase in the number of patients with Alzheimer's Disease by 2030, the steepest rise in our region.

If the El Dorado County Senior Legal Program were to be removed out of the county's budget, our vulnerable seniors would never be served in the same manner, and many would never be served at all. By protecting the health of seniors, it protects the health of the community, and saves the county money in other areas. In addition senior legal staff holds workshops and seminars throughout the county to senior groups, county volunteers and the general public on topics pertinent to the health and well-being of seniors. I hope you will take the time to hear from the staff who run senior legal about the many significant facets of the program.

The senior legal program is very cost effective; \$50,000 comes from the Older Americans Act, and in the last 12 months, the program has received \$95,000 in donations. This leaves a balance of \$268,000 to come out of the county budget; \$268,000 out of a budget of \$280,000,000.

El Dorado County is a very special place to live. We have a reputation both for excellent schools for our children, and outstanding services for our seniors. It is important that we do what we can to maintain what we have.

Sincerely,

Kathi Lishman, chair Friends of Seniors

Opinion: Is Calif.'s festival bubble about to burst?

By Joe Mathews

The next bubble to burst in California just might be the festival bubble.

The festival economy is growing so fast that it runs the risk of overheating. Even after expanding from one weekend to two and increasing capacity to 125,000, the Coachella Arts and Music Festival still sold out in just three hours this year. Its cousin, Stagecoach, is the world's biggest country music festival, welcoming 75,000 people annually. And Coachella and Stagecoach have a new spin-off, Arroyo Seco Weekend, debuting this month at the Rose Bowl.

And that's just the big-ticket festivals. This summer, Californians could spend every waking moment attending smaller festivals—hundreds of regional events and thousands of community ones celebrating arts, food or some combination of the two—and still not get to all of them.



Joe Mathews

Festivals have long been essential to the California story, from the Monterey International Pop Festival during the Summer

of Love, to the 1996 Organic Festival in San Bernardino National Forest, which helped popularize the rave scene. But today, festivals proliferate for very practical reasons: the promotional needs of many California institutions and communities.

Festivals provide the ready-made audiences that our creative industries use to support artists. Cash-strapped local governments see festivals as relatively cheap economic development tools for creating traffic around sales-tax-producing retail corridors. Regional museums and cultural institutions use festivals to distinguish themselves and draw tourists.

Festivals also fit this cultural moment. Short attention spans require a constant mix of offerings. And given how hard it is to build anything in California, the impermanence of festivals is attractive, as Californians turn away from established institutions in favor of pop-up food and social events. Festivals are designed to be photographed, hash tagged, geotagged, and shared to produce the maximum amount of FOMO among one's friends and followers, who won't get their own chance to attend.

All of which makes festivals both red-hot—and vulnerable. Will the crowds still have the cash for \$5 bottles of water if the state's other bubbles, from housing to technology, burst? Will they tire of waiting on long lines? In an era of skyrocketing land values, will the open spaces hosting these festivals eventually find it more lucrative to house something permanent?

A shakeout may be under way, at least among bigger musical festivals. With so many successful festivals seeking to book the same performers, fees go up, and so do ticket prices. Major festivals in the United Kingdom (widely considered the global leader in musical gatherings) and in places from Oregon (Sasquatch) to Tennessee (Bonnaroo) have seen attendance

decline.

Corporate consolidation is another factor to watch. Many of the bigger music and arts festivals are owned by just a couple of companies, making them vulnerable to shifting economic winds. One of those companies is Goldenvoice, which is responsible for Coachella, Stagecoach and the Arroyo Seco Weekend. Goldenvoice's Paul Tollett has publicly expressed concern about threats to Coachella's future, from terrorism to botulism. "There are big ships that go down over small things. You're riding high, but one wrong thing and you're voted off the island. It's scary," Tollett told the *New Yorker*.

When the shakeout comes to California, which festivals will endure? The fastest-growing events are smaller, boutique gatherings that allow people to immerse themselves in a very particular world for a time. Among these are the High Sierra Music Festival, a family-friendly gathering (entertainment includes a morning kickball game) in tiny Quincy. The West Coast "transformational" festival scene—a movement producing hippie parties with lots of costuming—is strong in California; its crown jewel festival, Lightning in a Bottle, is in tiny Bradley in Monterey County.

The state's best festivals have a strong sense of place. It's hard to imagine signature San Francisco street events like the How Weird Street Faire ever shutting down.

"In a more globalized ethos," says Eamon Armstrong, California-based creative director of Everfest, which produces the Fest300 list of the world's best festivals, "there's a desire to create your own smaller communities and assert your own identity."

California's most enduring festivals have been careful to develop a deep web of ties to their local communities. Take the Monterey Jazz Festival, which has a robust education program. Or the Gilroy Garlic Festival, which supports more

than 140 local nonprofits, provides a venue for local performers, offers a college scholarship to the winner of the Miss Gilroy Garlic Festival Queen Pageant, and relies on over 4,000 community volunteers, including high school students who complete their community service requirements by working at the festival.

Sure, you could have seen Lady Gaga at Coachella this year. But she's also playing LA, San Francisco, and Sacramento in August alone. The only place you can find that much garlic is in Gilroy. And the taste stays with you.

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

Opinion: TRPA misses the mark with transportation

By Jeffrey Spencer

In TRPA's latest publication *Tahoe In Depth* there is an article about their latest plan for transportation. The article outlines transit improvements, trails and technology. What is interesting to me is their thinking is reactionary rather than visionary; 19th century thinking for 21st century problems.

We all have experienced the gridlock caused by tourists following alternative routes provided by Waze and Google Maps to try and divert around closures and delays. Our local streets have become impassible during peak travel on weekends and holidays. We residents cannot conduct our lives during these times. Simple tasks such as getting groceries or going

to church are nearly impossible. God forbid an emergency happens.

I have been working in planning, and especially the transportation sector for over 20 years. My focus has been in implementing technology to address mobility across California and in transit across the U.S. In order to address growing concern about local issues such as peak congestion and localized traffic, I have been suggesting technology improvements for traveler information and demand management to TRPA since 2013, without any success.

A meeting was held in February at the Meyers center, with the county supervisor addressing the issue supported by a host of officials from planning, the sheriff's office and CHP. I proposed a solution using current technology that can be easily deployed. I also spoke about the impacts and costs, and how we can recover those costs to improve our roads. Everyone seemed to agree this was a logical approach. Sue Novasel stated she would put me in touch with TDD about that proposal, but not a thing has happened yet.

According to TRPA's plan, they now seem to think that providing transit around the basin will get visitors out of their cars and lessen congestion. The national average of transit mode share is 2 percent, and less in rural communities. Rural transit tends to most serve those dependent on transit, such as workers without cars and elderly dependent for work, medical, shopping, etc. When was the last time you drove to visit somewhere and then rode the bus? I can just see the masses loading the bus with their mountain bikes, kayaks, SUPs, coolers and grills to enjoy the many recreational opportunities Tahoe offers. Right! According to studies performed here, the likely riders were casino patrons and elderly.

The bus service is dismal. Folks that are truly dependent on bus service cannot get to work on time nor home if they work

after 7pm. Folks in Meyers have no bus service at all. Kids that don't drive can't get into town unless a parent drives them. The response to that problem is "it isn't cost effective." One highlight proposed in their plan is free bus service. That plan is supposed to be cost effective? Like any other commodity, we have a simple economics problem between supply and demand.

Look at the recent "improvements" done at Camp Richardson. The pedestrian crossing is clearly marked and signalized, but the signal cycles about every 15 seconds so folks can get to their ice cream and coffee. Meanwhile, traffic is backed up nearly two miles to 15th Street and hundreds of cars wait endlessly to pass, meanwhile spewing their emissions while idling in the gridlock.

At issue here is the TRPA and county have their own solutions looking for a problem without a lick of common sense. There is so much focus on how to collect taxes through growing business and tourism, but nothing on how to truly mitigate the impacts of attracting all these tourists, addressing the conditions of our roads, or improving the quality of life for residents. Building a tourist-focused bus service that bangs and bounces along on the plethora of potholes is not going to be attractive to anyone. A purely tourist-focused economy only builds low-paying service jobs and ignores the needs of residents.

We collect gas taxes based on our population, but that population swells to more than four times on weekends and holidays. The tourists are not paying for their impacts to our system. We need a comprehensive plan that looks at all modes, including the future of shared-mobility and automation. We need a plan that monetizes the commodity of mobility in the basin and either reduces or offsets the impact to our roads. We need fair and equitable solutions and not expect to balance the road and transit budget solely on the backs of the local taxpayer.

Jeffrey Spencer is resident of Christmas Valley.

Letter: Sister church helps at Bread & Broth

To the community,

“It was a great experience to celebrate Memorial Day with the local community, sharing the traditional holiday fare of hamburgers, hot dogs, barbecue beans and much more!” exclaimed Ed Day while taking a break from serving dinners to Bread & Broth Monday meal guests. Day continued that he was also “taken back by the quality of the cuisine and attention to detail to serve a great meal.”

Day, his wife Debra and good friend Shelly Zimblar crewed the Friends of Our Lady of Tahoe Catholic Church’s Adopt A Day of Nourishment sponsorship team that volunteered for about three hours on May 29 at Grace Hall.

B&B’s Monday meal is served weekly and provides a full-course dinner along with food give-away bags filled with dairy products (milk, butter and eggs), fresh fruit and vegetables, miscellaneous canned foods and breads and pastries, in addition to second servings and left over to go containers.

The AAD sponsor \$250 donation provided by Friends of Our Lady of Tahoe covered the cost of food, utilities and dinner supplies needed to feed the 93 hungry folks attending the evening’s dinner. But the best part of the AAD program is the opportunity to participate in the experience of helping others and seeing the impact your time and funds has on the very grateful dinner guests. B&B would like to thank the Friends

of Our Lady of Tahoe for their kindness and generosity in improving the lives of others.

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth

Letter: Questioning keeping STHS soccer coach

Updated June 18:

To the community,

I am writing you in regards to the article that has surfaced regarding Mark Salmon, Soccer Coach at South Tahoe High School. I am not able to make it to the board meeting June 13, but I would like to be heard regarding this matter. I have worked next to Mark for several years while coaching throughout our kids growing up. I have a daughter at the high school who would love to continue playing soccer throughout her high school years, but did not register last year to play at the high school because Mark was the coach. I do not ever want my daughter to play for Mark again.

Mark coached my daughter for all-stars one season and it discouraged her from playing soccer the following season. We did not have a good experience with him. I have heard this from several parents and players throughout this community. Since Mark has coached many of the children in our community over the years, many of the girls who played under him, have quit playing soccer with him or just quit playing soccer all together because of their experience with him as a coach.

Three years ago, I had about 25 families who were willing to

write letters to try and have Mark removed as the high school soccer coach. Unfortunately, most of those families decided not to say anything because they wanted their daughters to have the opportunity to play at the high school even if Mark was the coach. Most of them were afraid of the retaliation it may have had on our children. It was the only option, so they kept quiet. Now that this process has started, several more parents have been willing to step up to have Mark Salmon removed.

As soon as I heard this was going on, I signed my daughter up for the next school year to play high school soccer with the hope that Mark Salmon will be gone. My daughter loves soccer. She has been playing since she was 4-years-old. She is now 15. I have another daughter who plays soccer as well. Our family is very involved in soccer. My daughter has had the same coach for the last 6 years. She plays fall and spring as well as for club.

At the time my daughter started to play club soccer, Mark was the main person in charge of the STFC Team. My daughter's coach, was another coach under STFC and Mark's politics got the best of our team and made our coach leave STFC. Mark encouraged the girls to try out for his team, but the girls did not want to. Most of the girls followed the other coach to Nevada and have been playing for him since. Mark and the other coach have very different styles of coaching. Our coach is respectful to his girls and in return they respect him.

I would be willing to do just about anything to have Mark Salmon removed from the high school and having anything to do with soccer at all in this community. Just because he has training as a coach and he wins games, does not mean that he is a good coach or a good person. He should not be the kind of person who our girls look up to as a role model.

Please people, speak up, for our kids as well as our community. Send your comments to. jtarwater@ltusd.org, schan-

dler@ltusd.org, bbannar@sbcglobal.net, aswanson@ltusd.org, tmatthews@ltusd.org, lreilly@ltusd.org, bturnball@ltusd.org, paulpalant@yahoo.com.

Jeanna Rangel, South Lake Tahoe

Opinion: A state park's miracle and disappointment

By Joe Mathews

Riddle: When is a miracle also a disappointment?

Answer: When the miracle is a California state project.

Case in point: the miraculous recent opening of the Los Angeles State Historic Park.



Joe Mathews

Miracle one: It's a large (32 acres) park—with broad grassy fields large enough to fly kites or hold big concerts, and a signature bridge with selfie-ready views of the downtown skyline—in the densely crowded center of park-poor Los Angeles.

Miracle two: It was built on a historic railyard and

industrial site that required costly soil decontamination and was originally planned for business redevelopment, before the state saved it for parkland.

Miracle three: The state's woefully underfunded parks department built this park with public funds, in an era when major parks require donations.

Miracle four: The park didn't die during a 16-year odyssey that coincided with a crippling recession, budget crises, and an accounting scandal inside the parks department.

So why do all these miracles add up to disappointment? Because in a state where it's so hard to do anything impactful, this park's story reminds how hard it is to do something world-class.

The park represented, in the words of one state press release, a "once-in-a-century" opportunity for California to reshape a transit-connected parcel extending from Metro rail's Chinatown station to the L.A. River. But just getting the park opened in the face of obstacles required many compromises, not the least of which was a reduced \$18 million price tag for a park that was originally planned as a \$55 million facility. And so the Los Angeles State Historic Park still lacks the basics of a great park.

Like shade.

There are no shade structures, and small, newly planted trees provide little relief from the blistering sun. Many of the features of the original plan for the park, advanced a decade ago, haven't materialized—no elaborate gardens, no fountains, no children's playground. And the park, which is supposed to be a community asset, is open for limited hours—8am to sunset—and is cut off by fencing and trains from its two bordering thoroughfares, Broadway and Spring Street.

My first visit, with my three young (and quickly bored) sons,

left me angry. Here again was the California disease: Our big ambitions aren't matched by dollars or management follow-through. If this park—with so many champions, from state politicians to local activists—can't be better, what hope is there for other California plans to create new, dynamic public spaces?

This is not merely about a state government with a dysfunctional budget system, and byzantine regulation and planning processes. Rich folks in New York ponied up millions in donations to make the High Line (a \$152 million project) brilliant. Chicago and its philanthropists devoted \$475 million to Millennium Park, which is of a similar size to the L.A. State Historic Park. Why haven't our rich people and corporate interests stepped up and done something grand here?

The answer to that is a very long story about a lack of cohesion, generosity and imagination. (I still carry a torch for architect Thom Mayne's 2006 idea for the park property: Move Dodger Stadium to the park space, and instead create an even grander park where the stadium now sits, paid for by selling some development rights.) Instead, the State Parks Department—with its constant budget troubles, and having barely survived efforts to close dozens of state parks in recent years—had to perform a cut-rate miracle. Couldn't billionaire Eli Broad have sold off a few pieces of his art collection to add more to this park?

Despite such frustrations, let's stay positive. What's not done is not done. And the good news is there's still time and opportunity to make this park truly great.

Already, developers are starting to transform the industrial space around the park into resident-friendly locations. There's a brand new nonprofit friends group that should support the park. An in-park restaurant and a new water wheel project from artist Lauren Bon and the Annenberg Foundation are on their way. There's plenty of space to add a children's

playground, shade structures, and a bridge over the Metro Gold Line tracks to connect the park with people who live along the Broadway corridor. Perhaps hours could be extended to something that matches the life of the neighborhood—6am to 10pm.

“Now that the park is open, you have the canvas from which to create the future,” says the tireless Sean Woods, superintendent for the Los Angeles sector of California State Parks, who has been working on the park since its 2001 beginnings.

All that will require is more money—and the miracle of Californians taking full advantage of an opportunity to do something great. Until that happens, enjoy the park—and bring lots of sunscreen.

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