

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Sir Cedric

Sir Cedric is a 3-year-old tabby and white shorthair cat with big pointy ears. Cedric also has extra toes on his huge front paws.

Plus, Cedric has a huge heart – he loves attention. He may get along with other cats given the right introduction and patience. Due to a kind donor, Cedric's adoption fee is just \$20.

Cedric is neutered, microchipped, tested for FIV, and vaccinated. He is at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many other dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes. Go to the Tahoe animal shelter's Facebook page to see photos and descriptions of all pets at the shelter.

Call 530.573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet. For spay-neuter assistance for South Tahoe residents, go online.

– Karen Kuentz

Opinion: Is rising inequality poisoning our democracy?

By **Zócalo**

Back in the 1980s, President Ronald Reagan famously took a jab at the policies of Lyndon Johnson with the remark, “In the ’60s we waged a war on poverty, and poverty won.” Since then, poverty has apparently continued its victorious march. According to the Census, 43.3 million people were living in poverty in 2013 – down from the year before, but way up from 2007 pre-recession numbers.

With the 2016 presidential election cranking up, soon the airwaves will swell with candidates’ ideas for how to remedy the woes of America’s poor. What should we do about economic disadvantage – particularly in a country that holds the concept of equality as a democratic principle in such high regard?

As a preview for Zócalo’s fifth annual book prize event “Can Democracy Exist Without Equality?”, we asked scholars: What effects could increasing inequality have on democracy in America?

Stephen Pimpare: Mark Twain was right

A hedge fund manager just paid \$92 million for an apartment he has no intention of living in; it’s just a “fun” investment, he says. Meanwhile, 28 percent of U.S. workers earn wages so low that even if they work full time, year-round, they will still live in poverty (it’s 36 percent for African Americans). In 2014, just the bonuses paid by Wall Street banks equaled twice the total earnings of all full-time minimum wage

workers.

Welcome to the New Gilded Age.

There is nothing “natural” about our unprecedented level of inequality. Economic forces didn’t mysteriously cause this; political ones did – a backlash against New Deal and Great Society programs that redistributed money and power from a narrow elite to the broader public. The pushback has been seen in a decades-long assault on unions, cuts in tax rates for high income Americans, the repeal of regulations that restrain corporate power, stagnation in the minimum wage, and cutbacks on the very social welfare programs that mitigate the worst effects of the “unfettered” market.

Meanwhile, because we define “welfare” so narrowly, we are blind to the “submerged” state that further redistributes money through the tax code to upper-income families.

That money buys them political power, which gets them more money, which secures yet more power. This is not hypothetical: A growing body of research demonstrates that U.S. policy-making institutions have become “utterly unresponsive” to the needs and wants not just of poor and low-income Americans, but increasingly of middle-class ones as well.

Political philosophers since Plato have condemned excessive inequality, and not typically on moral grounds. Rather, they worried about how one maintains political stability and legitimacy in the face of such distance between classes – after all, people who struggle while they see others prosper can only be made so miserable before they feel they have nothing to lose by fighting back.

Stephen Pimpare is author of “The New Victorians: Poverty, Politics, and Propaganda in Two Gilded Ages” and “A People’s History of Poverty in America”.

Nicole Austin-Hillery: Inequality is a moral issue

The United States as a nation boasts about the virtues of equality and the ability of all Americans to “pull themselves up by their bootstraps.” But in the reality of the 21st century, this concept is little more than a catchphrase. The United States is a nation divided by wealth and income, where it is difficult, if not impossible, for individuals with decreasing economic power to connect with the inner workings of this country.

We see examples of the power that money buys everywhere. Most notably, the Supreme Court’s Citizens’ United ruling reminded us that when it comes to free speech within the electoral system, one’s voice gets much louder when it’s amplified by dollar signs.

Larger, equally complicated issues like race (particularly if one is African American or Latino) and gender are inextricably linked to the subject of wealth and power in the United States, and a multitude of research has been devoted to the various intersections of race, gender and wealth disparity. This does not bode well for the future of America, where the racially diverse population of the country is projected to become the majority over the next several decades.

Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz recently discussed the growing chasm between the haves and the have-nots in his book, “The Great Divide”, and concluded that the consequences for this nation will be devastating as the divide widens.

Stiglitz warns that we must treat inequality as an urgent political and moral issue. As numerous candidates begin vying for votes ahead of the 2016 presidential election, one can only hope that this issue will be more than a talking point. Those who benefit from political power owe it to the nation, and to the furtherance of our democracy, to recognize and address the larger issue of inequality.

Nicole Austin-Hillery is the director and counsel of the Brennan Center for Justice, Washington Office. She directs the organizations work in Washington in the Justice and Democracy areas, with a particular focus on mass incarceration, racial and criminal justice, and voting.

Michael Tanner: Warren Buffet and the Koch brothers don't share a brain

The idea that growing inequality threatens our democracy is a three-legged stool, each leg of which is fatally flawed.

1) "Inequality has never been worse."

Most claims that income inequality is at a record high in the United States are based on a measure of "market income," which does not take into account taxes or transfer payments. Yet, America already has a significantly redistributive political process. We tax the rich heavily and provide benefits to the non-rich.

According to Gary Burtless of the Brookings Institution, hardly a right-winger, fully accounting for taxes and benefits actually shows that income inequality between the top one percent and everyone else actually decreased in the United States from 2000 to 2010.

2) "The rich vote in lockstep."

The idea that the rich threaten the democratic process presumes that the wealthy share a common political philosophy or interest. But the idea that Tom Steyer, Warren Buffet, David Koch, and Sheldon Adelson agree on much of anything is preposterous. The rich don't even agree on basic questions of taxes and redistribution. Moreover, the rich don't contribute to campaigns just for personal gain. Like the rest of us, they are expressing views on everything from gay marriage to war and peace.

3) "Money in politics favors the rich."

The influence of money on politics is vastly overstated. According to the Center for Responsive Politics, candidates for Congress spent roughly \$3.76 billion in 2014. Yet that was less than the \$6 billion spent on auto insurance advertisements in 2013, with Geico alone spending almost \$1.2 billion. Aren't election choices worth as much as insurance choices? Besides, 16 of the top 25 political campaign contributors since 2002 are unions, the CRP reports. Over the same period, the arch-villain Koch brothers, in fact, ranked 50th in total political contributions. Elections are littered with losers that thought they could buy an election. Remember California gubernatorial candidate Meg Whitman?

Inequality remains a powerful rallying cry. But this stool is about to fall over.

Michael Tanner is a senior fellow with the Cato Institute, where he heads research into a variety of domestic policies with a particular emphasis on poverty and social welfare policy, health care reform, and Social Security.

Victor Tan Chen: Debunking the myth of self-made success

When Michael Young coined the term "meritocracy" half a century ago, he meant it to be an insult, not an ideal. In his view, a society where only the best and brightest can advance would soon become a nightmare. Young predicted that democracy would self-destruct as the talented took power and the inferior accepted their deserved place at the bottom.

Of course, the world we live in today is still no meritocracy. If most Americans are expected to go it alone, without the help of government or unions, elites continue to block competitors and manipulate the rules – as Wall Street did in spectacular fashion in the lead-up to the 2008 financial crisis.

Celebrated French economist Thomas Piketty argues that even when – or especially when – the market operates efficiently, inherited wealth becomes an ever more potent force within the economy, slowly strangling the opportunities for ordinary individuals to advance.

Nevertheless, the myth of meritocracy tells us that the rich are rich because they – like Young’s talented ruling class – are smarter and better. They worked their way up. They are the “makers” growing the economy. Anyone who can’t do it on his or her “own” is just a “taker,” suckling on the government’s teat.

I found hints of this viewpoint when I interviewed the long-term unemployed for my book. Some felt enormous shame and blamed themselves for their inability to land another job. Often, the sense of failure had a negative impact on their personal relationships and their belief that they had something at all to contribute to society.

Preserving our democracy will require forceful government regulation and strong unions. Such approaches have their own flaws, but there is no other way to restore balance to an economy and society increasingly under the sway of an elite class.

Beyond that, we need to tackle head-on the culture of judgment, materialism, and ruthless advancement used to justify extreme inequality – and temper it with a measure of grace.

Victor Tan Chen is the author “Cut Loose: Jobless and Hopeless in an Unfair Economy”, which will be published by the University of California Press in August. He is an assistant professor of sociology at Virginia Commonwealth University and the editor in chief of In The Fray. He can be reached at victortanchen.com and @inthe fray.

Valerie R. Wilson: Disenfranchisement can create momentum

American democracy, in theory, is rooted in equality – the idea that each of us is entitled to an equal say in decisions that affect us all. In reality, however, money and power have always been used to tilt the outcome of democracy in one direction or another.

America's history is littered with examples of powerful entities denying entire segments of the population the right to vote based on race or gender. And this continues to happen through corruption, intimidation and arbitrary restrictions (e.g. voter ID laws, cutting voting hours, purging voter rolls, or ending same-day registration) to steal, buy or suppress votes.

But the power of political activism among the disadvantaged and disenfranchised has also been an important tool in rebalancing the scales of American justice and democracy.

Increasing economic inequality is the direct result of the influence of money and power in the democratic process. Public policy choices on behalf of a wealthy and privileged minority have intentionally suppressed wage and income growth for most Americans and concentrated income gains at the top of the income distribution. This has given the already-rich even more resources with which to lobby for policies that benefit them.

A desire to break this destructive dynamic has mobilized an increasingly diverse majority to fight for their fair share of the economic gains they help to produce. The momentum behind the workers' movement to raise the minimum wage, Fight for \$15, continues to build as it expands beyond its base of fast food workers. But it remains to be seen whether this momentum can be successfully marshaled on a larger scale to prevail against the influence of wealth and power in American politics.

Valerie R. Wilson is an economist and director of the Program on Race, Ethnicity and the Economy at the Economic Policy

Institute in Washington, D.C.

Indivar Dutta-Gupta: Why the wealthy always win

Inequalities in income, wealth, and opportunity have risen to virtually unprecedented levels. In “Affluence and Influence”, political scientist Martin Gilens demonstrates that in policy disagreements between the most well-off and everyone else, the wealthy consistently win. And while it’s not too late to change things, if this problem gets worse, it could seriously impair our democracy.

One glaring cause and consequence of rising inequality is that Congress has not raised the minimum wage since 2007. FDR described the minimum wage as necessary in any “self-supporting and self-respecting democracy.” So why does it lag so far behind growth in worker output per hour, despite widespread support for increases throughout nearly all the income and wealth distribution? To understand the lack of recent minimum wage increases, look to the highest one percent of the wealth distribution, where one starts to see significant opposition.

Expanding economic inequality may also enlarge gaps in policy preferences between the affluent and the rest of us. We increasingly see proposals to shrink the wildly popular and successful Social Security program, despite the fact that most Americans prefer to expand these programs.

The good news is that we know how to protect our democracy. Leveling the playing field for political contributions, strengthening voting rights, and limiting the influence of corporate lobbyists are a good start. So are full employment, modernized labor standards and worker empowerment, and public investments in education and care. And, imperfect as they are, elections, like the one we are having next November, still offer less affluent Americans a chance to be heard.

Indivar Dutta-Gupta is a senior fellow at the Georgetown

University Center on Poverty and Inequality. He has worked policy analysis and development related to tax, budget, savings, education, training, and public insurance programs and policies.

Tahoe City-based guide recounts Nepal quake

By James Joiner, Daily Beast

High in the Himalayas, Everest climbers can only hope for the best after Saturday's devastating earthquake.

As the numbers of injured and killed – currently 5,900 and 3,218, respectively—rise in the wake of yesterday's earthquake in Nepal and aftershocks continue to rock the countryside, the first groups of evacuees from nearby Mount Everest's base camp have begun to straggle in to the ravaged capital of Kathmandu. Massive avalanches, unleashed by the quake, destroyed the north side camp, killing 19 people, including Google executive, American Dan Fredinburg.

Pentagon Spokesman Col. Steve Warren said nearly 70 personnel, "including a USAID Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART), the Fairfax County Urban Search and Rescue team and several journalists along with 45 square tons of cargo," took off this morning from Dover Air Force Base bound for Nepal, and are expected to arrive on Monday.

While in no way overshadowing the country-wide devastation wrought by yesterday's quake, the extent of which is still unfolding, there is, on Everest, a chilling sense of déjà vu. This latest disaster comes almost a year to the day after the

2014 Everest avalanche that claimed the lives of 16 Nepalese guides, calling into question the overall safety and cultural integrity of scaling the legendary mountain, often perceived by the public as the pinnacle high alpine achievement.

We spoke with six-time Everest summiteer and founder of Tahoe City-based Alpenglow Expeditions Adrain Ballanger, who is staged at the northern base camp, just miles away from the avalanches and chaos, about what this horrific disaster could mean for the future of climbing on Everest. Given his limited cell and radio connectivity, Ballanger may not be aware of the scope of the damages in the rest of Nepal.

Read the whole story

Collapsible bike helmet folds into laptop bag

By Kate Bratskeir, Huffington Post

A bicycle helmet funded on Indiegogo aims to make commuting to work even more convenient – and a lot less bulky.

“The Morpher” is designed to fold flat, making it easier to carry around than a traditional helmet. And while cyclists will still deal with its heft, it beats having to lug around a helmet and a bag all at once.

British inventor Jeffrey Woolf came up with the concept after commissioning a survey to learn about the helmet-wearing habits of those who rely on bike rentals, like New York City’s CitiBike and Boston’s Hubway. Of those he surveyed, 92 percent reported not wearing a helmet when riding their temporary

bike. Eighty-four percent believed they were risking their lives by forgoing head protection, and 83 percent said they go without the helmet due to “lack of portability.”

Read the whole story

Drought doesn't drain Vail Resorts revenues

By Jason Blevins, Denver Post

The California drought and a warm spring in Utah pinched visits to Vail Resorts' ski areas, but season pass sales and targeted marketing to wealthy skiers pushed the resort operator's revenues ahead of the previous season.

North America's largest resort operator on Friday released results from its nine ski areas for the 2014-15 ski season showing lift revenue – including a portion of season pass sales – up 8.5 percent over the previous season.

Keeping with a common trend seen across the resort industry, visitors spent more. Vail Resorts' ski school revenue climbed 3.4 percent, dining was up 3.3 percent and retail and rental revenue increased 3.8 percent.

Read the whole story

Lack of snow redefines rock skiing

By Veronica Rocha, Los Angeles Times

A group of filmmakers poked gentle fun at California skiers who were recently photographed skiing on an anemic patch of snow on the state's drought-ridden mountains, by promoting a new sport: rock skiing.

In the film from Happy United and Groove Guild, a skier and a snowboarder donning winter gear are seen climbing a steep, rocky mountain, then leaping off. The pair ski down the sharp rock edges, landing in gravel instead of snow.

Jumping off boulders, the snowboarder and skier appear to navigate every turn and twist with considerable skill despite the lack of snow.

Read the whole story

Training when tired makes a better athlete

By Lindsey Emery, Outside

It's an all-too familiar scene: You're 19 miles into a marathon, feeling good (ish), loose, physically and mentally strong, and then all of a sudden you hit mile 20, and everything starts to crumble. Your muscles ache, your head hurts, your feet throb, your stomach groans – you're fatigued, and you've hit a giant wall. Now you just need to climb over

it. No problem, as long as you've taught your body how to do that successfully.

"For many longer events (half-marathons, marathons, Ironmans, etc.), you can't practice the full distance in training," says Jeff Gaudette, head coach for RunnersConnect. "You need to train tired in order to simulate what the last 10K or so will feel like and to learn how to handle those specific demands during the race."

Training tired can be tricky, though. There's some evidence to suggest that it increases your risk of injury, notes physiologist Darren Paul, author of a recent injury prevention training article published in Aspetar Sports Medicine Journal. "Plus, energy levels are depleted and you become slower in your reaction and decision-making time, which will also likely impact your ability to perform." Approach it properly, however, and it may make you a better athlete. "Training through this response results in better maintenance of strength and improved postural control."

Read the whole story

Truckee resident benefitting from High Fives

On March 15, 2014, Jeff Andrews experienced a snowboarding accident at Sugar Bowl Resort resulting in a C6 burst fracture with associated spinal cord injury and transverse process fractures at L1, L2, and L3. He suffers quadriplegia at the C5-C7 level. His goal is to become as independent as his condition will permit and return to the most active lifestyle possible.

The High Fives Foundation Empowerment program approved a \$21,000 grant for the Truckee resident for nine months of specialized personal training at the CR Johnson Healing Center in Truckee.

A previous empowerment grant allowed Andrews to spend two months at Body Wellness Hawaii training in the Neurokinetic Pilates (NKP) method with Alejandra Monsalve. Throughout his Hawaii trip, Andrew's friend and personal trainer Jack Powell attended every session and has incorporated the NKP method into his training philosophy.

High Fives Foundation is a Tahoe-based nonprofit supporting the dreams of mountain action sports athletes by raising injury prevention awareness while providing resources and inspiration to those who suffer life-altering injuries.

K's Kitchen: Asparagus stars in lasagna

By Kathryn Reed

I don't think there has ever been a time that my sister, Pam, has come to visit that she hasn't helped me with a new recipe. It's a good thing she's a good sport. And not all of the dishes have been keepers and some have been rather labor intensive.

I have to say, though, this is one of the best entrees I have made in a while. All of the flavors came together to make for a wonderful dinner.

The only drawback is when I have milk in the kitchen it's nonfat. That's not a great thickening agent. Mix water and flour together to get out lumps and then pour into whatever you need thickened. It just adds to the cooking time, but does the trick. Of course the easier option is to have milk with fat in it.

Don't skip the lemon rind. It adds tremendously to this recipe.

And don't use a 9 x 13 pan like I did when Pam and mom were here. It made the lasagna too thin.

With it being asparagus season, make this recipe now or you will have to wait a year.



Artichoke and Asparagus Lasagna

1 T olive oil

2 C leeks, thinly sliced

1 pound asparagus, trimmed and cut into 1-inch pieces

2 tsp garlic, minced

2 tsp thyme, chopped

7 ounces marinated artichokes

1½ C milk, divided

3 T all-purpose flour

1 C vegetable broth

1½ tsp grated lemon rind

½ tsp kosher salt

½ tsp black pepper

1/8 tsp nutmeg

Dash of ground red pepper

4 oz. part-skim mozzarella cheese, shredded

2 oz. Parmesan cheese, grated

Cooking spray

6 cooked lasagna noodles

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Heat oil in large skillet over medium heat. Add leek; cook 3 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add asparagus; cook 3 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add garlic and thyme; cook 1 minute. Stir in artichokes; remove from heat.

Combine half cup milk and flour in a saucepan, stirring with a whisk until smooth. Stir in remaining 1 cup milk and broth. Bring to a simmer over medium heat, stirring frequently. Simmer until thickened.

Add rind and next 4 ingredients (through red pepper).

Combine cheeses in a small bowl.

Spread half cup milk mixture in bottom of an 8-inch square glass or ceramic baking dish coated with cooking spray. Cut bottom third off each noodle to form 6 large and 6 small noodles. In a single layer, arrange 2 large and 2 small noodles over milk mixture to fit pan.

Top with one-third of vegetable mixture, one-third of remaining milk mixture, and one-third of cheese mixture. Repeat layers twice, ending with cheese.

Cover with foil. Bake for 25 minutes. Uncover lasagna; broil on middle rack of oven for 2 minutes or until cheese is browned. Let stand 5 minutes before serving.

Nev. Legislature may fund cloud seeding

By Jeff DeLong, Reno Gazette-Journal

As a late-season snowstorm swept toward the Sierra Friday, scientists prepared to do their thing. In this case, that meant activating mountaintop generators that spray chemicals into storm clouds, encouraging formation of ice crystals that fall as precious snow.

“It looks pretty good. We are pretty confident we will get the opportunity,” Frank McDonough, an atmospheric scientist with Reno’s Desert Research Institute, said of the approaching storm’s potential..

And for the first time in six years, Nevada’s cloud-seeding program could get a little help from the Legislature, which is considering a bill to help fund a financially struggling effort. Local leaders, meanwhile, want to explore the potential of seeding Sierra storms in different ways, including through the use of manned aircraft and drones.

Even last winter, by the far the driest in a string of four dry ones, cloud-seeding paid off, DRI scientists recently

reported to the Western Regional Water Commission. The commission is again being asked to contribute \$100,000 toward cloud-seeding operations next winter.

Read the whole story