

Letter: Suggestions for the president

Dear Mr. President,

You should compose your own jokes, then tell them straight without a printed sheet to read from.

If there are only three, that's OK. Then say something important to the American people, and sit down.

Jim Hildinger, South Lake Tahoe

Truckee speeding up building permit process

Beginning May 9, Truckee will offer a program for residential projects to be construction-ready sooner and not have the back-and-forth of resubmittals.

The program will be known as One & Done Mondays. Any residential project is eligible when submitted. Once reviewed, that project may not be eligible based on the need for corrections.

The applicant can elect to schedule an appointment on a Monday with the Building and Planning divisions, have all the questions answered during the appointment, and the permit will be ready to issue. This program will allow for more efficiency.

Recreation – the cornerstone of South Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

Parks and recreation – it's the toy department of any municipality and South Lake Tahoe isn't any different.

It's all about fun and games for the public, and that spills over a bit for the local staff. Lauren Thomaselli, who runs the department, insists her staff work and play hard. The same went for her day leading the Citizens Academy.

In between learning about the inner workings of the department, academy members played pickleball, basketball, ping pong and spun hula hoops. These are all activities available at the rec center.

The academy is a free seven-week course designed to give residents a better understanding about how the city works as well as an opportunity to ask questions of staff. (This reporter is part of the current class.)

Campground by the Lake and Bijou Golf Course are money makers for the city. (The golf course is slated to open May 16.) Last fiscal year the campground netted \$388,000. It's bound to do even better in 2016-17 because this spring the council agreed to raise rates. The city has made incremental improvements to the grounds, like adding six tent cabins in 2011. The stumbling block is El Dorado County owns the land, so until the city and county have resolution regarding that parcel and the surrounding land, nothing major will take place.

Another recent change, though, to the campground is that

online reservations are possible.



A slew of activities are available at the South Lake Tahoe Recreation Center. Photo/LTN

One of the main programs city staff oversees is the summer STAR camps for youth in grades K-5.

“The whole concept is no child left inside,” Thomaselli said. She called the camps “authentic Tahoe recreation.”

These camps are so popular that a waiting list is often necessary.

A facility designed more for the tourist is Explore Tahoe near Heavenly Village. This visitors center has a wealth of information about Tahoe in terms of how it was created, the forest, the lake and history.

“The final message we promote is recreation with a conscious,” Thomaselli said of Explore Tahoe.

Aquatics at the swimming pool at the rec center is one of the core services the city provides. Every **fourth-grader** in Lake Tahoe Unified School District may participate in swim lessons during the school year. A variety of programs are offered year round. A bubble on the pool makes it more enjoyable in the

winter. It comes off every May.

Thomaselli's department is also responsible for some of what goes on at the senior center. This is coordinated with the county, which owns the building and provides services like meals and veterans' care.

Special events such as Live at Lakeview are under the rec department's purview.

The city and county developed a recreation master plan that is now being implemented. Douglas County simultaneously created a plan, too, using the same consultant. One thing to come out of that is a joint activity guide for the South Shore.

"It recognized recreation is our economy. So what should we be doing to deliver a better product?" Thomaselli said of the master plan.

A bigger picture item to come out of the master is potentially overhauling the recreation center. It was identified as a need for locals and tourists. It could mean razing what is there and starting from scratch, or renovating what exists. Ultimately that will be the City Council's decision.

Funding to do so, though, is likely to be up to the voters. The city is contemplating raising the hotel and sales taxes to create a dedicated source of income for recreation.

Letter: Rotarians give back at Bread & Broth

To the community,

“Service Above Self” is the motto for the Rotary Club of South Lake Tahoe and on April 18, fellow Rotarians David Jinkens, Brian Hogan, David Kurtzman and Nic Abelow exemplified how involved and service oriented the club members are. These four Rotarians came together to volunteer their time at the Rotary Club’s Adopt A Day of Nourishment and serve those in need in the community.

By adopting the Bread & Broth’s Monday evening dinner, the Rotary Club of SLT provided a hot, nutritious meal to 89 dinner guests and sent them home with food to provide meals for later in the week. As an international service organization, the local Rotary Club chapter’s goal is to positively affect as many children, families and community members as possible. By selecting B&B’s Adopt A Day program as their month of April service project, the club and its members were able to have the positive impact of easing hunger for those who attended their AAD dinner.

“It’s an honor for the Rotary Club to have this opportunity to serve our community and assist B&B,” Kurtzman said as he took a break from the dinner serving line.

Playing an active part in the local community is the ongoing focus of the group and Bread & Broth truly appreciates the support the Rotary Club and its members have so generously provided at their AAD dinner.

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth

Could you come up with \$400

if disaster struck?

By NPR

If a financial emergency struck – say, a health problem or a car that needed repair – would you be able to come up with \$400? According to the Federal Reserve Board, 47 percent of Americans would have trouble paying it – they would have to sell something, borrow money or simply couldn't pay.

And this is true even for people who consider themselves middle class. Neal Gabler is one of them. He's a successful writer with five books under his belt, and he's a visiting professor at the State University of New York, Stony Brook. But in a new article in the *Atlantic*, he admits to having "financial impotence":

"I know what it is like to have to juggle creditors to make it through a week. I know what it is like to have to swallow my pride and constantly dun people to pay me so that I can pay others. I know what it is like to have liens slapped on me and to have my bank account levied by creditors. I know what it is like to be down to my last \$5 – literally – while I wait for a paycheck to arrive, and I know what it is like to subsist for days on a diet of eggs. And I know what it is like to have to borrow money from my adult daughters because my wife and I ran out of heating oil," Gabler said.

Read the whole story

Poison not best option to kill rodents

By Stella McMillin

Spring is in the air and rodents may be in your garage, attic, closets, cabinets, tool shed or yard. It's a busy time for pest control companies and rodenticide sales. But nature can control rodent populations if you let it. In the natural environment, there is balance. Every creature is prey to some animals and predator to others.

Raptors – owls, hawks, falcons, eagles and vultures – are rodents' natural predators. If you actively protect them and their habitat, you won't need to spend money on poisons and put desirable wildlife, pets and children at risk of accidental poisoning. Environmentally friendly tactics (such as providing tall trees that raptors favor) will encourage these birds of prey to hang around your yard and remove rodents for you.

Most raptors use the same nest for many years and some even pass from one generation to the next. Bald eagles are known to have used the same nest as long as 35 years. That makes them an excellent long-term control for rodent populations in the immediate area.

During breeding season, a family of five owls can eat as many as 3,000 rodents. You can encourage them by hanging a nest box on your property, but please don't do that if you or any of your neighbors are using anticoagulant rodenticides. Remember that poisoned rodents can poison the predators, scavengers and pets that eat them.

Even though the state Department of Pesticide Regulation and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency have restricted public access to the most dangerous rodenticides, all rodenticides –

including the types still available to consumers – are poisons that can kill wildlife, pets and children.

Unfortunately, even after stricter regulations on rodenticides were enacted, wildlife continue to be exposed to second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides (brodifacoum, bromadiolone, difenacoum and difethialone). Licensed pest control companies and agricultural producers are still free to use them. If consumers hire pest control companies, they should know that the materials the firms use could poison local wildlife. Only consumers can ensure that it doesn't. The most effective pest control does not involve chemicals, but sanitation and exclusion.

Like most animals, rodents will congregate and multiply where food is available and they feel safe. The easiest way to discourage them is to remove or modify anything that could make them comfortable. Sanitation is the first step to controlling rodents.

For example:

- Keep your home and yard neat and clean. Don't give rats places to hide.
- Remove objects and plants that rodents can hide under, such as wood piles, debris, construction waste, dense vegetation and ground-covering vines like ivy.
- Pick up fruit that has fallen from trees as soon as possible.
- Secure your garbage in a tightly sealed can.
- Seal water leaks and remove standing water that can attract unwelcome animals, breed mosquitoes and waste water.
- To remove unwelcome rodents, set traps in secluded areas where they've been seen or are likely to travel: close to walls, behind objects, in dark corners, on ledges, shelves, fences, pipes and garage rafters. In areas where children, pets or birds might go, put the trap

inside a box or use some kind of barrier for their safety. Check traps daily and wear disposable gloves when removing rodents from traps. Place them in a sealed plastic bag then into your garbage bin for weekly collection. Wash your hands after handling traps or rodents, even when using gloves.

Once you've removed mice and rats from inside the building, seal the entries they used to get in: openings where cables, wires and pipes enter buildings, and cracks or holes in the foundation, walls and roofs. Rodents can squeeze into holes as narrow as one-half inch diameter. Use hardware mesh and concrete, plaster or metal whenever possible. At the very least, stuff stainless steel or copper pot scrubbers, or Stuf-fit copper mesh wool into the spaces. All of these are sold online and at hardware and dollar stores.

If you feel you must use "rat poison," carefully follow the label directions for all rodenticides. Only use them in small treatment areas indoors or right against building walls in tamper-resistant bait stations, never out in open field or garden areas, where they're most likely to reach wildlife and pets. Much more information and practical advice can be found on the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's **website**.

Stella McMillin works for the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

UNR, UNLV differ on punishment for cheaters

By Sally Ho, AP

Leaders at the two major universities in Nevada don't seem to agree on how to dish out punishment equally and consistently among cheating students.

Patricia Ellison, a biochemistry professor at UNR who is chair of the Faculty Senate's academic standards committee, said the school lacks consistency in handling cases with such gray areas.

Ellison is among the elected leaders representing the UNR faculty who have now proposed a plan to create a "sliding scale" of consequences that would be in line with the severity of the offense. She said there also needs to be a uniform reporting process and the Reno professors are urging for an online system to make it easier to report cases.

Not all professors report possible cheats because the current letter-writing system can be cumbersome, Ellison said. Sanctions within the classroom – ranging from a do-over on an assignment to failing the entire course – are typically determined by the individual instructors without full guidance to ensure the punishment is even-handed and evenly applied.

"What we really want is consistent penalties," Ellison said. "We can't possibly catch every case. We catch as many as we can and should be consistent with what we do about it."

UNR, which has 21,000 students and 5,200 faculty staff members, said it had 122 confirmed cases of academic misconduct out of the 135 reports filed in the 2014-2015 school year.

In the same time frame, UNLV, which has 28,600 students and about 950 instructors, had 287 cases of confirmed academic misconduct among the over 300 cases reported. UNLV already has an online reporting process.

Officials said plagiarism is a common mistake students can make. They may simply lack the skills to properly cite a

source of information. They may also misunderstand the parameters of an assignment and error by working in groups with classmates.

And when it comes to the most severe cases of cheating involving not just mistakes but intentional dishonesty, both UNR and UNLV say it's extremely rare that a student cheats repeatedly or egregiously. Beyond the classroom, the universities can also impose disciplinary action as severe as suspension or expulsion, though UNR said it's never expelled anyone over academic misconduct.

Phil Burns, director of the office of student conduct at the Southern Nevada school, said UNLV has had to expel students but it's uncommon, with fewer than 10 cases in recent memory.

UNLV also doesn't have full guidelines dictating how a student should be sanctioned within the classroom for each particular offense. Burns said he doesn't believe in a "cookie-cutter" approach because each student and set of circumstances should be weighed individually.

"We're all human. We all make mistakes," Burns said. "If this job was about punishment, I wouldn't do it."

Prescribed fires to be scattered about basin

Weather permitting, the U.S. Forest Service, Nevada Division of State Lands and Nevada Division of Forestry may conduct prescribed fire operations beginning May 2.

On the East Shore, operations may take place in the Rocky

Point area near Tunnel Creek Road, Montreal Canyon near Spooner Summit and south of Glenbrook near Camp Galilee. On the South Shore, operations may take place near Lake Tahoe Boulevard and Sawmill Road, Panther Lane near South Tahoe High School, off Highway 89 near Spring Creek, and off Santa Claus Drive and West River Parkway near Christmas Valley.

To view a map with project locations and details, visit the Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team **website**.

Residual smoke may be seen in locations where operations have taken place over the last several weeks.

Food Bank needs volunteers in SLT

The Food Bank of El Dorado County needs 10 volunteers for May 4 distribution in South Lake Tahoe.

Volunteers work from 9:30-11:30am to help with our Mobile Food Pantry by assisting in handing out food and signing people in.

For more info or to sign up, call 530.621.9950 or email volunteer@foodbankedc.org.

To contribute, send checks to Food Bank of El Dorado County, 4550 Business Drive, Cameron Park, CA 95682.

Samba TV expanding to Incline Village

By Jason Hidalgo, Reno Gazette-Journal

A technology company backed by Dallas Mavericks owner and Shark Tank regular Mark Cuban is expanding to Lake Tahoe.

San Francisco-based Samba TV announced Thursday that it is opening a facility in Incline Village, bringing 30 jobs to the greater Reno-Tahoe area.

Samba TV is part of the Smart TV movement, specializing in real-time TV analytics and providing consumers with an interactive television viewing experience. In addition to Cuban, investors of the company include Rackspace founder Richard Yoo and entrepreneur Tom McInerney.

Read the whole story