

Letter: Ski patrol makes difference at B&B

To the community,

Although it's been a busy season safeguarding Heavenly Mountain Resort skiers, on Jan. 16 the Heavenly ski patrol also wanted to help the community off the mountain.

By sponsoring a Bread & Broth Adopt A Day of Nourishment, the ski patrol funded a B&B's Monday meal, which not only provided a hot, tasty meal, but also a chance to enjoy a warm and safe place to spend time with others.

Representing the ski patrol and volunteering their personal time were Evan Bozarth, Patrick Chu, Gray Grandy, Dave Helllod and Nick Kushner. As always, the ski patrol sends a fun group of volunteers and they did a great job helping to dish out over 100 servings of filling and much enjoyed chili dogs.

On his break from serving, Chu shared his thoughts about the evening's experience. "We were warmly welcomed by the B&B staff into a rewarding and unforgettable experience. The setup and serving was well organized and the food was delicious. Heavenly ski patrol is proud to take part in and support B&B in their efforts to serve the local community."

B&B is very fortunate to have the on-going support of the Heavenly Ski Patrol and its dedicated and hardworking members who routinely do good works and kind deeds for others.

For more B&B program information, go **online**.

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth

Opinion: The slaves of ‘La La Land’—and South L.A.

By Joe Mathews

The new film musical “La La Land” is being celebrated as a love letter to L.A. But the darker heart of the movie lies in a brief and devastating critique of Southern California, delivered by the jazz pianist played by Ryan Gosling.

“That’s L.A.,” he tells his lover, an aspiring actress played by Emma Stone. “They worship everything and they value nothing.”



Joe Mathews

There has been no better recent summary of the California struggle—with the very notable exception of the 2015 novel, “The Sellout”, whose author Paul Beatty recently became the first American to win the prestigious Man Booker Prize for Fiction.

“La La Land” and “The Sellout” seem very different. The film, an Oscar favorite, can be seen as a glossy escapist romance about white artists who live around Griffith Park. The novel is a taboo-trashing racial satire about an African-American urban farmer of watermelons and artisanal weed who

reintroduces segregation to his South L.A. neighborhood, in hopes of putting it back on the map.

But the film and the novel are two of the most thought-provoking and entertaining documents of today's California. And both are about the same big problem: that for all our celebration of game changers in this state, we offer precious little space or support to those who dare upset our status quo.

The film and the movie also make the same provocative argument about how to break through the Golden State's stacked deck: Don't be afraid to do things that are totally nuts. Both works specifically champion a self-sacrificing craziness, a willingness to surrender yourself and the people you love to focus on making your mark.

"La La Land" makes a straightforward case for crazy. Gosling's musician is the film's romantic hero, because of his uncompromising commitment to restoring traditional jazz even though he can't pay his bills since the world is abandoning the form. Stone's frustrated actress only inches closer to the red carpet when she devotes herself to producing a one-woman play in a theater she can't afford to rent. In the audition scene in which she finally breaks through, she embraces the virtues of craziness in song: "A bit of madness is key to give us new colors to see. Who knows where it will lead us?"

Beatty's novel similarly suggests that, to smash through the California looking-glass world, the sanest course is to go over the edge. After the city of L.A. removes his minority neighborhood from the map, the farmer fights this fire of systemic discrimination by violating legal and cultural norms. Most outlandishly, he takes a slave, who helps him segregate the local school, hospital, bus line, and businesses with signs reading "Colored Only" and "No Whites Allowed."

Two provocative parts of the plot stand out—how long it takes

for anyone to notice the farmer's segregation edicts, and how, through the farmer's unconstitutional acts, seeds of tolerance (and lower crime, higher test scores, more polite behavior) take root.

"The racism takes them back," the farmer explains. "Makes them humble. Makes them realize how far we've come and, more important, how far we have to go."

Both the film and the book, for all their high ambition, fall back on some wondrous magical realism as an escape hatch from the difficult political juggling acts they perform. The "La La" lovers literally float into the stars through the ceiling of the Griffith Park Observatory, while "The Sellout" Metro bus becomes a rolling party that ends with the vehicle being driven into the Malibu surf.

Both works wrestle with the conflict between loyalty to one's dreams and selling out—and in the process point out just how hard it has become to tell the difference between the two. And both get at a painful paradox. We know we must hold onto real people and real things, to be truly human. But in L.A., we learn we must loosen our grip on reality to get ahead.

In this way, both masterpieces ultimately raise the question of whether making your mark here is worth the cost. No character in the book or the movie is happier than the farmer's slave in Beatty's satirized world, an aging actor from the 1950's TV show "Little Rascals" who refuses all efforts to free him. Trying to be a star in L.A. is so confounding that he comes to prefer the simplicity of quiet servitude.

"I'm a slave. That's who I am," he insists to the farmer. "It's the role I was born to play."

After all, if you're going to live in a place that values nothing, why fight so hard to be something?

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

Opinion: Those who use Calif. roads should pay to fix them

By Dan Walters, Sacramento Bee



Dan Walters

When California was building what became a world-class network of freeways, highways and local roads after World War II, it relied on a simple financial tool called “user pays.”

Personal and commercial users of roadways paid for their construction and maintenance through fuel taxes, motor vehicle fees, bridge tolls and weight fees on trucks.

The system enjoyed wide public support because of its self-evident fairness, although there were occasional squabbles over how the money was being spent.

Read the whole story

Letter: TTUSD trying to cope with snow days

To the community,

In light of the unprecedented number of snow days we have experienced this early into the winter season and our desire to make up instructional time for our students, the district is proposing making changes to the current 2016-17 school calendar.



Rob Leri

In addition to eliminating three minimum days (Feb. 1, March 8, May 10) to gain additional, uninterrupted instructional time for our students, district administrators and teachers are considering an independent study option during part of Ski Skate Week. With this proposed option, your child could complete assigned coursework remotely or attend makeup classes on Feb. 22, Feb. 23, and Feb. 24 at school sites and complete assigned course work on-site with teacher support.

Please note:

- Transportation would be provided for the proposed makeup classes during Ski Skate Week.
- Food service would be available for the onsite makeup classes.
- The proposed makeup classes during Ski Skate Week would provide two more snow days to be used with a school end

date of June 21. If we have fewer snow days, school would end earlier.

District leadership considered extending the school days with more instructional time, however the state of California doesn't allow this.

Our board of education approved the submittal of a waiver of five school days to the California Department of Education. Therefore, based on the number of snow days to date, June 26 would be the last day of school if we don't have any more snow days this year. By adding the independent study option, it provides for three potential snow days. With this option, as of today, school would end on June 21 if we don't have any additional snow days.

We'd like to hear your input on these changes and what would work best for your family before the proposal goes before our board of education. We have a special board meeting scheduled on Jan. 25 at 4:30pm at the district office where the board will consider this proposal.

Please **click here** to share your feedback.

Rob Leri, superintendent Tahoe Truckee Unified School District

Letter: Chamber grateful for successful charity mixer

To the community,

Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce would like to thank the community for supporting the local charity, Bread & Broth, at the annual Connect for a Cause Charity Mixer at Riva Grill

on Jan. 12.

Over 100 people attended the event and together raised \$1,299 for Bread & Broth. Tahoe Chamber couldn't have been more pleased with the turnout and the amount of donations received for the B&B 4 Kids program.

We'd like to thank Riva Grill for hosting the event and providing the generous spread. Tahoe Chamber would also like to thank Lauren Lindley Photography for providing a mobile photo booth that allowed guests to try on costumes and take fun photos to remember the night.

A special thank you to all of the businesses that provided great raffle prizes, including Artemis Lakefront Café, Attic Thrift Store, CalStar, Epic Tahoe Adventures, Fresh Ketch, Heart Rock Herb & Spice, Heavenly | Kirkwood, Heavenly Sports, Lakeside Inn and Casino, Lake Tahoe Cruises | Zephyr Cove Resort, Lake Tahoe Resort Hotel, McP's Taphouse, Mott Canyon Bar & Grill, Oakley, Overland Meat & Seafood Co., Powder House Ski & Snowboard, Reclaimed Tahoe, Samurai Restaurant, and Summit to Shore Chiropractic.

This event wouldn't have been possible without the support of Tahoe Chamber members and the community.

Brittani Curtis, Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce

Letter: Build an appropriate music venue

To the community,

First off I want to thank Paul Reder for his investment in

this community with The Loft and other ventures. Having been here 40 continuous years I know it's not easy in this town. I also want to say that I am all for events in the area. I was in the event industry for 15 years. Heads in beds is the game in this town.

I would also like to say "no" to more musical events at the play fields. The only reason SnowGlobe is there is because the college, Bijou Park and the middle school are shut down. If you hold events there at other times of the year, where is the staging and parking going to take place? How are musical events going to work around the other activities that happen within the Al Tahoe corridor? How are musical events going to affect the animals in the new wildlife center?

The community fields are being built and paid for by the community for the community. The fields aren't being built for total domination by Reder events. Also, during the summer months I would bet that there will be an abundance of illegal camping because of the proximity to the meadows. Illegal camping most times equals illegal campfires and, well, you can see where this is going.

If the city wants to have music events, then the city should build an event center for such events. Maybe the city could focus on an event center that creates revenue instead of constantly bringing up building a city hall. Or maybe Mr. Reder could build a proper event center for his events and possibly others.

Again I will say that I am all for events in the area. They just need to have a proper venue.

John Spinola, South Lake Tahoe

Opinion: Good things happening in Tahoe

By Jim Lawrence

Twenty-five years ago, I finished my graduate work in Oregon and moved to Northern Nevada for a planning position at the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency. Having spent a large part of my youth hiking and camping at Tahoe and in the Sierra, the move felt like coming home.

Today, I am still in awe by Lake Tahoe's beauty, and along the way I have become even more inspired by the many voices that all share a passion for protecting and enhancing the Jewel of the Sierra. Working collaboratively and from a place of mutual respect, we have and can continue to make positive changes for Tahoe's environment, economy, and communities.



Jim Lawrence

Last year the Tahoe region achieved many milestones. Having just accepted the position as chair of TRPA's Governing Board, in my view, the challenge for 2017 is to keep building on that momentum with critically important initiatives to conserve and restore Lake Tahoe's environment while also revitalizing our communities.

Heavy snow is falling this January, signaling some relief for Lake Tahoe's forests after five years of drought. But this summer will also mark the 10th anniversary of the Angora wildfire. The fire was started by an illegal campfire and quickly burned 3,000 acres and more than 250 homes. We must not lose sight of wildfire risk and continue to work together to reduce hazardous fuels in our forests and create defensible space and fire-adapted communities. This is not just a critically important public safety issue, but is essential for the health of our forests. A healthy forest means ecologically functional watersheds, better wildlife habitat, and improved streams and fisheries.

Fire districts and land management agencies have made significant progress working together as the Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team, prioritizing and coordinating fuel reduction projects to reduce wildfire risk in the most dangerous areas where forests and communities meet. More than 65,000 acres of wildland urban interface have been treated over the last two decades, and the rest is on track to be treated over the next 10 years. Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team partners last year secured more than \$25 million in federal funding for continued fuels reduction work in the wildland urban interface. We need to keep that work going and extend it out into the general forest landscape.

In December, Congress passed the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act after nearly a decade of work on the legislation. It authorizes up to \$415 million in future federal funding for projects that will help restore Lake Tahoe's famous water clarity, remove hazardous fuels from forests, and combat aquatic invasive species. Much work remains to secure that funding, but this legislation is critically important for continued progress on these major focus areas of the Lake Tahoe environmental improvement program.

TRPA continues to make headway on its top initiatives. The agency is working with local governments and other partners on

a “welcome mat” initiative to coordinate and streamline permitting processes. It is also working on an initiative to improve Lake Tahoe’s unique development rights system. The goal is to help people invest in projects that benefit our environment and the health of our communities and economy.

With the four-year 2017 Regional Transportation Plan scheduled to be released soon, one of our largest goals for the coming year is addressing Lake Tahoe’s significant transportation challenges, and finding ways to implement needed infrastructure and transit improvements.

With 150 miles of bike and pedestrian routes built over the last 20 years, and major projects like the Fanny Bridge project in Tahoe City on track to start construction soon, our region can make significant headway on transportation issues. Construction also started on the Incline Village to Sand Harbor State Park bike path last summer. The project is building a showcase bike path to one of the lake’s busiest summer recreation areas. But it will also feature new off-highway parking areas, enhanced transit services in the state Route 28 corridor, and water quality improvements to help protect the lake’s water clarity. This shows how we can bundle projects to reduce traffic and parking congestion, provide new recreation amenities, enhance bicyclist and pedestrian mobility and safety, and improve our environment.

We must continue to connect and improve routes for bicyclists and pedestrians and improve our electric-vehicle charging infrastructure so people can more easily drive zero-emission vehicles to and from Lake Tahoe. We must also strengthen our transit services so people can travel around the Tahoe basin and to popular recreation sites without having to drive at all.

We face many challenges in the years to come. Fortunately, the spirit of partnership and collaboration is alive and well at Tahoe. And with that spirit of partnership continuing, there

is no doubt we can all work together to see even greater achievements that are yet to come.

Jim Lawrence, deputy director of the Nevada Department of Conservation and Resources, is chair of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Governing Board.

Letter: Liberty was super accommodating

To the community,

My two contacts with Liberty Utilities were via the phone number published by local media for “electric outage reports”. Each call was answered quickly by a friendly and efficient live person. In addition, I received a follow up welfare call from what I think was a field technician within one hour of area “brownout” restoration.

My battery powered scanner was on overload with emergency communications between responding agencies. Listening almost an entire day, I heard positive, “out loud” team thinking to solve difficult, unanticipated issues.

No complaints here if my taxes fund such real time, real life cooperation. Job well done.

A note to planners: I have “plain old telephone” (POTS) service for just these kinds of emergencies. With no electricity, one has no Internet access for utility information sites or social media and probably no telephone.

Please keep it simple going forward.

Thank you again responders.

Dawn Armstrong, South Lake Tahoe

Opinion: Inaugurations more than hail to the new chief

By Richard M. Skinner

For all their happy pageantry – marching brass bands on parade, solemn invocations, evening gowns at the balls—our inaugurations expose some of the biggest tensions that define the American presidency.

At the founding of our republic, monarchs led nearly every other nation. Even as democratic systems spread, most countries adopted parliamentary systems where legislatures chose prime ministers to head their governments, often alongside a ceremonial head of state to hover above the partisan fray. But the U.S. presidency falls somewhere between: A head of government that assumes office on behalf of a political party, yet is expected to be a unifying head of state for all Americans.

As our first elected president, George Washington was conscious that he was setting precedent for this new position as head of a republic. He had resigned his command of the Continental Army a few years earlier, despite calls for him to keep his wartime powers and rule the nation as a dictator or king. Yet he and his supporters also saw how his vast prestige could help support a fragile new government. So instead of simply taking his oath of office, the only constitutionally-mandated element of an inauguration, they turned Washington's

ascension to the presidency into a show—one that publicly reconciled the compound, if not contradictory, roles bestowed on America's top post.

The result blended the trappings of European monarchs with heavy nods to the presidency's democratic foundations. In many ways, the inauguration looked like a coronation, with throngs of adoring lookers-on, invocations of the divine, and a gun salute. But the new president wore a plain brown suit to the affair, held at Federal Hall in the then-capital, New York. He used his inaugural address to show humility at the task "to which the voice of my country called me," and drew attention to his solemn pledge to "preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States."

Washington set another powerful precedent eight years later: After two elected terms, he retired. His refusal to cling to control provided reassurance to those who feared the power of a single executive. It also set the stage for peaceful, regular transitions.

After Washington, most of America's presidents decided to keep up the pageantry of the inaugural inauguration too. In 1797, Oliver Ellsworth became the first chief justice to administer the oath of office when he swore in John Adams. Thomas Jefferson's first inaugural was also the first to take place in the new Capitol of Washington, and his second featured the first parade. James Madison had the first inaugural ball in 1809. And in 1981, Ronald Reagan shifted the ceremony from the Capitol's East Portico to its West Front, allowing more of the public to witness the event from the National Mall.

Inaugurations seek to show stability during contentious transitions. But divisiveness can still undermine democracy's big day. Between Abraham Lincoln's election and inauguration in 1861, seven southern states declared their secession from the Union and began forming the Confederate States of America. Rumors spread of plots to prevent Lincoln from reaching the

Capitol to ascend the presidency, so the president-elect disguised himself and took a night train through pro-slavery Baltimore to reach Washington on time. Artillery companies guarded Capitol Hill and sharpshooters lined his Pennsylvania Avenue route on Inauguration Day.

Despite the drama, Lincoln used his first address to strike a conciliatory tone, telling Southerners, "We are not enemies, but friends." It was all for naught. Within six weeks, the Civil War had begun. But America did have a properly sworn-in president at the helm.

Even in the absence of a secessionist movement, partisanship can undercut aspirations for inaugurations to celebrate national unity. In 1829, Andrew Jackson's new presidency marked a stark, populist departure from those of incumbent John Quincy Adams. Following a bitter election fight, his inauguration became more victory party than reconciliation. The outgoing president Adams didn't show. But, fitting the new everyman order, a rowdy crowd of over 10,000 supporters did.

Just as many inaugurations are remembered for presidents-elect who tried to smooth bumpy handoffs. In 1801, Jefferson, the first president to come from a different party from that of his predecessor, declared, "We are all Republicans, we are all Federalists."

In 1933, the outgoing Herbert Hoover and incoming Franklin D. Roosevelt, who openly loathed each other during a rocky transition, shared a lift to the new president's inauguration. Hoover mostly scowled as FDR tipped top hat to the crowds. But Hoover honored the tradition that, with rare exception (assassination, resignation, natural death, and a few 19th century cases of animosity), the outgoing president has always made some sort of symbolic show on Inauguration Day. It's perhaps the ceremony's most powerful symbol of the peaceful passage of power.

Richard M. Skinner teaches political science at Johns Hopkins and George Washington Universities.

Letter: SLT assists warming room

To the community,

Tahoe Coalition for the Homeless would like to thank the city of South Lake Tahoe for their preparedness in the face of severe weather last week. As one volunteer commented, "Everyone at the city of South Lake Tahoe was very nice, helpful, and willing."

The South Lake Tahoe Warm Room is an emergency overnight winter shelter providing a reprieve from the elements to individuals experiencing homelessness in the South Shore. During our recent rain event followed by a blizzard, we were challenged to find volunteers, to provide access to our guests, and to remain open despite the severity of the weather. The city of South Lake Tahoe and their disaster planning made a big difference for us and set our minds at ease. If power outage or flooding threatened our operations, city staffers helped us create emergency contingencies that reinforced our confidence in our ability to manage the inclement conditions.

We especially would like to thank Tracy Franklin and Nancy Kerry for their prompt communication and assistance in planning for transportation needs. Police Chief Brian Uhler was available and responsive to our concerns about an emergency. Fire Capt. Jon Anderson and his crew from Station 3 inspected our building for storm preparedness and also made

themselves available in case of flooding or other crisis.

TCH will be hosting an open house at the Warm Room on Feb. 22 to honor Councilwoman Wendy David and her contributions to our project and the community. The event is from 4:30-6:30pm at 2179 Lake Tahoe Blvd. and our theme is Share the Love and Bring a Blanket.

Sincerely,

Marissa Muscat, executive director