

Letter: Vote Sass for SLT council

To the community,

A few weeks back I did something that I have never before done in my 54 years of life, the past 32 of which have been spent raising two sons, living, working, recreating, and being a participant in our community here in the city of South Lake Tahoe. I did something that I had never ever felt compelled to do. I made a contribution to a campaign for an elected official.

I've endorsed candidates before openly in local press. I've displayed election signs for various measures and candidates in my yard. But in this election I felt so passionately about doing in my small way what I could to get Austin Sass elected to the South Lake Tahoe City Council that I contributed to his campaign. Although a small donation (which anyone who looks will find listed in the contribution section of Sass's candidate financial statement), it was my way of showing my community that I believe so strongly that Austin Sass should be elected that I was willing to invest in it. Now when I say invest I'm talking about an investment that I believe will pay off in spades when it comes to the quality of life that I, my family, and my fellow community members can look forward to here in South Lake Tahoe should Austin Sass be elected to a seat on our City Council.

Two years ago when Sass was narrowly defeated and was denied a council seat that I and many voters felt should be rightly given to him when a sitting council member, with two years left on her term, resigned weeks after the election. Sass eagerly jumped through every hoop that the sitting council members required for their "appointment" process. I'd be lying if I didn't tell you that Sass was very disappointed and even

somewhat disillusioned about his desire to run for a council seat in the future, and in my mind rightly so. Now I want to point out that I used the term “somewhat” because when weeks after that election two years ago we talked and I opined that he should give it one more shot in 2014 his head and mouth said, “I don’t know.” But his eyes told me yes.

Perseverance, dedication, qualified on every level required of a council member, and most of all, passionately cares for his community and wants to do his part to create a sustainable path for the future generations of South Lake Tahoe community members. Anyone who has read any of his interviews or has attended any of the candidate forums knows that Sass is highly versed in the current issues facing the council, agencies and regulations involved in the Basin, and has a firm grasp on the processes to achieve the best outcome for the members of our community both residential and business.

Not only has Austin received the endorsement of *Lake Tahoe News*, but also Taylor Flynn of the *Tahoe Mountain News*. Well, and of course mine!

In closing, I want to urge each and every member of our South Lake Tahoe community registered to vote, to not only vote Nov. 4, but to make sure that you make one of your three choices Austin Sass for city of South Lake Tahoe City Council member.

Toogee Sielsch, South Lake Tahoe

Thousands help Nevada turn



Nevada Lt. Gov. Brian Krolicki, who is from Stateline, and his family. Photos/Susan Wood

Thousands of people lined the streets of Carson City to watch the Nevada Day Parade on Nov. 1.

This was no ordinary parade. It was the culmination of a year's worth of partying for the Silver State, which turned 150 on Oct. 31.

Much of its history was represented in floats – including the Virginia City contingent dressed in Old West garb and firing off guns.

Plenty of politicians – current, soon to be termed out and wannabes marched along.

The day started with drizzle and cold temps, but that did not dampen the enthusiasm of those in the parade or those watching.

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Snippets about Lake Tahoe



- Gates at Van Sickle Bi-State Park on the South Shore are closed and will be until May 1.
- Truckee is taking a survey with the intention of making improvements prior to the next construction season. The survey will close Nov. 30.
- Do you have a favorite health or wellness topic that you would like addressed at your next staff meeting or club event? Make arrangements for a free lecture by a Barton Health medical expert on a topic of your choice by contacting Leanne Wagoner at 530.543.5537.
- Matt Williams, Washington Nationals manager and Carson City Native, will be the featured speaker Jan. 16 at the annual fundraiser for the UNR baseball team.
- UNR School of the Arts is celebrating the holiday season and the completion of the Act I renovation with the theater and dance department's production of "A Christmas Carol: The Musical" by Alan Menken on "A Christmas Carol: The Musical" by Alan Menken Nov. 21-23, Dec. 2-7. For more info or to buy tickets, go online.

Essay contest for young Calif. hunters

California Department of Fish and Wildlife and California Wildlife Officer Foundation are co-sponsoring the annual Passing on the Tradition essay contest for young hunters.

The winner will receive a lifetime California hunting license valued at more than \$600.

Junior hunting license holders or youths under 16 who earned a hunter education certificate in 2014 are eligible. Contestants need to submit an essay of 500 words or less on what Passing on the Tradition of hunting means to them. Applicants are encouraged to write about conservation, sportsmanship, ethics and the challenge of being a hunter in modern times.

Entries must include the applicant's name, date of birth and a contact telephone number. Entries should be submitted via email to Lt. John Nores at john.nores@wildlife.ca.gov. All entries must be received before Dec. 19.

For additional information, call Lt. John Nores at 408.591.5174.

Letter: Tahoe Fund making

basin a better place

To the community,

In 2010, amidst a backdrop of discord in the Tahoe basin, a group of people who love Tahoe came together to start the Tahoe Fund. As leaders in conservation, business and community, our interests were diverse, but all agreed we could do better for Tahoe. There was a lot of pent up energy to do tangible projects that would protect the environment, improve recreation and increase environmental stewardship.

Not wanting to reinvent the wheel, we decided the best way to do that would be to support the already existing environmental improvement program (EIP), a collaborative interagency effort to identify priority projects which was a result of the first Lake Tahoe Environmental Summit. In our first few years, we have raised funds for more than a dozen projects to expand the network of bike trails, fight invasive species, and restore important watersheds. Projects include the Van Sickle Bi-State Park, removal of Asian clams from Emerald Bay, restoration of Blackwood Creek, and a new bike path from Incline Village to Sand Harbor. A full list of our projects can be found online.

I would like to thank the visionary Tahoe Fund supporters who make these projects possible. With your help we can increase our impact and leave a legacy for generations to come.

Cory Ritchie, Tahoe Fund board member

Anderson to give talk in S. Lake Tahoe

Meyers resident Jamie Anderson began her work with the Sugar Pine Foundation before her Olympic medal success, helping to plant sugar pine seedlings.

Earlier this year she reconnected with the group.

The Sugar Pine Foundation is a small organization trying to make big changes. The group is dedicated to saving Tahoe's sugar pines and other white pines from blister rust disease by educating and involving the local community in hands-on forest stewardship.

To help the foundation raise money, will give a talk Nov. 6 about the Sochi Olympic Games. The talk is at Azul Latin Kitchen in South Lake Tahoe from 6-8pm. Cost is \$20. Children are free.

The first 30 to arrive will receive a lift ticket to Sierra-at-Tahoe, Anderson's home resort.

EDC leader cleans out her office

By Kathryn Reed

El Dorado County CAO Terri Daly this week moved all of her personal belongings out of her office.

Board of Supervisors Chairwoman Norma Santiago on

Saturday morning was asked what this means.

"I'm not going to tell you. I'll talk to you later. By," Santiago told *Lake Tahoe News* before hanging up abruptly.



Terri Daly

Daly and Santiago are friends, with Santiago always coming to her defense.

But Daly has come under fire for months base on her handling of financial and contractual dealings within the county. She is responsible for taking a budget surplus and turning it into a \$20 million deficit.

Daly earlier this year had a consultant look into how things were functioning. It came out that her office was one of the most dysfunctional. The El Dorado County Grand Jury in its report this year also called the county dysfunctional.

The board on its agendas has an ongoing item of "exposure to litigation" to be able to talk about Daly and Assistant CAO Kim Kerr, a source told *Lake Tahoe News*. But this could be a violation of the Brown Act because more of a description is required. Plus, any action taken in closed session must be reported out.

County Counsel Robyn Drivon when asked if Daly was fired, said, "No. There are rumors aplenty." She would not, though, explain why Daly cleaned out her office, or if she quit.

If the board had fired Daly, she would have only gotten paid for three months. She has had a rolling three-month contract.

On Tuesday, county workers saw Kerr helping Daly carry boxes of personal items out of the building.

With Daly evidently gone, this would leave Kerr in charge. Her pedigree is no better than Daly's. This column by Larry Weitzman spells out Kerr's past.

Series of Tahoe controlled burns to be lighted

The North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District, Nevada Division of Forestry and the U.S. Forest Service will conduct prescribed fire operations in the Incline Village, Ponderosa Ranch, Tunnel Creek trailhead areas and on scattered urban lots around the Lake Tahoe Basin beginning Nov. 2 and continuing as conditions allow.

Smoke from prescribed fire operations is normal and may continue for several days after an ignition depending on the project size.

Before prescribed fire operations are conducted, the agencies post road signs around areas affected by prescribed fire, send email notifications and update the local fire information line at 530.543.2600, ext. 6. To receive prescribed fire notifications, send an email to pa_ltbmu@fs.fed.us.

Project Information:

- HRP (Worm), various drainages throughout Incline Village, Second Creek Drainage, Wood Creek Drainage, First Creek Drainage (Incline Village General Improvement District), hand piles, 50 acres.

- PRS/Tunnel Creek, Ponderosa Ranch/Tunnel Creek Trailhead, hand piles, 20 acres.
 - West Wood Creek and West Second Creek, Wood Creek Drainage and Second Creek Drainage, understory, 20 to 40 acres.
 - Van Sickle Round 10, Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park, Van Sickle Unit south of Kingsbury Grade with access off Vista and Easy Street, hand piles, 186 acres.
 - Tunnel Creek Prescribed Fire, Tunnel Creek drainage, south of Incline Village, understory, 29 acres.
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FBI agent part of Lake Tahoe's fabric

By Kathryn Reed

"When victims and families have a really bad day, that is when our good work starts. That is one of the things that is odd about our career – some of the most challenging and interesting cases are some of the most horrific."

Chris Campion, retired FBI agent



Chris Campion spent 25 years with the FBI stationed in South Lake Tahoe. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Jaycee Lee Dugard is the one case in Chris Campion's 25-year career that stands out above all the rest. The day she was kidnapped from a Meyers bus stop and 18 years later when she was freed from captivity.

"A lot of people don't realize all the leads that went on in between ... at times we thought we had something," Campion told *Lake Tahoe News*. "Right up to the day she came back I was working a lead of a guy in New York who kidnapped five women, some as young as 14, and kept them in an underground bunker. He had ties to Lake Tahoe and Reno."

Last spring he spoke at a conference for the National Center of Missing and Exploited Children. Terry Probyn, Dugard's mom, was a speaker, too.

Campion has kept in touch with Dugard during the past five years.

"She is doing amazingly well. You stop and think about it ...

her spirit and ability to adapt. She is an amazing person and constantly astounds me,” Campion said.

Campion is a walking encyclopedia of crime on the South Shore for the last quarter century. But he is no longer going after the bad guys for the FBI. He retired from the agency – he was close the mandatory retirement age – two months ago.

He isn’t done working, though. He has been hired by a firm to do corporate investigations. It allows him to keep living in South Lake Tahoe, while also getting his passport stamped plenty of times.

And when Campion is in Tahoe he plans to do more of the outdoor activities he never had time for when he wore a badge.

Plenty to do

He attributes the crime rate on the South Shore to the casinos, the nightlife – that they are a draw for criminals, just like they are for the average person.

“People come here to get away from things all the time. They think maybe there is not as much law enforcement and more anonymity,” Campion said.

The office handled cases in five counties from Truckee to Mammoth.

South Lake Tahoe had an FBI office in the 1970s that closed in 1979. Then there was the Harveys’ bombing, and the Coddington and Operation Deep Snow cases.

(Herbert James Coddington, who was in his 20s at the time, murdered two women at his residence in the Tahoe Verde Mobile Home Park on May 16, 1987, and kidnapped and sexually assaulted a 14-year-old and 12-year-old girl. He is sitting on death row. Deep Snow involved the mayor of South Lake Tahoe and about 20 others on drug and money laundering charges.)

Those cases led to the FBI reopening the office in 1989. Chick McDevitt was the sole agent until Campion joined him.

This was Campion's first assignment after graduating from the academy. While California was on his list of choices, originally he was headed for Fresno. He didn't regret his destination changed before he ever went to the Central Valley.

Campion's intention after graduating law school was to join the FBI, but the agency was in a hiring freeze. This led him to work in a large law firm doing civil work. In that time he wrote a brief for the Minnesota Supreme Court.

When the FBI called, though, he was still interested.

"I took a pay cut and never looked back," Campion said.

FBI policy used to be that agents moved every few years. That changed and allowed Campion to stay in Tahoe. While thoughts of working in a bigger office filled his head in the early days, he realized he got to do more in a smaller office.

"When the phone rings, it is for you," Campion said. "All the cases we get and worked have a big impact on the community."

At times he was the only agent, other times there were three in the office; two from the Sacramento division, one from Las Vegas.

Memorable cases

Two cases he is glad to have gotten convictions in are Joseph Nissensohn and Richard Swanson.

The Platz case also sticks out for Campion. He was one of the hostage negotiators. What they didn't know at the time is the little girl was already dead.

(In 2003, Lisa Platz was found guilty of the 2001 murder of her 9-year-old daughter, Rebecca Aramburo. The child was found

with her throat slashed inside a tent at Campground by the Lake. Platz was sentenced to life in prison. Her boyfriend James Csucsai hanged himself in jail.)

He was able to retire with all the child abduction cases in the area being closed.

But there are three missing person cases he hopes one day will be resolved even though the women involved are presumed dead. They are Donna Lass from the early 1970s who may be linked to the Zodiac killer; Bobette Ulrich who was in her 40s and went missing from South Lake Tahoe in the early 2000s; and Catherine Hatadis, a retired Stateline woman, who disappeared.

The three public corruption cases that stand out for him are Operation Clean Sheets that involved fraud with hotels in the redevelopment area; the arrest of Mary Kay McLanahan, South Lake Tahoe associate city planner, on embezzlement and grand theft charges; and the conviction of Johnny Poland, who was a South Lake Tahoe police officer.

Campion received the Shield of Bravery from the FBI after he was shot at in front of the Safeway in South Lake Tahoe.

Brian Williams, now a lieutenant with the South Lake Tahoe Police Department, was with Campion as they went after the fugitive robber.

"There was a big bullet hole in my brand new car where I would have been sitting if I were still in the car," Campion said.

And, still, he would not have wanted another career.

"There was never a time I wanted out. It's a tremendous privilege to be in those situations where you are needed, where you are bringing some harmony back to the community," Campion said. "I look at it as law enforcement people are healers in a way. They are taking the ripped fabric of society and trying to mend it."

Letter: Measure F deserves a yes vote

To the community,

I strongly encourage our community to vote yes on Measure F. This measure helps to maintain and upgrade existing facilities on the Lake Tahoe Community College campus, construct a public safety training center for emergency personnel training, and supports the planning of on-site residential housing.

The college gives our local kids a hometown college option upon graduating from high school. The college is an important training ground for our youth, who someday will be leading this community, in much-needed skills such as fire safety, environmental protection and business development.

LTCC is one of the smallest community colleges in the state. Of the 112 colleges, Tahoe is one of eight with less than 3,000 full-time students enrolled. This presents challenges since with a smaller enrollment there is less tuition collected to maintain facilities and to lay the foundation for the next phase of the college. The college has developed a well thought-out strategic plan including increasing energy efficiency, modernizing the science and computer labs, establishing a sustainability degree, and offering four-year degrees in certain fields.

Even non-traditional students get to directly benefit from the college by enrolling in classes that can help further their careers, or to just add a new skill or hobby. There is a

robust year-round theater program featuring local talent, a state-of-the-art culinary program, and an expansive physical education facility with a large variety of classes. You can learn a new skill from highly qualified faculty, such as creative writing, pottery, dance, computer programming, and there are many more to choose from.

LTCC and its diverse and rich programs and beautiful campus were built by long-time locals who dedicated thousands of volunteer hours to creating this vision. Forty years ago this dedicated group launched the college in a motel along Highway 50. Twenty-five years ago they broke ground on the first building on the beautiful campus where it exists today.

Let's not let the heart and soul of the South Shore community and the vision and hard work of dedicated locals just wither away. The measure will add an average of \$68 per year to our property taxes. This small investment provides a high return for the community.

Kim Carr, South Lake Tahoe