

Letter: Naysayers' wasting EDC time, money

To the community,

Like in today's national political climate, the "flamethrowers" causing a stir tend to be the minority with the loudest voices. Few who support or are indifferent reach out to send their praise for the ideals that are legitimately making their way through the system. As such, we are seeing a similar situation play out on a local level in El Dorado County (EDC).

As our Dollar General development in Georgetown makes its way through EDC's approval process, we get to see first hand the inner workings of role and responsibility local government plays in the protection and improvement of the community. The "Historic Design Guide", put in place to preserve the history of the town was created to guide responsible development, not stifle it. It was created to ensure that responsible development improves the community.

EDC's role is to review a project for its adherence to the historic guidelines and ordinances, not to pick economic winners and losers. Our great nation was founded on many freedoms, including the freedom of enterprise so that we as citizens, can open a business of our choosing and let the market decide if it succeeds or fails. To that end, the EDC Planning Commission approved the Dollar General development in Georgetown with a resounding 4-1 vote. The approval was of no surprise as the development strictly adhered to EDC's and the state of California's historic and development guidelines. Unfortunately, EDC's approval was appealed by a local citizen.

The pending appeal of the project to the Board of Supervisors cited that the appeal was filed "on the grounds that the

project violates the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the applicable general plans and zoning laws, and that the comments submitted to the Planning Commission contained accurate statements of significant legal violations that were not addressed at the hearing.” This statement contains no specific information to support those claims and has been continuously disproven with fact and expert testimony at several previous Planning Commission hearings.

During testimony at the most recent hearings, the appellant and corresponding political lobbyists, raised concerns specifically relating to the design and conceptual approval of the alternative septic system, EDC’s ability to approve such a system per state regulations and the particulars of the methods of mitigation for storm water runoff with regards to the effect on the nearby creek. Despite very specific factual counter testimony by EDC engineering staff, citing specific technical details of the systems in question and how they work, the appellant continues to waste taxpayer dollars by bringing claims of fraud and legal violations. It is also prudent to note that EDC’s experts and our own consultants have put their licenses on the line when they review and approve the plans we create.

As the staff at EDC can attest, our team has worked tirelessly to create a better project for the community. We have gone back to the drawing board not less than six times to create an elevation that meets and exceeds the historic guidelines. We have met with dozens of community representatives and groups in Georgetown to try and create a better project whether it’s through better lighting, design, landscaping, etc.

The amount of money spent by EDC on dealing with frivolous appeals is wasteful at best. I think we could all agree that those funds would be better spent fixing real problems faced by the residents of the local communities. For example, in Georgetown itself, the local fire station is made of mostly volunteers who use aging and outdated equipment to protect the

residents paid firefighters and a new fire truck could and would help protect the upcountry way of life.

There continues to be a lot of support for the project, but in today's world we hide behind our smart phones and computers and hastily type negative responses and attack anyone with a different opinion, rather than debating it in a fair and respectful way. There will always be people on either side of every ticket who support or don't support a political project or point of view, but it seems to be built into our current political culture that it's ok to tear people or things down, simply because you don't understand them or like them.

Over the past few decades, the Georgetown area has suffered economically through the loss of much of its industry and numerous jobs, while the Northern California region has prospered. We can all agree that our project will help the economy in Georgetown. We recently had an economic update study done to survey the prosperity of nearby stores where Dollar General had recently opened. We found that before Dollar General opened, local merchants were concerned about the impact to their businesses, but have conversely seen no negative impact to their sales. We had this study done on our own accord to show our commitment to the prosperity of the community.

As I mentioned before, change can be a tough pill to swallow for some and this has proven itself on several occasions when other developments came to the area. When the gas station, El Dorado Savings Bank and Mar-Val were proposed in Georgetown, there was a similar reaction to those projects as there has been towards Dollar General coming to town yet in the time they have since been open and have been embraced by the community as a benefit.

Respectfully,

Joshua Simon, president SimonCRE – proposed developer of the

Freedom of flight – paragliding in the Sierra



Blake Paiement soars through the air near Kingsbury Grade on March 31. Photo Copyright 2016 Carolyn E. Wright

Swaying in the wind currents it's like the paraglider is doing

a dance in the air.

Blake Paiement, 21, with his green, yellow and white parachute-like contraption is a striking contrast against the blue sky. He soars toward the Carson Valley after having launched from the top of Kingsbury Grade.



Brad Paiement looks for a safe landing spot. Photo Copyright 2016 Carolyn E. Wright

“I was above Heavenly saying ‘hi’ to the skiers,” the Gardnerville resident told *Lake Tahoe News* March 31 after he landed a couple hundred yards from Foothill Road.

The views, thrills and freedom are what drive Paiement to strap on the harness and other gear a couple times a week. Then he propels himself into the air, catching the wind to get a bird’s-eye view of the local terrain.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Hispanic voters growing influence in the West

By Paige Blankenbuehler, High Country News

In the midst of the raucous and polarized presidential election, a quieter story has been at play as well: the growing political clout of Latino voters.

Nationwide, about 12 percent of the country's eligible voting population is Hispanic – and the West is home to nearly 40 percent of those voters, far surpassing other regions. This November, Hispanic voters are projected to turn out in greater numbers than they did in 2012, with a nearly 10 percent increase forecast by the National Association of Latino Elected Officials Educational Fund.

At the same time, the Latino voting bloc is in transition. Latino populations are getting younger, larger and more politically engaged. In the process, they promise to change Western presidential politics.

Now, not only are there more Hispanic younger voters, but an increasing percentage of them are born in the United States. That naturalized population is beginning to dominate the Latino population of voters (non-citizens can't vote). Young Hispanics make up a larger proportion of the voting block than in other groups: 44 percent of Hispanic voters are between the ages of 18 and 35 this year, compared to 27 percent among white voters.

In Nevada, Hispanic groups are becoming more vocal on the

immigration debate and about their opposition to Donald Trump, whose campaign has taken an anti-immigration stance. But their influence is complicated by the fact that the state has the largest percentage of undocumented immigrants in the country (nearly 8 percent; California comes second with just more than 6 percent), according to the Pew Research Center.

Read the whole story

Nev. judge disqualifies solar industry's ballot measure

By Daniel Rothberg, Las Vegas Sun

A Carson City judge ruled to disqualify a ballot measure that would restore more generous rates for rooftop solar customers, a setback for solar advocates who had been aggressively campaigning for it.

In a case that represented a proxy fight between NV Energy and SolarCity, Judge James Russell sided Monday with a political action committee backed by NV Energy and undisclosed consumer groups.

The group argued that the measure, floated by SolarCity and several local companies, did not meet the requirements of a referendum because it sought to remove certain sections of a law rather than the full law. Russell said his ruling was not about the merits of solar but about what he saw as the flawed framing of the measure.

Read the whole story

Trash – especially plastics – subject of talk

Don't Trash the Lake will be the topic of an April 20 talk at Lake Tahoe Community College.

Single-use plastics are the No. 1 trash item found in Tahoe beach-cleanups. Learn about steps to take to reduce waste, manage trash, be bear aware and keep plastic out of Lake Tahoe.

Local experts will talk about trash cleanups, recycling efforts and recent messaging campaigns to encourage locals and visitors to clean up their act.

The free talk will be from noon-1:30 in the Creekside Room at the college.

K's Kitchen: Quinoa and veggies with tahini

By Kathryn Reed

Until recently I didn't realize quinoa comes in a variety of colors. After doing a little research, I learned there isn't much difference between them.

Cooking times may vary. A reason not to just buy white is a little color might make a dish stand out more.

I used red quinoa for this dish, but it's not necessary. And at the store I was at it was a lot more expensive than the regular white.

I used white rice because it's what I had in the cupboard. Brown rice would make it healthier. And the brown rice could be the color instead of the red quinoa. Brown rice takes longer to cook and often needs more water.



**Quinoa and Rice Bowl with
Vegetables and Tahini**

1 C rice

1 C red quinoa

$\frac{1}{4}$ C olive oil

1 small onion, diced

1 carrot, cut into matchsticks

1/4 pound baby bella crimini mushrooms, thinly sliced

1 small zucchini, cut into matchsticks

Salt

1 head of broccoli, chopped

1 10-ounce bunch kale, large stems discarded

$\frac{1}{4}$ C tahini, at room temperature

$\frac{1}{2}$ C fresh lemon juice

5 garlic cloves, minced

2 T warm water

$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp crushed red pepper

1 ripe avocado, diced

1 C mung bean sprouts

In a medium saucepan, cover the rice with 2 inches of water and bring to a boil; then cover and cook over low heat until the rice is just tender. This can take about 40 minutes.

Combine the quinoa with 2 cups of water in small saucepan and bring to a boil; then cover and simmer over low heat until the quinoa is tender and all of the water has been absorbed, 20 minutes.

Add 2 tablespoons of oil large skillet. Over medium heat cook onion until translucent. Add the carrot, cook until starts to soften. Add the mushrooms; then zucchini. Season with salt. Transfer to a bowl.

Add the remaining 2 tablespoons of oil to the skillet. Cook broccoli until deep green, about 5 minutes. Add the kale, cook until just tender. Season with salt. Stir in the other vegetables.

In a small bowl, whisk the tahini with the lemon juice, garlic, warm water and crushed red pepper. Season with salt.

Put equal amounts of rice and quinoa to bowls. Top with the cooked vegetables, diced avocado and bean sprouts. Drizzle tahini mixture on top.

Marinas on front line for lake clarity issues

By Kathryn Reed

CAMP RICHARDSON – Marina operators throughout the Lake Tahoe Basin are beginning to make a concerted, united approach to dealing with aquatic issues.

The Tahoe Marina Association is a relatively new group made up of the owners. Eleven of them gathered last week at Camp Richardson to hear a presentation from the League to Save Lake Tahoe about how marinas can keep Lake Tahoe blue. This in itself is not something that would have happened a handful of years ago based on the nonprofit's old philosophy of thinking anything not native to the lake must be harmful – including boats and buoys.

The new thinking of working with those who are here has made for more amicable relationships – including with marinas.

Jesse Patterson, deputy director of the League, told them, "You know the good, the bad and ugly of the lake. That is why we want you involved."

Last year four marinas participated in a training about aquatic invasive species, with more sessions planned for May. The Eyes on the Lake program is open to the general public, too. It's all about identifying invasives and getting rid of them.

A representative from Obexer's on the West Shore admitted it's difficult to tell the difference between native and non-native plants.

A Sierra Boat Company employee said using the information gathered about AIS helped with their dredging application.



Stormwater flows into Lake Tahoe marinas carrying water that mostly originated off property. Photo/LTN

The idea is to focus more on invasive plants like Eurasian milfoil and curly leaf pondweed because these are often habitat for non-native fish. Eliminating the food source is easier.

Boats are a conduit for the invasives, with some marinas like Tahoe Keys being inundated with the unwanted plants.

Patterson said marinas are the perfect place for invasive plants to live because it's still water where fine sediment comes in.

Another issue Patterson wants marinas to be cognizant of is stormwater runoff. Many marinas have pipes draining into the

lake from their properties. But the water likely originated farther upland. Still, marinas are regulated and the amount of fine sediment deposited becomes their problem.

This fact was evident last July when a putrid smell was coming from Ski Run Marina. South Lake Tahoe officials were notified and it turned to be a malfunction with a weir. The city fixed the problem.

Through the League's Pipe Keepers program marina staff can be trained to take samples during storms that are then analyzed for turbidity by the League's people.

"Source reduction is our No. 1 goal," Patterson said.

Opinion: When friends are 'like family'

By Deborah Tannen, New York Times

"My friends are the sisters I was meant to have," a woman told me. Another said that her friends are more precious than her sisters because they remember things from her past that her sisters don't and can't, since they weren't there. And a man commented that he didn't enjoy a particular friend's company all that much, but it was beside the point: "He's family."

I interviewed over 80 people for a book I'm writing about friendship, and was struck by how many said that one or another friend is "like family."

These comments, and how people explained them, shed light on the nature of friendship, the nature of family, and something that lies at the heart of both: what it means to be close.

For friends, as for family, “close” is the holy grail of relationships. (In both contexts I often heard, “I wish we were closer” but never “I wish we weren’t so close.”)

Read the whole story

Study: Calif. pays lower taxes on alcohol than average

By Daniel Wheaton, Los Angeles Times

Californians can consider themselves lucky: their state charges less in taxes than the national average for import taxes on beer, wine and liquor.

A report from the Tax Foundation breaks down excise taxes by state. These are paid by the person or business that buys the alcohol from the manufacturer, and are often passed down to the consumer. California’s rate is 20 cents per gallon of beer. That amounts to 2.5 cents for each pint. On top of that however, is a federal tax of 58 cents per gallon of beer, or 7 cents per pint.

As with nearly every other good, taxes vary based on where you’re purchasing them. Regionally, there is significant variation in how much states tax beer: The South has the highest beer taxes; in Wyoming, it’s barely anything at all.

Read the whole story

Introduction to pickleball at SLT Rec Center

South Lake Tahoe is hosting an open house for pickleball enthusiasts on April 2 at 2pm.

It will be at the rec center, 1180 Rufus Allen Blvd.

Players will learn the basics of one of the fastest-growing games in the U.S.

Cost is \$6 for adults and \$5 for seniors. This includes access to the entire recreation center for the day.

Pickleball paddles and balls provided.