

Letter: Barton volunteers appreciated

To the community,

On behalf of the physicians and staff at Barton Health, I want to thank the Barton Auxiliary for volunteering their time and providing generous donations for our health and wellness efforts.

More than 80 community members make up the Barton Auxiliary, a compassionate and dedicated group of individuals who help support Barton Hospital, its patients, and the community. They can be found in many places, such as escorting Skilled Nursing residents on field trips, guiding visitors around the hospital, handing out comfort items to patients, or sorting donations at the Attic Thrift Store. In this past year, the Barton Auxiliary volunteered 29,092 hours.

In addition to their volunteerism, the Auxiliary members are also generous benefactors of Barton Health. In 2015, the Auxiliary raised \$280,850.99 from the Attic and gift shop sales, holiday fundraisers, and personal donations. This means the Auxiliary has raised more than \$7,456,000 dollars since its inception in 1960.

Barton Memorial Hospital, which has transformed into a regional health system, would not have existed without the Barton Auxiliary. As we celebrate National Volunteer Week April 10-16, I extend my appreciation to the Barton Auxiliary for improving the health and wellness of our community.

Molly Hucklebridge Coolidge, communications specialist Barton Health

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



- The ACT Bowling Night fundraiser is May 18 in South Lake Tahoe. The \$20 per person fee supports Animal Coalition of Tahoe's spay-neuter program and the animal shelter in Meyers. Teams must enter by May 12. Fill out this **form** and then call Rich Hodge (530.400.4766) to arrange pick up.
 - Andre Nickatina plus Black Rock City Allstars will be at Whiskey Dicks Saloon in South Lake Tahoe on April 20. Doors open at 9pm. Must be 21 or older to attend. Advance tickets are available for \$20 **online**.
 - Entrepreneurs Assembly is an award-winning mentor program that assists budding and existing entrepreneurs. The free monthly ongoing program is from 6-9pm on the first Thursday of the month in the Aspen Room at Lake Tahoe Community College.
 - Registration is open for summer Tahoe Rim Trail's youth backcountry camps. For more info, go **online**.
 - TAMBA's spring party on April 20 from 6-9pm is a fundraiser for the mountain bike group's trail projects and Sky Tavern Bike Park. It will be at Sky Tavern, which is just below Mount Rose Ski Area on Mount Rose Highway. RSVP **online**.
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Caltrans makes room for taller trucks by raising I-80 overpasses

By Tony Bizjak, Sacramento Bee

After a year of heavy lifting, California highway officials are nearly done with an improbable task on Interstate 80 in Placer County: raising seven freeway overcrossings between Loomis and Weimar, in some cases by more than 2 feet.

The \$36 million "Raise 80" project has involved jacking up and repositioning 1,000-plus ton overpasses, many of them a half-century old, to comply with federal 16-foot-6-inch standards so modern supersized trucks and military vehicles can squeeze under them.

Caltrans spokeswoman Liza Whitmore said completing the project has taken a combination of brute strength and intricate choreography.

[Read the whole story](#)

Passport – a trip through EDC wine country



Vineyards in El Dorado County are coming alive.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

PLACERVILLE – Wine has often been described as its own food group, and yet, most people will agree that all wine tastes better with food.

This theory was put to the test last weekend during the annual El Dorado County Passport event. (The two-weekend shindig continues this Saturday and Sunday.)

“It’s like the Super Bowl of wine weekends,” Tiya Grabowski told *Lake Tahoe News*. The Citrus Heights woman has been going to Passport for about 20 years.

For her friend Shelly Celio of Georgetown it was the food pairings that impressed her this year. A fun time with friends, while enjoying good wine close to home keeps her

coming back.



El Dorado County is celebrating the 25th anniversary of Passport. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Now in its 25th year, Passport has gone through various iterations. There was a time about 10 years when it was more of a crazy party, with buses and limos clogging the parking lots, people seeming to be more interested in freebies and getting drunk than experiencing a tasting. It was a bit of a cultish type event, with a waiting list. The recession changed that.

The deals on wine fluctuate from year-to-year, as well as winery-to-winery. But a definite trend this year is on the food and wine. Some wineries have a few edibles to go with the flight of wines, while others have individual bites for specific wines.



Busby uses Chardonnay in its mac and cheese. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Passport started as a way for wineries to unload excess bottles before the next vintage was released. El Dorado was one of the first regions to put on such an event. In the beginning it was conducted earlier in the year as a way to get people to come to the region in the off-season. Snow, even in the foothills, started to keep people away so the dates kept being pushed back to where now it's the second and third weekends of April.

John MacCready of Sierra Vista is one of the few winemakers who has participated in Passport every year. This Placerville winery is the second oldest in the county, with the first grapes planted in 1974. (Boeger is the oldest, having started in 1972.)

"For us, it's a money-maker," MacCready told *Lake Tahoe News*.

MacCready was a pioneer when it came to planting Rhone

varietals in the region. Since then many wineries have followed suit.

He's noticed less of a party atmosphere through the years, especially with people coming with a designated driver.



John MacCready of Sierra Vista pours a rare Cabernet release. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Sierra Vista hired Allez out of Diamond Springs to cater the event. The creamy wild mushroom sauté was outstanding. It paired nicely with the 2013 Roussanne. While the wild boar Bourgogne on mashed root vegetables was a hit, especially in conjunction with the 2012 Syrah, the mushrooms on the mash was also delectable. (The boar came from Nevada.)

"The food has been just as much of an experience as the wine," Jeanne Garman of Sacramento said while sampling the fare at Sierra Vista. This was her first Passport.

At Narrow Gate Vineyards, owner Teena Hildebrand noticed more people from the Bay Area and Sacramento were participating in

Passport than locals.

This is the Placerville winery's 10th year to be part of the event. Being able to introduce people to wine, what it's all about and the intricacies of it are what appeals to her. Plus, Passport is great exposure for Narrow Gate.

She makes all the food to pair with the wine that her winemaker husband, Frank, produces. The ginger garlic stir fry was good with the Chardonnay, but even better with the Viognier. The house smoked pork Panini went well with the Cabernet and Syrah. A veggie Panini is also available, and paired well with the bold reds.



More than 2,000 acres in El Dorado County are planted with wine grapes. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Elliot Graham of Busby Cellars was putting a different twist on food and wine pairings as he poured some Chardonnay into

the mac and cheese he was serving to guests.

This is the 10th year he and his wife, Sherrie, have participated in Passport. He admits there was a time when the event was overwhelming. Participants coming in smaller batches is better for a winery their size.

In the past they paired individual varietals with specific food, now it's a variety of food to go with their array of wines.

Carrie Bendick with Holly's Hill told *Lake Tahoe News*, "It's nice to do something as a group. It helps distinguish the region, which people are still discovering."

The El Dorado Winery Association puts on Passport. This year 24 of its more than 30 member wineries are participating. In all, El Dorado County has about 70 wineries.

One thing that distinguishes this area is the elevation – with some vines planted at 3,500 feet. The county is home to more than 50 varietals. While Zinfandel has always been a stalwart favorite, Barbera has created quite a following in the last few years.

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Notes:

- For more information about Passport or to buy tickets for this weekend, go **online**.

Opinion: Calif. high speed rail is a boondoggle

By Ted Gaines

If you thought the Bay Bridge construction fiasco would reign forever as California's worst, most unsurpassable example of a government project running wildly over budget, you are in for a bitter surprise. High speed rail is on pace to be the grand champion money waster in California history and needs to be stopped before our citizens take an unprecedented fleecing.



Ted Gaines

As a reminder, the Bay Bridge was initially slated for a retrofit after its dramatic and tragic failure during the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake. In 1995 the cost estimate stood at \$250 million. By 1997 it was \$1.3 billion. In 2001, \$2.6 billion, and finally \$6.5 billion at completion, but even that estimate doesn't include interest costs, which could push the final cost to \$13 billion.

Now comes high speed Rail (HSR), whose initial \$33 billion total cost estimate has already ballooned to more than \$60 billion, and the story is about to get worse. With construction in its infancy, the California Rail Authority is facing potential cost overruns of \$400 million dollars on just the first 29 miles of the 500-plus mile project. And this is on the flat and sparse Central Valley. What will the cost overruns be in the infinitely more crowded and complex Bay

Area, LA and San Diego?

We shouldn't view this overrun as an anomaly, but a preview. It's further proof that every HSR number should be disregarded and that the state is really obligating itself to build a project with an open-ended cost, taxpayers be damned.

Their own, recently updated business plan shows that they've identified only \$20.7 billion in funding for their \$64.2 billion in costs (and there is zero chance that \$64.2 number doesn't explode into something drastically higher). Where will the rest of the money come from? They are hoping for some more federal funding and for continued "cap-and-trade" revenue, but those are hardly guaranteed. The cap-and-trade program is scheduled to expire in 2020.

Moving forward with such an unrealistic and unlikely financing scheme is really a leap of bad faith on the part HSR. They are playing a cynical game where they will waste \$20 billion, in hopes that the state (read: taxpayers) will have to see the fantasy project through to the end after sinking so much money into the "investment."

It should speak volumes that private investors, required under the terms of the initial HSR plan, have stayed completely on the sidelines. No investors will risk their own money on the project, but politicians gambling tens of billions of your tax dollars is just fine.

On April 4 I attended an oversight hearing on the updated HSR business plan, where legislators and bullet train representatives went back and forth on the new timelines, routes and funding proposals. One group did not have a seat at the table: The opposition. They did not get to speak. On a project this big, with a brief but conspicuous history of wildly inaccurate cost estimates, the critics should be more than a silent ATM.

Every assumption used to justify the initial high speed rail

proposal approved by the voters in 2008 proved to be overly optimistic at best, purposely misleading at worst. The ridership projections have been slashed, the train speed cut, and, predictably, the updated cost estimate looks nothing like the 2008 version.

This is not the “Train to Nowhere” as it’s been derided – we should be so lucky. Its last stop is in the political hall of shame. To build it is to rob Californians of the desperately needed roads, water storage, and other meaningful infrastructure projects those tax dollars could buy. To build it is to doom taxpayers to perpetual subsidies to prop up the ultimate green vanity project.

State Sen. Ted Gaines represents the 1st Senate District, which includes all or parts of Alpine, El Dorado, Lassen, Modoc, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Sacramento, Shasta, Sierra and Siskiyou counties.

U.S. isn't teaching kids money management

By Jenny Che, Huffington Post

When it comes to understanding how to use a credit card responsibly, how to take out a loan or how to invest our money, Americans have a lot to catch up on.

A global survey published last year found that the U.S. ranked 14th in the world for financial literacy, behind the Scandinavian countries, Canada, the Czech Republic and others. A new report suggests that the classroom may be part of the problem.

A large majority of K-12 teachers don't bring financial education into their curriculum, according to a study by PricewaterhouseCoopers. Just 12 percent teach personal finance, even though 92 percent think that the topic should be included in the curriculum.

Read the whole story

Ex-drug agent to spend 10 years behind bars



Mark Zlendick

A former drug agent who stole more than a pound of methamphetamine and cocaine from the South Lake Tahoe Police Department's evidence locker is going to prison for at least 10 years.

Mark Zlendick, 48, was sentenced this week to serve 10-25 years in prison and pay a \$5,000 fine.

Zlendick was arrested in May 2015 in Gardnerville on what started as a domestic disturbance.

At the time of his arrest he was a member of South Lake El Dorado Narcotics Enforcement Team.

Nevada has third-highest foreclosure rate

By Eli Segall, Las Vegas Sun

Despite a drop in overall foreclosure filings, lenders have repossessed a rising volume of homes in Nevada compared with last year, keeping the Silver State among the hardest-hit areas in the country.

One in every 236 homes statewide received a foreclosure-related filing in the quarter ending March 31, down 11 percent from the same period last year, according to a new report from RealtyTrac.

Nevada had the third-highest foreclosure rate in the country in the first quarter, behind Maryland and New Jersey.

Read the whole story

Murillo finalist for SoCal college presidency job

By Kathryn Reed

Lake Tahoe Community College President Kindred Murillo is a finalist for the presidency job at Santa Barbara City College.

The announcement came Thursday during the Southern California college's board meeting.



Kindred
Murillo

"Santa Barbara has a lot of the same characteristics as Lake Tahoe Community College. There is a strong sense of academic excellence, which is what I like," Murillo told *Lake Tahoe News*.

In January she announced she would be leaving the South Lake Tahoe college some time between June 2016 and February 2017. The 61-year-old has been at the helm of LTCC since July 2011.

She is one of five finalists for the Santa Barbara position. Board interviews are later this month.

Santa Barbara has 15,000 full time equivalent students, while LTCC has 1,800.

If Murillo were to get the job, she would be taking over for Lori Gaskin who is retiring after having that job for four years. Gaskin spent 17 years at LTCC as a dean of Instruction, then the vice president of Academic Affairs and Student Services.

Murillo is looking at other jobs as well.

"I think the issue for me is I'm kind of picky where I work. I like to be in a place that is a good fit," Murillo said. "The ones I've applied for are good for my skill set."

She did not disclose where else she has sent her resume.

As for leaving LTCC, she said it is a grieving process. Health reasons necessitate she moves out of Tahoe.

Bountiful lakes await visitors

By Tom Stienstra, San Francisco Chronicle

The biggest lakes in California, crowned by Lake Tahoe, joined dozens of smaller lakes in the north state this week by rising to their highest levels in years.

It sets up a spectacular season for camping, boating, fishing and recreation-based vacations.

After hitting a long-term low last winter, Lake Tahoe rose to its natural rim this week and is spilling into the Truckee River at Tahoe City. Roughly 60 billion gallons of water have entered the lake in the past four months, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, one of the agencies that tracks water flow into Tahoe.

Clear Lake, Shasta, Oroville, Folsom and Bullards Bar Reservoir are other large lakes that have had massive infusions of water.

Read the whole story