

Letter: Drug Store Project makes a difference

To the community,

Thank you to the many agencies, service clubs, public organizations, and volunteers who helped with the 12th annual Drug Store Project event on March 31 at Lake Tahoe Community College. Our 320 sixth-grade students had the assistance of 200 volunteers to send a clear message that they are valued. Teaching our youth about the dangers of all drugs; marijuana, alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes, over-the-counter as well as prescriptive medications, gets more challenging each year as states provide new legislation and products such as e-cigarettes that are packaged to entice our minors.

The agencies and groups who provided this program strongly believe that a difference can be made for our kids. Collectively we believe that if youth are provided knowledge about what effects drugs have on the body, the mind, family and social life, productivity, and overall positive life experiences, that many more will choose not to experiment and not to participate in drug use. If we can collectively put off the "age of onset" experimentation, then we can see a difference for our youth. Less drug use means less demand. Less demand is less costly in lives and in all facets of economics.

This year marked the 12th year of our program and we continue to make improvements and adjust with the needs of our youth each year. Our students complete both a pre and post survey to evaluate the information we provide. We want to know if it is making a difference on a cognitive level; if they are gaining knowledge about what drugs are and what consequences can occur. We also work to learn what they thought about our program. Additionally, a counselor from Tahoe Youth & Family

Services will visit each classroom following the event for further discussion and students will be provided a community bag to take home.

Already our youth are reporting that the event was both meaningful and worth their time; that they have more information and confidence to make decisions that are in their best interest. Youth are reminded that the true test will come when confronted to choose experimentation or use of drugs, as the choice will be theirs alone. "Choices, What are Yours?" is the message we provide our youth before, during, and after this event.

Of the 200 individuals working the event, 16 were students at South Tahoe High School who participated in the program while in sixth grade. We also had the assistance of four Honor Society students from Lake Tahoe Community College assisting us. Those 20 students are now a proactive part in drug prevention here in Lake Tahoe and we couldn't be more proud. We continue to also have the assistance of our California National Guard with representatives from our Army and Air Force who are assigned to the Joint Task Force Domestic Support – Counter Drug. It is with the help of these men and women who are working on coalitions to help provide events such as these for our communities. Their contributions are invaluable.

Tahoe Youth & Family Services is the agency under which our program is based. The Drug Store Project continues to be supported completely through donations, grants, and in-kind donations from businesses amounting to \$41,650. Of this amount, \$24,360 of in-kind donations is provided by Harrah's Lake Tahoe, Lake Tahoe Resort Hotel, McFarlane Mortuary, and Lake Tahoe Community College. The needed "cash" for this program is donated by our service clubs and agencies, \$11,000 this year. We are in year two of the South Tahoe Drug Free Coalition's grant and receive \$4,200 and we maintain a small carryover from year-to-year to keep us going when donations

are less. The true cost per pupil attending this year is approximately \$130. Every dollar is worth a child's life. Please support those that support your kids.

I'd like to extend my gratitude to the following entities:

Barton Health, Barton Health Foundation, California Conservation Corps, California Highway Patrol, CalSTAR, Diamond Valley School, Douglas County Search and Rescue, El Dorado Community Foundation, El Dorado County District Attorney, El Dorado County Mental Health, El Dorado County Probation, El Dorado County Public Health, El Dorado County Search and Rescue-Tahoe Team, El Dorado County Sheriff's Office – Narcotics, EDSO Sherriff's Team of Active Retirees, El Dorado County Superior Court, Harrah's Harvey's Lake Tahoe, Harrah's HEROS Program, JCV Photography, Joint Task Force Domestic Support-CD, Kiwanis Club of Lake Tahoe, Kiwanis Club of Tahoe Sierra, Lake Tahoe Community College, Lake Tahoe Resort Hotel, Lake Tahoe Unified School District, Lake Valley Fire Protection District, McFarlane Mortuary, Optimist Club of Lake Tahoe, Partnership of Community Resources, Pro Leisure, Rotary Club of South Lake Tahoe, Sierra Community Church, Soroptimist International of Tahoe Sierra, South Lake Tahoe Fire Department, South Lake Tahoe Police Department: Explorers/K9/Narcotics/Patrol, South Lake Tahoe Police Officer's Association, South Tahoe Drug Free Coalition, South Tahoe High School, Tahoe-Douglas Fire Protection District, Tahoe-Douglas Rotary Club, Tahoe Turning Point, Tahoe Youth & Family Services, Zephyr Cove Elementary, and the many community volunteers.

I hope that every parent of a sixth-grade youth will take the time to complete the parent survey on the Drug Store Project event. We hope that you and your child openly discuss the dangers of all drugs on a regular basis.

Get educated together.

Gratefully,

Lisa Huard, Drug Store Project coordinator

Businesses turning customers into guests

By Hilary Stout, New York Times

The long line moves slowly. Clutching baskets of detergent, dental floss and such, the errand-running patrons of Walgreens assume their places with resignation, seeking only to pay and get out the door.

But when at last they reach the front, a cashier greets each one with a smile and the customer service salutation of our time:

“Following guest, please!”

It’s one of those head-scratchers of daily life that no one can explain. Somehow, at some point, the queued-up masses at drugstores, grocery checkouts, banks and retail establishments from Uniqlo to Staples became “guests” in the common service lexicon, instead of “customers.”

The linguistic turn has spawned eyebrow-raising and the occasional Twitter grumble or Internet rant over the years. One can easily imagine a “Seinfeld” discourse on the topic if the show were still in production.

We decided some reporting was in order get to the bottom of how this tic spread from the turndown service at a hotel to the pumps at a gas station.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



- BevMo opens in South Lake Tahoe on April 3 at 9am.
- After nearly four decades at Sugar Bowl Resort, Rob Kautz, the resort's president and CEO, is retiring.
- Vail Resorts is buying Perisher Ski Resort in Australia for \$136 million in cash. The deal represents Vail's first purchase of an international resort, and is expected to close in the company's July quarter.
- South Lake Tahoe Recreation Department is offering American Red Cross Certified Lifeguard Training from April 6-10, 4-8pm. Must be at least 15, able to swim 300 yards continuously while demonstrating breathing control and rhythmic breathing, tread water for two minutes using legs only, and complete a timed event. The class includes 7 hours and 25 minutes of online learning and 20 hours of hands-on instruction. Cost is \$225. Signup by calling 530.542.6056.
- The Fields Advisory Committee of the South Lake Tahoe Recreation Facilities Joint Powers Authority will meet April 3 from 2-3pm at Lake Tahoe Unified School District, 1021 Al Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe.

Nursing home, assisted-living expenses can decimate savings

By Jake Lowrey

People pondering their retirement years often conjure images of spending more time on a favorite pastime or traveling around the country or the world.

Health concerns can intrude on those idyllic scenes, though, not only affecting enjoyment of life but also punching a heavy dent in retirement savings.

As we age, usually our medical or long-term care expenses increase, sometimes depleting our assets to a level of crisis.

It's important for retirees, and anyone planning for retirement, to become educated about what the pitfalls are and what they need to do to avoid losing their life savings.

Long-term care especially can burn a hole in savings accounts. In 2012, for example, nursing home care averaged \$74,800 a year, according to a report by the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation.

Meanwhile, assisted living facilities averaged \$39,500 per year, and home-health services averaged \$21 per hour.

More than 10 million Americans need some sort of long-term care, the Kaiser report said. That number covers all ages, even children, but about half are people 65 and older.

Those older Americans had looked forward to enjoying their golden years. They should be able to have actual golden years instead of what can end up being scary years, both personally

and financially.

Certainly, being able to maintain good health is a key factor in protecting savings and making retirement enjoyable and satisfying, he says.

But life doesn't always work out that way. Fortunately, there are strategies seniors can use to lessen the impact of expenses brought on by long-term care needs.

Some of those include:

- **VA benefits.** Military veterans may be able to offset nursing home or assisted-living expenses through benefits provided by the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs. A veteran's eligibility for long-term care services would be determined based on his or her need for ongoing treatment, personal care and assistance, as well as the availability of the service in the area where the person lives, according to the Department of Veteran Affairs.

Other factors, such as financial eligibility, a service-connected disability, insurance coverage, and/or ability to pay may also come into play.

- **Medicaid compliant SPIAs.** A SPIA is a single-premium immediate annuity. Typically, a SPIA is a contract with an insurance company where you pay the company a sum of money upfront (the premium), and the company promises to pay you a certain amount of money periodically for the rest of your life.

A Medicaid compliant SPIA is a specially designed annuity that pays out over the person's "life expectancy" and has other specific characteristics. A couple who put money in a Medicaid annuity are able to avoid having the income from that annuity count against the financial assistance a spouse receives for nursing home care.

- **Setting up a trust.** Trusts can help shelter wealth from the look-back periods in Medicaid requirements and assist in qualifying for VA programs, among other advantages.

Jake Lowrey is a financial consultant and president of Lowery Financial Group, an ethical and professional firm that guides clients to retirement success, including planning for long-term care needs.

International tourist arrivals rapidly increasing

By Dan Peltier, Skift

The World Travel & Tourism Council projects the world will welcome nearly 1.8 billion international visitor arrivals per year by 2025, a 58 percent increase from the 1.1 billion international arrivals who crossed borders in 2014.

These international tourists will certainly contribute to a travel industry experiencing faster growth than the wider global economy but the money tourists spend in their own countries continues dwarfing that of international tourists traveling abroad. This reality has long defined visitor spending in destinations and the status quo won't see significant changes in the near future, the World Travel & Tourism Council projects.

Considering global domestic travel spending made up 72 percent of travel and tourism's contribution to global GDP last year, the organization released forecasts this week which point to domestic travel spending growing slightly faster than foreign visitor spending in 2015, 3.7 percent vs. 2.8 percent and

accounting for \$3.7 trillion and \$1.4 trillion, respectively, of the world's total GDP.

Read the whole story

Remains of man missing 8 years found in EDC

By Bill Lindelof, Sacramento Bee

The remains of a man missing more than eight years – and whose suspected killer sits in jail awaiting trial for his murder – have been found in El Dorado County.

Cold case homicide investigators on Friday unearthed the remains of Tobias Kaiser, an El Dorado County man who was reported missing from his Somerset home in November 2006.

Kaiser, 47, was last seen Nov. 30, 2006, at his residence near the 7400 block of Perry Creek Road in Somerset. He reportedly was in the process of moving to Modesto.

Earlier this year, based on information gathered by investigators, arrest warrants were issued for Eric Todd Mehlmauer, 47, of Placerville and Ronald Anthony Garcia, 53, of Sacramento in connection with Kaiser's death. The two men were taken into custody Jan. 15.

Read the whole story

Bikes being stolen off car racks in S. Tahoe

Two high-end bicycles were stolen off bicycle racks on the back of parked vehicles in public parking lots in South Lake Tahoe.

The crimes occurred in the day and at night in the last week.

Police have no suspects. However, each of the victims had smaller, thinner bicycle locks securing the bikes to the racks. The suspect was able to easily cut through the cables and steal the bikes.

The following are tips from South Lake Tahoe police officers:

- Always lock your bike's frame and wheels with a high-quality, modern U-lock (with a disc/flat key).
- Remove all detachable items like lights, bags and quick release parts and take them with you.
- Lock to a bike rack, or firmly affixed (bolts covered in concrete) parking meter or sign pole – these are the most secure places.
- Record your bike's serial number. Take a photo of you and your unlocked bike. Keep the receipt.
- Always lock your bike, even if you're just leaving it for a moment.
- Always lock through the frame and a wheel. Add a cable, cable lock, or second U-lock to lock the second wheel.
- Buy the most expensive lock you can afford. U-locks are

strong and better ones come with theft warranties. Only buy a U-lock with a flat or disc key. Cylindrical keyed locks are more easily picked.

- Beware of locking to “sucker poles” that are loosely bolted down and can easily be removed.
- Avoid locking to private property. Store your bike inside if space is available.
- Lock your bike when keeping it in a garage or on a porch.
- Learn about the lock manufacturer’s warranty and product replacement policy.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Plein air expert to give talk in South Tahoe

Tahoe Art League is kicking off the plein air painting season with Dave Russo on April 8.

At the monthly meeting he will give a presentation and demonstration for the public. It begins at 6pm at the South Lake Tahoe Senior Center.

Working in oil and watercolor, Russo create landscapes that capture the beauty and essence of the Sierra with great detail. He developed his artistic talent at an early age and received the David Epstein Memorial Art Scholarship, which afforded him the opportunity to live with Picasso in France for a year. He later earned his master’s degree in art from San Francisco State University and then a doctorate from

Stanford University, where he later taught.

Most recently he has been teaching at Lake Tahoe Community College.

Glen Alpine Falls, Cathedral Meadow, Sand Harbor and Blue Lakes are just a few of the sites the group will visit this season. The initial session will be April 12, with a visit to the historic ranch of Ida Glazier on Foothills Road in the Carson Valley, where it may be possible to see lilacs and apple trees in bloom.

The Tahoe Art League meets the second Wednesday of each month at 6pm at the South Lake Tahoe Senior Center, 3050 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe, California. For more info, go online.

Nevada entertainment tax could soon expand

By Sean Whaley, Las Vegas Review-Journal

CARSON CITY – Fans of NASCAR, the Electric Daisy Carnival or the Burning Man countercultural event held every year in the Black Rock Desert in far Northern Nevada could soon have to pay a bit more to get their groove on.

Casino nightclubs, performances by disc jockeys and events staged around a hotel pool would also be taxed under the long-awaited measures from Assembly Minority Leader Marilyn Kirkpatrick to simplify and expand the live entertainment tax.

If Assembly Bills 392 and 393 win approval and take effect July 1, many events that have been exempted from the levy will soon be included under her proposed Luxury Discretionary

Spending Tax. The tax rate would be 8 percent, or about \$60 for a \$700 VIP Tier 1 ticket to the 2015 Electric Daisy Carnival or \$31 for a \$390 ticket to Burning Man.

Many events already impose the tax. The levy brings in about \$140 million a year, most from the gaming side from the major entertainment venues.

But Kirkpatrick has been working for years to close off loopholes in the tax, including outdoor concerts. She also wants to simplify the tax. There are now two different tax rates of 5 percent or 10 percent based on the size of the venue.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Good Neighbor Policy is good for everyone

Publisher's note: *The Nevada Senate Education Committee unanimously approved the bill April 2.*

By Kindred Murillo

It's been nearly four years since I moved to South Lake Tahoe and became president of Lake Tahoe Community College. When I first arrived, I heard an earful from community members who were upset about the loss of the Good Neighbor Policy (GNP). This policy was established by the Nevada System of Higher Education in 1988. It made it possible for basin students living on the Nevada side to attend LTCC at California resident rates. The GNP was discontinued by Nevada in 2011 for reasons that were understandable at the time: all state higher

education systems faced deep cuts during the country's recession, and there was a clear need to reduce costs.



Kindred
Murillo

The unintended consequence of the decision to end the GNP is now apparent. The people who are most affected by the loss of the GNP are primarily residents living and working in the Stateline area, mostly in low wage jobs. Many of them were born and raised in Tahoe, brought here by parents seeking work in the many tourist-oriented businesses found in the basin. They are often what we call “place-bound,” meaning they don’t have the financial footing to move elsewhere to attend college and improve their job prospects. They work hard, often in multiple jobs, just to get by. They are stuck with minimal skills, minimal education, and little hope of breaking out of that cycle without access to education. Community colleges in rural areas evolved out of K-12 systems to serve these “place-bound” students.

While the number of people affected by the loss of the Good Neighbor Policy isn’t massive, the policy’s cancellation has clearly hurt the basin’s most vulnerable population. Our community’s success and growth depends on a highly trained workforce. When a portion of our local population cannot get the skills and education they need, the entire basin suffers economically. I am passionate about reinstating a form of the Good Neighbor Policy so LTCC can once again be a good neighbor to Tahoe residents living on both sides of the state line who want the opportunity for a better life. They are much more

likely to achieve that if they can access a community college.

I encourage you to support Nevada Senate Bill 414, written by Sen. James Settelmeyer, R-Minden. The bill, currently under consideration by the Senate Education committee, encourages the Board of Regents of the Nevada System of Higher Education to enter into a reciprocal agreement with California to create reciprocity for residents in the Lake Tahoe Basin as stated in California Senate Bill 605. SB605 will create a limited reciprocity six-year pilot program for residents in the Lake Tahoe Basin to attend Lake Tahoe Community College and Western Nevada College at resident rates. If you believe, as I do, that we are one community regardless of borders, and that all of our citizens deserve access to education, then please let the members of Nevada's Senate Education committee know that. A list of committee members with links to their contact information is [here](#).

On behalf of the many students who will benefit from this bill on both sides of the border, I thank you.

Kindred Murillo is president of Lake Tahoe Community College.