

Opinion: A final farewell as LTN goes dark

By Kathryn Reed

This is it. It's time to say goodbye.

These past nine years have been an incredible journey; one I would never trade. So many friends have been made. So many interesting people interviewed. So many exciting events to cover. So many stories – and not all of them saw the light of day.

I want to say thank you one last time to everyone who has been part of the *Lake Tahoe News* team – which includes all of you readers. After all, if no one is reading, what is the point of writing?

For the immediate future I will be paying to keep *LTN* up so it can be used as an archive. There will be a small fee to access the content. This is just a way to help offset the expense of hosting the site and for basic maintenance costs.

I believe all credible news sources become an area's history. To “pull the plug” on *Lake Tahoe News* felt wrong on so many levels, so that's why it will remain as an archive. There just won't be any new content after today; unless it sells or something.

What I worry about most going forward is the lack of news Lake Tahoe will be receiving. It's not that *LTN* is not replaceable. But the fact that no one in the basin is doing the kind of news *LTN* does – hard hitting, investigative, daily, in depth series – well, it will take some time to fill the void that *LTN* will leave.

This means it is going to be up to you, the residents and

others who care about the Lake Tahoe Basin and Truckee to become more involved. Start by signing up for the information that the various public agencies send out. This includes meeting alerts and recaps of meetings. Just know that the recap is their biased slant on what happened. There is no reason to say you didn't know about a meeting. It is easy to get advance notice about them. Read the agenda, become engaged.

Some meetings are online, others are covered via the public access station on cable TV. Seeing them in person is better; you get to witness how the electeds and others play with each other. A psychologist could have a field day watching these people interact.

The electeds who sit on other boards almost never give a recap of what happened so even their colleagues don't know what is going on. I can't remember the last time Councilman Austin Sass or Commissioner Nancy McDermid or Supervisor Sue Novasel reported back to the South Lake Tahoe City Council, Douglas County commissioners and El Dorado County supervisors about what happened on the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Governing Board or Tahoe Transportation District? Yes, it would lengthen meetings if these recaps were provided, but don't the other electeds and the public deserve to know? It's been a pet-peeve of mine for years that these elected officials represent the city or county on another board but seem to do so in a vacuum, as an individual and not as a representative of the city or county. It's one of the procedures I wish I could have gotten changed because I believe it would have brought more accountability to more agencies.

Read the legals in the non-daily *Tribune*, *Record Courier*, *Sierra Sun*, and *Mountain Democrat*. Yes, really. That's all the small print in the back of those publications. (All are available online.) Public entities are required to post almost all of their meetings in the newspaper of record. Those four cover South Lake Tahoe, El Dorado, Douglas, and Placer

counties. There is a trove of information in the legals.

Read those publications as well as the *Tahoe Mountain News*, *Moonshine Ink*, *Reno Gazette-Journal* and *Sacramento Bee* for local and regional news. The *Las Vegas Review-Journal* and *Las Vegas Sun* do a better job of covering Nevada politics, gaming and other news. In California, take a look at the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *San Jose Mercury News*, *Los Angeles Times* and *Orange County Register*. They all have real journalists who understand how to ask tough questions, have ethics and are not bought by advertisers. They are in print and online.

The number of pages a print publication has is based on a formula that starts with how many ads there are on a given day. The news hole is then derived by a ratio of ads to editorial content. So, the more advertising, the more potential for local news. The more advertising, the more reporters who can be hired.

If you want your news sources to stay, advertise. If you don't have a business, frequent the advertisers in the publications and tell them you saw their ad in X publication.

When you see the donate button – donate. When the number of free stories expires, actually pay to read the publication. In fact, just pay for it from the beginning.

If you don't somehow contribute financially to a news organization, it is not going to stay in business. It's your choice.

If you want something done, do it. Government is the people. Remember that.

There is also so much that can be done outside the constraints of government. Get involved. Look at all the good the Meyers Community Foundation has done, the arts groups are doing, the business districts on the North Shore keep doing.

Remember, requesting public records is something the public has a right to do. It's not just the media. And if you don't get them, make a stink.

Write letters to the editor so more voices get heard. Suggest stories to the publications. Hold the publications accountable as well as the decision-makers.

There are so many aspects of this job I will miss. But it really is time for something new.

Thank you again for everything.

Hasta luego,

Kae

3 double winners at Tahoe Tennis Classic



Claire Perry of Incline Village serves as partner Sally Huttenmayer of Zephyr Cove stands ready to volley. The duo won the women's 8.0 division. Photo/Provided

A record 245 players competed in the Tahoe Tennis Classic, which saw some incredible competition across the four days at Zephyr Cove Tennis Club.

While players came from 11 states, all the winners were from either California or Nevada. Now in its 35th year, this all doubles tournament brings out some of the best players in the region.

The finals were played on July 29 under smoky skies with little breeze.

Kurt Chan of Gold River and Kendall Homer of Sacramento won twice together. They beat David Harden of Gold River and Michael Kiskinen of El Dorado Hills 6-4, 6-7, 6-1 in the men's 9.0 division. Then they prevailed over Dan Bohannon of Orange and Mark Peterson of Truckee of 7-5, 6-1 in the men's 120

division – where the combined age of the partners had to be at least 120.

Ryan Johnston of South Lake Tahoe was also a double winner. In the men's 10.0 it was revenge with partner Mohamed Irfan Lakdawala of San Francisco. Last year they finished second in that division. This year they beat Chris Evers of El Dorado Hills and Dave Hagiwara of Folsom 6-3, 6-3. In mixed 10.0 he paired with Kim Iliffe of Austin to easily handle Julie Chan of Gold River and Geoff Garrett of Rocklin 6-2, 6-2. Iliffe with a different partner won the mixed 10s last year.

Other results:

- Women's 10.0: Jeanette Berry of Reno and Holly Tretten of Reno beat Iliffe and Holly Rittiman of Zephyr Cove 6-3-6-4.
- Women's 9.0: Dianna Gillaspie of El Dorado Hills and Juli Hilton of Roseville beat Sophie Heerinckx of San Jose and Rittiman 4-6, 6-3, 6-3.
- Women's 8.0: Sally Huttenmayer of Zephyr Cove and Claire Perry of Incline Village beat Donna Kaneko of San Jose and Melissa Neal of Campbell 6-3, 6-0.
- Women's 7.0: Liz Bissell of El Dorado Hills and Lorraine Segala of Palm Springs beat Barbara Cooper of South Lake Tahoe and Carolyn Wright of Zephyr Cove 7-6, 3-6, 6-2.
- Women's 6.0: Sylvia Haro of Zephyr Cove and Jennifer Kerver of Reno beat Nancy Cumming of San Pedro and Jean Van Well of Incline Village 6-2, 6-3.
- Men's 8.0: Ken Cutler of Truckee and Ray Fugitt of Carson City beat Duane Catania of Incline Village and Vincent Catania of Elk Grove 3-6, 6-2, 6-4.
- Men's 7.0: Thor Spargo of Fair Oaks and Murray Yoffee of Gardnerville beat Ronald Cauley of Minden and Ken Sigel of Seattle 6-1-6-0.

- Men's 6.0: David Beronio of Stateline and Richard Brown of Vallejo beat Anders Chaplin of Stateline and Hal Cole of South Lake Tahoe 7-5, 7-5.
- Men's 140: Hersh Herschman of Zephyr Cove and Tad Yukawa of Palm Desert beat Dominic Mushines of Genoa and Ross Rittiman of Zephyr Cove 7-5, 6-4.
- Mixed 9.0: Sara Pierce of South Lake Tahoe and Adam Turner of South Lake Tahoe beat Penne Burgess and Scott Gillespie 6-3, 6-2.
- Mixed 8.0: Fernando Quinones of San Francisco and Amy Warden of Modesto beat Dave Nostrant of Saint George, Utah, and Joyce Youngs of South Lake Tahoe 6-1, 6-4.
- Mixed 7.0: Katelyn Bump of San Jose and William Cesano of San Jose beat Alida Pohl of South Lake Tahoe and Spargo.

– *Provided to Lake Tahoe News*

SLT city clerk texts with colleague 'real petty'

By Kathryn Reed

"I thought they were real petty" – that's how South Lake Tahoe City Councilman Tom Davis described the text messages that City Clerk Suzie Alessi released to *Lake Tahoe News* on July 30.

This is just a fraction of the texts that *LTN* requested earlier this year. The ones released are just between Alessi and Tina Shannon, who works in the city manager's office. The

two have quite the friendship, saying “love you,” logging into each other’s email, telling each other who was in talking to the now former city manager, praising the now weekly newspaper and trashing *LTN* with profanity.



Suzie Alessi

Interim City Attorney Nira Doherty has promised the rest of the texts will be released by next Monday at the latest. This will come after Alessi quits her elected position effective this Friday.

LTN asked all the councilmembers for their views on the texts. Only Davis responded. “Any texts between city staff need to be professional in nature and not personal. Perhaps we need to go redefine city policy,” Davis told *LTN*.

The correspondence between Alessi and Shannon is juvenile at best. The two women are catty in their dialogue and don’t hesitate to use profanity. Most of the exchanges are while they are on the clock, getting paid with taxpayer dollars. Here are the **Alessi-Shannon texts**.

They were redacted by Doherty. The messages were from both women’s personal phones.

“Redactions are only if they were personal in nature. There were a lot that were personal in nature. I wouldn’t redact those on a city device,” Doherty told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Alessi has not explained why she took so long to release the documents and then why she is choosing to hand them out

incrementally. Ten days is the normal time limit to produce public records.

There is no love lost between Alessi and Shannon and former City Manager Nancy Kerry. Shannon gets pissy that Kerry opted to get food from someplace other than her restaurant at the airport, which could have been seen as a conflict. They both seem to mock Kerry during her final days as she is trying to keep her job; and this is from people Kerry thought were at least quasi friends.

On Feb. 5 Alessi messaged Shannon, "Omg l Yes, she Is freaking out! It is so freaking crazy it just needs to be done. I cannot believe how she and Brooke are attacking Nira. just pisses me off. I am so pissed off at her. God do your will. And thanks for sharing the info with me. It's really good for me to have the info so that I can keep the pulse on what's going on. Thanks!" The "her" is Nancy Kerry; "Brooke" is Councilwoman Brooke Laine.

They accuse Davis of violating the Brown Act. Davis told *LTN* on Monday night that he has not violated the open meeting law, that he forwarded an email to a former councilmember that was a public record, and that he has told district attorney investigators everything he's done.

Alessi, even though she is an elected official, has no legal obligation to report a suspected Brown Act violation, but ethically she does. Instead she chose to gossip about the alleged infraction with a city employee who would not have been privileged to the supposed private information.

There are "conversations" involving former communications manager Tracy Sheldon when she had issues that spilled into the workplace and involved a phone call she made to Davis; as well as issues with now former Deputy City Clerk Ellen Palazzo.

There is a lot of interaction between the two when Alessi was

in rehab; all redacted.

Why it's time to quit your job and travel

By Ben Steverman, Bloomberg

Millions of Americans obsess over their careers and fret about saving, terrified they won't have enough to ever retire. The advice now being offered by some experts may surprise these worried souls: Take months or years off from work, travel the world, and enjoy yourself.

There's prudent logic behind a relaxing midcareer break. With longer lives come longer careers and longer retirements—the first so that you can afford the second. But a 40-year career, ending at age 60 or 65, is a very different prospect from a 50-year career ending at 70 or 75.

Read the whole story

Hot weather, land abuses fueling algal blooms

By Matt Weiser, Water Deeply

The West is known for summer wildfires. Now it seems Western summers will be distinguished by another kind of flare-up:

algae blooms.

This summer has witnessed an explosion of algae problems in Western water bodies. Usually marked by a bright green mat of floating scum, the blooms are unsightly and unpleasant for water lovers. More concerning are potentially toxic cyanobacteria often produced by the algae, which can be deadly to pets and livestock and cause illnesses in people.

These harmful algal blooms have popped up in freshwater lakes and streams for years. But in recent years they seem bigger and more widespread than ever, resulting in closed beaches, public health warnings and risks to drinking water in a few locations.

Blooms are even popping up in unlikely places, such as high-elevation mountain lakes.

Read the whole story

Array of classes through Barton Health

Barton Health has a variety of classes and events taking place this summer and going into the fall.

Some of them include:

- Registration for Barton's Sept. 8 Medical Wilderness Adventure Race (MedWAR) is open until Aug. 15. Go **online** to register a team of four to compete by paddling, mountain biking and navigating an 18- to 20-mile course.
- Adult family caregiver support group starts Aug. 8.

They are the second Wednesday of each month from 3-4pm. Email bhealthy@bartonhealth.org for more information or call 530.539.6629.

- Women's cancer support group is the last Tuesday of each month from 5:30-6:30pm. For questions and more information, call 530.600.1950.

- Mastering mindfulness is a new class starting Aug. 13. It will be the second Monday of each month from 5:30-6:30pm. Cost is \$10. Email bhealthy@bartonhealth.org for more information or call 530.539.6629.

- Sleep success is a class on Aug. 16 from 6-7pm. Call 530.543.5537 for details.

- There will be a concussion discussion on Aug. 16 from 6-7pm with certified trainer Jeremy Vandehurst at Barton Center for Orthopedics & Wellness, 2017-B South Ave., South Lake Tahoe.

Road Beat: 2018 Hyundai Sonata Eco best midsize



The 2018 Hyundai Sonata Eco is the best Sonata yet.
Photos/Larry Weitzman

By Larry Weitzman

It's been three years and at least 150 cars since I last visited with the Hyundai Sonata Eco. I loved it then and now consider the newest 2018 Sonata Eco to be perhaps the best midsize car in the business. That doesn't mean it's the quickest, best handling or best looking, but the best value, excelling in those aforementioned parameters while being the best at price point, fuel economy and operating efficiency. So, when you consider the whole package, Eco becomes excellence.

Sonata design broke new ground in the 2011 model year with the sixth generation and reaching a sales peak by 2012. It was a winner. While the seventh generation appeared in 2015, this 2018 model gets quite a refresh. Interestingly, while the new generation is a better-looking car with improved content, sales have fallen a bit. It might be due to renewed interest

in CUV/SUVs, but this new Sonata Eco is the best Sonata yet and the best midsize car value in the business.

First, although Sonata Eco sports mid-size dimensions (191L x 73W x 58H inches) on a 110-inch wheelbase, Sonata Eco is by EPA classification a large car with more than 120 cubic feet of interior volume. Second, the Eco is powered by a little giant, 1.6L inline four banger with DOHC, 16 valves, dual continuously variable valve timing, direct injection and a small turbo charger that cranks out a solid 178 hp at a low 5,500 rpm and oodles of twist with a peak of 195 pounds which occurs at a low of 1,500 rpm and stays flat at that prodigious number until 4,500 rpm meaning peak combustion efficiency is available from off idle to a very high rpm. Sure, other midsize four banger sedans make as much or slightly more hp, but very few produce that kind of twist especially over that rpm range. The secret is the direct injection and turbo charging.

But there is more as the front wheels are driven via a seven-speed dual clutch auto cog swapper, perhaps the most efficient tranny in the business. That adds up to overachieving performance with a 0-60 mph time of just 6.77 seconds which makes the Sonata Eco a high-performance automobile. Passing times also reflect this performance prowess with a 50-70 mph level pass of 3.67 seconds and the same run up a 6-7 percent grade only slowing that time by about a second to 4.79 seconds. This Eco is not just extremely responsive, but it really scoots. And as to turbo lag, what turbo lag? My advice is don't choose one off at a traffic light grand prix. There are only a few midsize family sedans that have this kind of scoot.

Fuel economy is excellent with EPA numbers showing 28/37/31 mpg city/highway/combined. But expect about 10 percent better as in a 20-mile two-way highway run at 70 mph the Eco averaged 43 mpg. Overall in 516 miles including all testing the Eco averaged 34.1 mpg and in its over the mountain 200-mile round

trip to Carson City the Eco averaged 37 mpg in aggressive driving. It's hard to stay out of the delicious throttle. Only hybrids return better fuel economy and not by much. No other midsize car can match this balance of performance and fuel economy. Engine speed is a low 2,050 rpm at 70 mph which contributes to the Eco's extreme quiet and silky behavior. One other bonus is the huge 18.5-gallon fuel tank. After a fill up on the highway your range on the trip computer will be over 600 miles. You might be able to stretch that out to 700 miles if your human components can last that long.



Specifications

Price with destination
\$23,660 to \$28,310 loaded up

Engine

Four cylinder inline 1.6L
turbo 16 valve 178 hp @
5,500 rpm

195 lb.-ft. of torque at
1,500-4,500 rpm

Transmission

Seven speed Dual Clutch
automatic with a manual mode

Configuration

Transverse mounted front
engine, front wheel drive

Dimensions

Wheelbase 110.4 inches

Length 191.1 inches
Width 73.4 inches
Height 58.1 inches
Track (f/r) 63.5/63.5 inches
Ground clearance 5.3 inches
Cabin volume 106.1 cubic feet
Trunk volume 16.3 cubic feet
Fuel Capacity 18.5 gallons
Weight 3,247 pounds
Steering lock to lock 2.78 turns
Turning circle 35.8 feet
Wheels 16X6.5-inch alloys
Tires 205/65X16
Co-efficient of drag 0.27

Performance

0-60 mph 6.77 seconds
50-70 mph 3.67 seconds
50-70 uphill 4.79 seconds
Top speed beyond sanity
Fuel economy EPA rated at 28/37/31 city/highway/combined.
Expect 33-34 mpg in suburban driving and 43 plus mpg on a level highway at 70 mph.

Handling is also good as the Eco gets state of the art independent suspension with coils in all four corners and gas shocks. Track is a very wide 64 inches and the steering is a quick electric power rack at just 2.78 turns lock to lock. About the only negative is the still big 16 x 6.5-inch alloys and 205/65 series rubber. But notwithstanding, the handling is very good with good cornering power and nimble feet. The suspension is a bit soft so body roll is more than I prefer, but I am picky and prefer a very sporty stiff, firm ride.

However, Eco can attack corners with some of the best and exits are fun as you squeeze the throttle. It's fun to drive.

Ride quality is very smooth, quiet and bump absorbing. You won't get complaints from granny. There is no wind, road and engine noise.

My tester was devoid of any option packages but basic safety is there including a fabulous back-up camera, blind spot detection, rear cross traffic alert and all of the usual acronyms. Strong four-wheel disc brakes (front ventilated) have powerful stopping power and the headlights on low and high-beam are very good.

Not to out do itself is the quality interior with soft touch materials, comfortable soft seats and a precise instrument panel. Besides the customary speedo and tach flanking and info center, mention should be made of the easy to use, excellent trip computer which is overflowing with pertinent info. Nice job. The center stack is easy to use with appropriate knobs, pushbuttons and a touch screen.

Rear seating is voluminous and so is the well-shaped trunk.

Pricing is the other part of the balance equation with a Monroney of \$22,650 plus \$885 for the train and truck from its Montgomery, Alabama assembly plant. My only option is the \$125 for the obligatory carpeted floor mats. That's it, \$23,660 all in for the best value and perhaps the best mid-size car on the market. I would buy one. Oh, and I forgot to mention to 10 year/100,000-mile warranty.

Larry Weitzman has been into cars since he was 5 years old. At 8 he could recite from memory the hp of every car made in the U.S. He has put in thousands of laps on racetracks all over the Western United States.

Letter: ZCTCF says thank you to community

To the community,

A record 245 people participated in the 35th annual Tahoe Tennis Classic at Zephyr Cove Park. The four-day event that concluded July 29 continues to draw people from across the United States and abroad, with a player from Holland this year.

The tournament is the biggest fundraiser for the Zephyr Cove Tennis Club Foundation. The nonprofit, all-volunteer organization has a contract with Douglas County to operate the six courts. Responsibilities include resurfacing the courts, managing play, and providing instruction for all ages and abilities.

Barton Health for the second year helped sponsor the event. Casey's in the Round Hill center opened its doors for the July 26 Charity Day, while MontBleu hosted the July 27 players' dinner.

The money raised from the silent auction/raffle at the dinner will help to continue to provide the only organized recreational tennis on the South Shore.

We thank the following businesses and individuals for their generosity for our fundraiser: Adam Robin, All Sports Fitness & Personal Training, Suzy and Mark Allione, Tom and Doreen Andriacchi, Angel Touch Salon & Spa, Anytime Fitness in Zephyr Cove, Jenny Bentley, Kari and David Beronio, Liz and Todd Bissell, Bona Fide Books, CalStar, Capise?, Carson Valley Inn, Casey's Restaurant, Casino Fandango, City of South Lake

Tahoe, Justin Clark, Cold Water Brewery & Grill, Barbara Cooper, Tony Cupaiuolo, Heart Rock Herb and Spice Co., Dirk Yuricich Photography, Douglas County Sheriff's Department, El Dorado County Sheriff's Department, Elements Day Spa, Elevation Spa at The Ridge, Elizabeth & Marin, FastFrame Carson City, Jay Freeman, Sharla Freeman, Dorothy Fugitt, Genasci & Steigers DDS, Getaway Cafe, Hard Rock Hotel-Casino, Harrah's-Harveys, Haskie's, Heavenly Sports, Heavenly Village Cinema, Sheryl and Hersch Herschmann, Homewood Mountain Resort, Imagine Salon, Improv at Harveys, It's My Yoga, Melissa and Jess Jester, Charna and Bill Knerr, Lake Tahoe Yoga, Lakeside Inn and Casino, LuLu Hair Design, Marcus Ashley Gallery, Jeanne Bogle Miller, MontBleu, Mt. Rose Ski Tahoe, Dave Nostrant, Pamela's Pilates, Ray and Nancy Peters, Weidinger Public Relations, Pine Cone Resort, Paul and Lousie Proffer, Kae Reed, Reel-Lentless Fishing Charters, Reno Aces, Reno 1868 FC, Bridget Rielley, Sierra-at-Tahoe, Splatter Studioz, Sprouts Natural Foods Café, Studio Four, Tahoe Adventure Film Festival, Tahoe Best Friends, Tahoe Blue Vodka, Tahoe Bodyworks, Tahoe Custom Massage & Structural Integration, Tahoe Dive Center, Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District, Tahoe Fly Fishing Outfitters, The Loft, The Ridge Tahoe, Ginny Unger, Tim and Linda Wulf, Rob Wunderlich, Patty Yamano, Whittell High School Boosters, and Zephyr Cove Resort/Lake Tahoe Cruises.

With great appreciation,

Carolyn Wright, ZCTCF president

South Lake Tahoe fires communications chief

South Lake Tahoe no longer has a communications manager.

Tracy Sheldon was put on leave last week after it came to light that on her own accord she threatened legal action against *Lake Tahoe News* and the news site's publisher, Kathryn Reed.

Interim City Manager Dirk Brazil confirmed that she was sent home last week and fired on July 30. He would not state the reason why.

The comment was posted on *Lake Tahoe News'* Facebook page. It has since been taken down by the city.

Last week the city clerk said Sheldon had no text messages as were requested by *LTN* in a Public Records Act filing. On July 30 the clerk released them. The few that were provided were not all that interesting. Why they were originally withheld has not been disclosed.

As for the future of this city position, Brazil said he's not sure.

"I want to look at the position and description of the position. It's somewhat unusual for a town of 20,000 to have a standalone communications director," Brazil told *LTN*.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Caesars will start taking sports bets in two states

By Associated Press

Two Atlantic City casinos owned by Caesars Entertainment will start taking sports bets this week, and another two in Mississippi will do so in mid-August.

Caesars Entertainment tells the *Associated Press* its Bally's casino in Atlantic City started taking sports bets this morning. Its sister casino in Atlantic City, Harrah's will start taking sports bets on Wednesday.

The company says it soon will offer mobile sports betting, as well, although it did not set a timetable.

Caesars is the parent company of Harrah's Lake Tahoe and Harveys.

Read the whole story