

Letter: Heavenly takes a turn at B&B

To the community,

Thanks to the generous Vail EpicPromise Grant program funds awarded to Bread & Broth, 12 Monday evening meals are served annually through B&B's Adopt A Day of Nourishment program. On a monthly basis, Heavenly Mountain Resort and Kirkwood Mountain Resort alternate hosting a dinner and sending a sponsor volunteer crew to work with the B&B volunteers to provide a hot, nutritious meal and giveaway bags to South Tahoe Community members dealing with food insecurity.

It was Heavenly Mountain Resorts turn during the month of December to host a B&B Adopt A Day dinner and on Dec. 14 members of Heavenly's sales and hospitality teams came to represent their departments. As always, the sponsor volunteer crew members from the Vail Resorts were outstanding and a pleasure to work with. Representing Heavenly at the dinner were sales coordinators Shannon Proper and Mary Hajdas; Michelle Beall, hospitality marketing; Lynsey Wright, international sales manager; and Adriann Kremer, group sales manager.

Bread & Broth sincerely appreciates the support of both the Heavenly and Kirkwood Mountain Resorts and the great attitude of all the wonderful sponsor crew members who volunteer their time to help to ease hunger in our community.

"I know I speak for all of us when I say that I feel so lucky to work for a company that is so involved with community organizations like B&B," reflected Beall. "Thank you for letting us serve today."

To partner with B&B as a donor or sponsor, contact me at 530.542.2876 or carolsgerard@aol.com.

TOCCATA ready for 11th annual WinterFest

Tahoe Symphony Orchestra and Chorus kicks off its 11th annual WinterFest with the “Brrroque Masters” concert series Jan. 3, 6, 8 and 10.

The concert series is dedicated to the memory of Mark Lord, TOCCATA’s principal trumpet player 2007-14.

The program opens with Mouret’s famous “Suite de Sinfonie” fanfare, which is better known as the “theme from Masterpiece Theater”, followed by Bach’s famed “Cantata No. 51, Jauchzet Gott en allen Landen,” a masterpiece for soprano Joy Strotz and baroque trumpeter Josh Dunlap. Bach’s “Concerto for Oboe D’Amore BWV 1055” will be performed by Nita Tune, and Vivaldi’s “Concerto for Flute RV 428 (The Goldfinch)” will be performed by Allison Smith. Concertmaster Jeffrey Lindhorst will be the featured soloist in Corelli’s “Concerto Grosso Op. 6 No. 8”.

The concert finishes with Handel’s tour de force for soprano and trumpet, “Let the Bright Seraphim”, from the opera “Samson”.

The Jan. 6 concert will feature soprano Michelle Norris, Mark Lord’s daughter. Katie Lauder, harpsichordist, and Nick Haines, cello, perform as the continuo. Maestro James Rawie will conduct all performances.

The performances are Jan. 3, at 3:30pm at St. Theresa Church

in South Lake Tahoe (1041 Lyons Ave.); Jan. 6 at 7pm at Corpus Christi Catholic Church in Carson City (3597 N. Sunridge Drive); Jan. 8 at 7pm at St. Patrick's Episcopal Church in Incline Village (341 Village Blvd.); Jan. 10 at 3:30pm at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Reno (501 California Ave.).

Tickets are available at the door or **online**. General admission to all concerts is \$25 adults, \$20 seniors, \$5 students aged 19 to 23. Preferred seating is \$35 and \$15 for youth/students. Youth under 19 years of age are admitted free, in non reserved seating, to most regular season concerts in 2016. All performances are supported by the Kling Family Foundation.

2015: A good year for the average human being

By Charles Kenny, Atlantic

From Paris to Syria through San Bernardino to Afghanistan, the world witnessed obscene and unsufferable tragedy in 2015. That was on top of the ongoing misery of hundreds of millions who are literally stunted by poverty, living lives shortened by preventable disease and malnutrition. But for all of that, 2015 also saw continued progress toward better quality of life for the considerable majority of the planet, alongside technological breakthroughs and political agreements that suggest the good news might continue next year and beyond.

Tragedy and misery are rarer than they were before 2015—and there is every reason to hope they will be even less prevalent in 2016.

To start with acts of violence in America, despite its

epidemic of mass-shooting events, the country is still far safer than it was in the past. The latest FBI statistics, reported this September, suggested that the trend toward lower rates of violent crime in the United States that began in the early 1990s continued at least through 2014: There were nearly 3,000 fewer violent crimes that year than the year before and more than 600,000 fewer than in 1995—that's a 35 percent decline over the period.

The latest data from the UN suggests that this is part of a global trend—to take one category of violent crime, homicide rates have dropped by an estimated 6 percent in the countries for which data was available between 2000 and 2012.

Read the whole story

Boutique hotel group acquires Park 968 in SLT

San Francisco-based hotel chain Joie de Vivre has taken over Park 968 in South Lake Tahoe.

With the addition of Park 968 and Monterey Tides, Joie de Vivre now operates 22 hotels in California. The boutique hotel chain also has properties in Chicago, Miami, Scottsdale and Washington, D.C., and soon will be in New Orleans and New York City.

Park 968 started as a Days Inn in the 1970s. In 2007, brothers Solomon and David Aflalo along with five silent partners bought the aging hotel for nearly \$5 million. It took almost a year to renovate the 58-room hotel. It became the first eco-friendly hotel on the South Shore.

In summer 2016 there will be 164 rooms available because the Park Tahoe Inn, which is next door, is being combined with Park 968 to be one hotel. Those rooms will be completely renovated. A clerk at Park 968 said they will look different, but could not say how.

The décor at 968 Park is modern and rustic at the same time.

A new restaurant will service the combined property. There will also be an expansive outdoor terrace.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Tahoe National Forest's Truckee Ranger District has been named District of the Year by the U.S. Forest Service's Pacific Southwest Region.

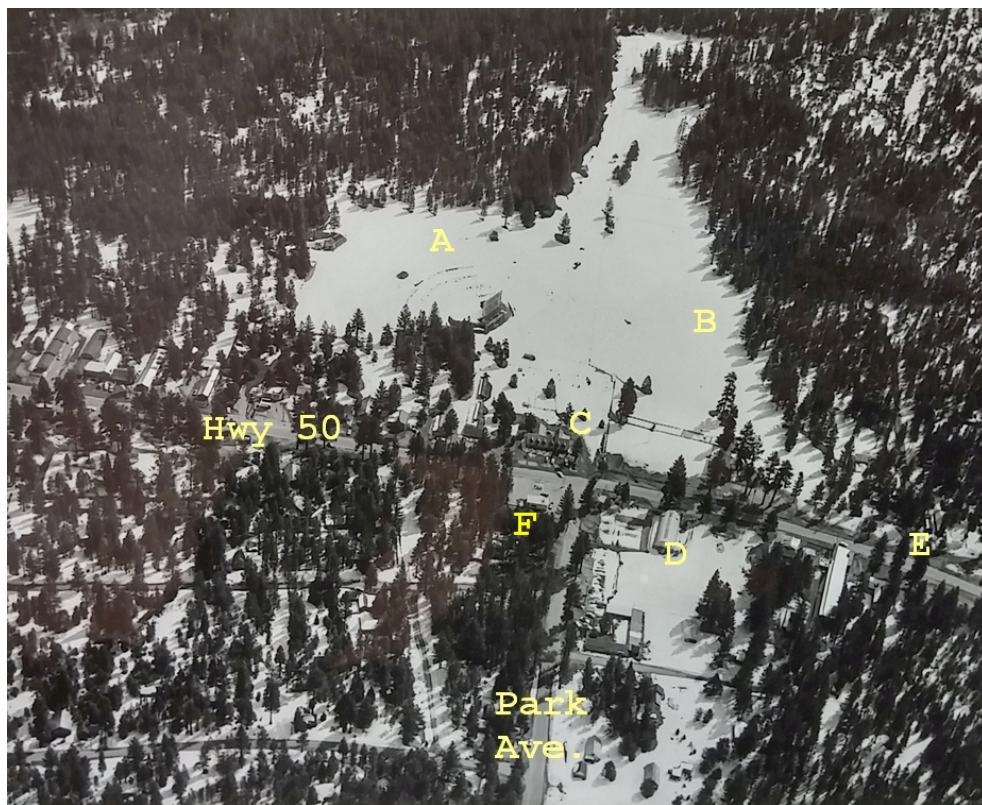
• Caltrans District 3 employees provided more than \$16,200 in cash donations and 747 pounds of food for local charities throughout the Sacramento Valley and Sierra regions as well as the Yuba-Sutter Chapter of the Salvation Army. Local charities included Sacramento Loaves and Fishes, Sacramento Food Bank, Food Bank of Nevada County and Christmas Cheer in South Lake Tahoe.

• In 2016 Washoe County Sheriff's Office's search and rescue team will be celebrating 50 years of service.

• According to the latest numbers released by the California Department of Finance, Placer County leads the

state in net domestic migration with 3.85 percent. This means more people are choosing to call Placer County home than are deciding to pack the moving van.

Then and now: Changes to the Park Avenue area



This is the Park Avenue area of South Lake Tahoe in the early 1950s. Photo/Lake Tahoe Historical Society

Defining the markers in the photo:

A = Steve Myers's original Tahoe Drive-In Theatre which moved to Bijou in the mid-1950s. Its curvy driveway leading from Cecil's (C) ultimately became an extension of Park Avenue

entering the Crescent V Center. Today that leg is renamed Heavenly Village Way.

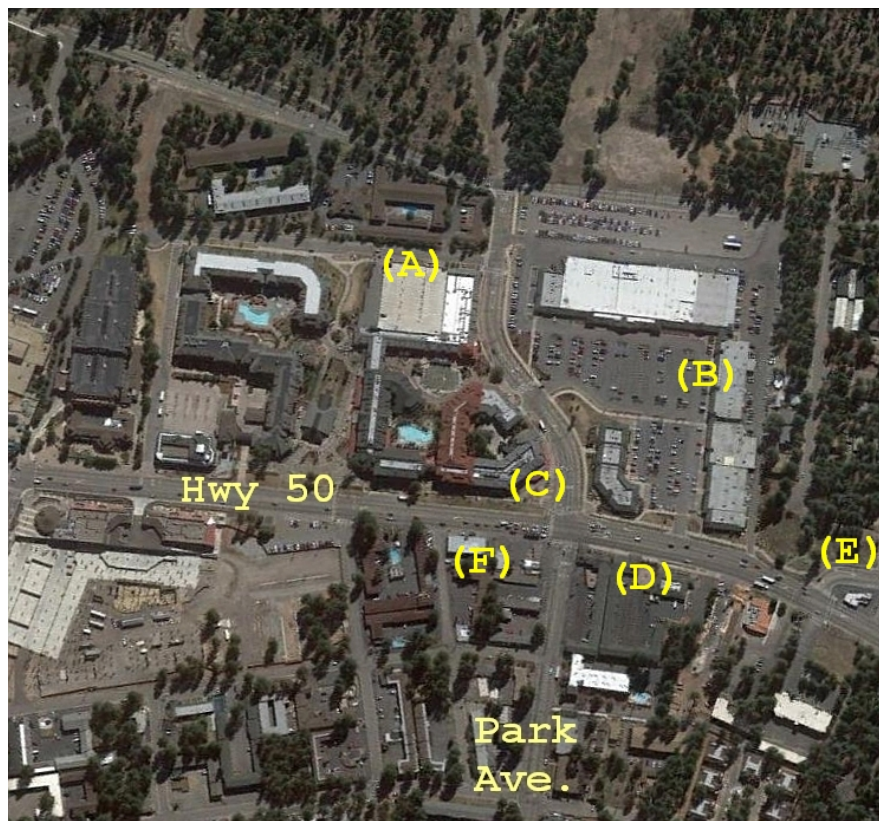
B = Jack VanSickle's Crescent V Ranch and Stateline Riding Stables, part of which became Crescent V Shopping Center in 1963.

C = The landmark Cecil's Market was razed in 2001 for redevelopment.

D = (Judge) Rudy and Jeannie Buchanan's quonset-hut Lakeside Theatre was razed in 1962 and rebuilt in 1963 near the Y. Rebuilt again by Office Depot in 1990s, it now is the CVS store.

E = Junction of Highway 50 and Pioneer Trail. There were no traffic signals in this photo, and Highway 50 was two lanes, plus parking.

F = "Brownie" Piedmont's Flying A service station, South Shore's oldest surviving gas station, is now Tahoe Tom's.



An aerial view of the same locations in
2015. Photo/Google Earth

– *Bill Kingman*

Going to the beach Tahoe style – with skis



Lots of snow this year makes it easy to ski on Tahoe's beaches. Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

ROUND HILL – Flat and scenic – the perfect combo for a cross country ski trek for those who are not super proficient at this sport.

While gliding is a large component of getting anywhere on

these skis, many of us were having trouble on this particular Saturday. The snow at times was sticky, other times slick. We persevered. The beauty surrounding us was too beautiful to let our speed or lack thereof dampen the outing.

With the abundance of snow this year there is little reason to have to travel far to ski. The beaches in the basin offer miles of scenic bliss. Being next to the water allowed for views to the West Shore and of Mount Tallac.



Starting out the trek is through the woods.

Going out the lake was tranquil; looking like it could have been a good day for a paddle, as well. Heading home, though,

the water was rougher – making the choice to be on land the smart decision for that day.

Eleven people and three dogs earlier this month went from Nevada Beach, through Edgewood Tahoe Golf Course to Lakeside Beach and back – about four miles round trip.

The lake is so low that at times we were gliding under piers. It certainly made it easier than contending with water or being close to private dwellings. Nevada and California have different rules about what is considered public property in regards to the water lines.



Edgewood Tahoe goes from golf course to cross country trail.

With snow, the clubhouse at Edgewood looks regal, yet inviting. Unfortunately it wasn't open the day we scooted by.

In fact, nothing was open on this stretch of sand. With the number of people who were out at Lakeside, it would seem like a perfect place for a hot chocolate and food concessionaire. They have the facilities in the summer, so why not now?



No ducking required to ski under the docks.

Getting there:

From South Lake Tahoe, go east on Highway 50. Drive past the casinos. Turn left on Elks Point Road. Turn left on Dorla Court. Park and ski toward the lake.

Opinion: El Dorado County out of control

By Larry Weitzman

At the last Board of Supervisors meeting on Dec. 15 item 40 on the calendar was to correct an error made by the CAO's office in the **annexation by El Dorado Hills Fire Department**, the wealthiest district in the county, of Latrobe Fire, one of the

poorest. The annexation was performed by the BOS on June 10, 2014, but item 40 proposed a grant of \$513,302 from the general fund to EDH Fire. In doing so the BOS made a summary finding without any evidence being introduced that there would be a public benefit as a result.

EDH Fire is a district that has on its last reported financial statement more than \$22 million in cash, along with the highest pay and benefit scale in the county for its employees. With only five years of service, an employee at 50 can retire with post-employment health care benefits, including dependents.



Larry Weitzman

The El Dorado County Fire Protection District by comparison is six times larger by area, has nearly double the population and has just 12 percent of the cash (\$2.6 million) of EDH Fire, according to their last balance sheets. Recently their Lotus Fire Station was closed from lack of funds.

But there is a larger issue that didn't stop our BOS led by former EDH Fire Chief, Supervisor and Chairman of the BOS Brian Veerkamp from granting over half a million dollars to EDH Fire at that last BOS meeting. Veerkamp not only ran the meeting, he "said" that he had no conflict of interest, participated in the discussion, encouraged item 40's passing and voted for it all in a probable violation of Government Code Sections 1090 and 1091 even if it is found Veerkamp has only a "remote" interest in EDH Fire as defined by the statutes.

During this last meeting, the issue of conflict of interest was raised by two of the written public comments on item 40 with respect to Veerkamp's receiving an approximately \$200,000 annual pension paid indirectly by EDH Fire and health care benefits paid directly by EDH Fire. Veerkamp himself should know the answer as every elected official and certain public officials including fire chiefs are required to take ethics training, including conflicts of interest instruction every two years and maintain proof of participation in disclosable public records for five years. Instituted pursuant to Government Code Section 53235 the requirement for continuing education started in January 2006 (Attorney General Ethics Training for Local Government Officials). Since Veerkamp was the prior EDH fire chief, he should have had this training and course at least five times. He should be an expert on conflicts of interest and the prohibitions of gifts of public funds (California Constitution, Article XVI, Section 6).

The statutes with respect to conflict of interest questions are Government Code Sections 1090-1097 et seq. Those sections not only govern the conflict issues as raised by the written and oral public comments, they relate to the June 10, 2014, BOS hearing when EDH Fire originally attempted to annex the Latrobe Fire District. But mistakes made by the county administrative staff prevented the takeover of the property tax revenues. Veerkamp was on the Fire Committee and LAFCO and participated favorably and voted for the annexation at the BOS level on June 10, 2014. Veerkamp had the exact same conflict issues then as he has now and likely has a problem as a result of participating in either BOS meeting. The penalties for a violation under Section 1090 are substantial. If you remember, former Supervisor Ray Nutting was charged by the district attorney for a 1090 violation.

Even if you have only a "remote" interest, which probably describes the Veerkamp relationship between being a supervisor and his receipt of benefits from EDH Fire as defined by

1091(b)(13), there are significant issues. The requirement of Government Code Section 1091(a) is where it gets dicey for Veerkamp. It says when a person sits on a governing body that is making contracts with an entity in which said person has a "remote" interest, you are required to do certain things which were spelled out by the court in the case of People vs. Honig (1996) 48 Cal. App. 4th 289, at 317, 318.

Honig was Bill Honig, the elected California superintendent of Public Instruction. "Section 1091 applies to an officer who is a member of a body or board that authorizes, approves or ratifies a contract. Such an officer will not be deemed to be interested in a contract if his or her interest is one of the remote interests as set forth in the section, if the officer makes a full disclosure of the interest, the officer abstains from voting, the officer does not influence or attempt to influence any other member, and the body or board authorizes, approves or ratifies the contract in good faith by votes of the membership sufficient for that purpose without counting the vote of the officer with the remote interest." The Honig case defined a "grant" of money as a contract.

And at this Dec. 15 meeting, the county had no contractual obligation to make this gift or grant. EDH Fire, because the property taxes were never transferred, had no legal interest in the Latrobe property tax revenues. They are gone forever as far as EDH Fire is concerned. Not only has the matter slipped through the sieve, the statute of limitations with respect to a claim likely has also past. To get around the prohibition against public gifts of money, at the suggestion of CAO Larry Combs, the BOS had to say there was a finding of public benefit. (At the hearing Auditor-Controller Joe Harn promised to pay despite the evidence of a conflict.) It was added to the agenda as No. 4 to item 40 seconds before the vote was taken.

Not only does this whole item stink, Veerkamp, instead of declaring a conflict and recusing himself from speaking and

voting, acted as if he had no conflict and continued to conduct the meeting, encourage Item 40's passing and voted. Veerkamp should know better. Veerkamp may have a serious problem as a result of bowing to a former master. That is a key reason for conflict of interest laws as stated by the court in Honig at pages 324-325.

Larry Weitzman is a resident of Rescue.

Gun deaths as common as traffic deaths in U.S.

By Christopher Ingraham and Carolyn Y. Johnson, Washington Post

For the first time on record, Americans are as likely to die by a gunshot as in a traffic accident, according to federal data.

Gun deaths now outnumber vehicle deaths in 21 states and the District of Columbia. That was true in just two states a decade ago, Alaska and Maryland.

The trend was driven largely by the sharp drop in the rate of traffic fatalities, a result of a series of laws and safety measures aimed at making driving safer. Gun homicide rates also have fallen in recent years, but have been offset by the rising prevalence of suicides.

Today, suicides account for roughly two out of every three gun deaths.

Read the whole story

Expect cable bills to increase in 2016

By Gerry Smith, BloombergNews

While facing a growing number of consumers who drop pay-TV for cheaper online alternatives, Time Warner Cable Inc., Comcast Corp., Dish Network Corp. and AT&T Inc. are all planning to increase their prices early next year – at the risk of turning off more subscribers fed up with the rising cost of television.

It's part of the vicious circle at the heart of the U.S. media industry's current troubles. To attract viewers who are migrating to Netflix Inc. and Amazon.com Inc., programmers are spending billions of dollars on developing scripted shows and on the rights to air sporting events – one of the last things that people still watch live. They are passing on those costs to cable- and satellite-TV providers by charging higher fees to carry their channels. Those providers, in turn, are passing on some of those costs to consumers.

In the coming weeks, Time Warner Cable is raising its sports programming fee by \$2.25 to \$5 per month and its broadcast programming fee by \$1 to \$3.75. Comcast, the biggest U.S. cable company, will increase its broadcast fee by \$1.75 to \$5 and its regional sports fee by \$2 to \$3. Phone and satellite companies are planning similar increases, which vary depending on the package. All say the moves are because of the rising cost of carrying broadcast and sports networks.

Read the whole story